CHAPTER II
ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY AND ITS IMPACT

From the assumption of active administration in 1881 to the transfer of power in 1947, the British administered Naga Hills as a frontier district of Assam. During this intervening period of seven decades, British administration concentrated on the maintenance of law and order in this border district. The establishment of peaceful conditions in Naga Hills was a gradual process which went on steadily throughout the period along with the extension of colonial rule and administration. The British directed their policies primarily towards practical and pressing problems such as the establishment of law and order, the foundation of administrative system and the dispensing of justice, and, not the least, the raising of the revenue necessary for the discharge of the function of the government. At the same time British policy was not that of imposing a European model of administration, but of establishing the rule of law for the security of colonial interests. Accordingly, the existing native institutions which had no contradiction with their policy or interests were left undisturbed.

Nevertheless, certain natural byproducts of British rule - the development of road communications, introduction of education and Christianity, changes in agricultural processes and promotion of public health - had significant transforming impact on the Nagas.  

I

Consolidation of British Rule

British colonial administration in Naga Hills district was founded not on a defined territorial boundary once for all, but on a growing process of extension throughout the period, 1881-1947. In extending their administrative sphere, the policy of the government was largely influenced by local circumstances. This brought out in the map below.

It was as a gradual process of annexation that the areas of the present Nokokchung, Zumshaboto and Phok districts were incorporated into the British district of Naga Hills. Conversely, in following a policy of expediency and convenience, the British left at least half of the present Nagaland unadministered. Thus a large part of the present Tuensang and Mon districts and Kiphro sub-division remained in the unadministered tract even at the time of the transfer of power in 1947.

1. For impact, see below.
For understanding the post-1881 colonial administrative policy in Naga Hills, it may be useful to divide the hills into three zones: Administered areas (A), political control areas (B), and areas beyond political control (C).  

(A) In the administered areas, the government assessed annual house tax at the rate of Rs.2 per house and appointed village headmen for the collection of the house tax and for carrying out the orders of the government at the village level. The government maintained law and order in this zone.

(B) In the political control areas or 'B' zone, the government conducted annual military promenades and, with it, the Deputy Commissioner had the discretion to settle cases of disputes but the government neither assessed house tax nor was it bound to protect the areas in the zone from the raids of the tribes from beyond it. On the other hand, the government had the discretion to punish the raiders depending on proximity and convenience.

1. For, Deptt, Extl-A, March 1886, no.15; Shakespeare, L.W., op. cit., p.163. A detailed discussion of events is outside the purview of this study. For that see Ghosh, S.A., The History of Nagaland, pp.120-40; and Reid, Sir Robert, History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam, pp.101-77.


3. See Appendix I & III, Rules for the Administration of Naga Hills District.

4. For, Deptt, Extl-A, March 1886, no.25.
(C) In the 'C' zone, the Government followed a policy of non-interference in the internal affairs. However, as noted before, the Government had the discretion to punish the tribes in cases of raids of a serious nature.

In the course of the gradual annexation of more territories the British incorporated the 'B' zones or control areas into the 'A' zone or the 'British District of Naga Hills' one after another while 'B' zone remained constant as a 'political control area'.

The circumstances which influenced the government to annex new areas into the fold of regular administration or 'A' zone were of similar nature. The condition of law and order specially the problem of headhunting was the primary concern which prompted the Government to annex the tribal areas; but in determining the imposition of control, administrative considerations of proximity and convenience remained paramount. Consequently, while 'B' zones were gradually brought within the ambit of administration, 'C' zones were deliberately left under political control only.

1. Ibid.
2. See Map above.
The 'A' zone was brought under political control consequent upon the introduction of the Inner Line Regulation of 1873. However, with the British occupation of Kohima and its decision to have permanent control of the Nagas in 1881, the Government introduced regular administration in this zone.

Immediately following the formation of Naga Hills District under the British India system of administration, the '3' zone area attracted the attention of the government because of headhunting incidents. Accordingly, the government in 1886 brought that zone under political control. However, owing to the increasing raids of the Trans-Dikhu tribes in the controlled tracts, in 1890 it was brought under active administration and simultaneously the sub-divisional headquarters which was established at Wokha in 1875 was shifted to Mokokchung, the former being left to the charge of the Tahsildar. Longsaor

4. *Par. Deptt. Extl-A*, February 1890, no.156, K.M.
in the map, which was hitherto an independent Ao village, East of Dikhu, was incorporated into Mokokchung sub-division in 1892.¹

The B² zone area consisting of the Sema and Eastern Angami (now Chakesang) tribes which had been under political control since 1903 was brought under regular administration in 1906,² with Tizu river as the natural boundary between the controlled and non-controlled territory. B³ area comprising the villages of Melomi and Primi was brought under political control in the wake of their raids by Aishan Kukies in 1913.³ Later, in 1923, it was incorporated into the Naga Hills District.⁴ Although there had been disturbances in the areas beyond the administered district, the Government limited its control to the Dikhu and Tizu rivers as its district boundary, leaving the eastern frontier under 'a loose control'⁵ till 1947.

1. Assam Secretariat, Pol-A, August 1892, nos.36-37.
2. Breh, H., Gazetteer of Nagaland, Kohima District, p.47.
3. Assam Secretariat, Pol-A, July 1913, nos.67-73.
4. Assam Secretariat, Pol-A, June 1926, nos.91-93.
5. 'Loose control' means that the Government did not interfere in the internal affairs of the area but controlled headhunting from time to time and advised the chiefs through Deputy Commissioner Naga Hills to live in peace.
II

Constitutional and Administrative Changes

Prior to the passing of the Assam Scheduled Districts Act 1874, the administration of Naga Hills was under the jurisdiction of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, who as the agent of Governor General governed it through the Chief Commissioner of Assam and his assistants. However, with the passing of Assam Scheduled Districts Act 1874, it was governed under the direct charge of the Chief Commissioner of Assam.¹

The chief purpose of this Act was to enable the Government to provide for the administration of the 'underdeveloped tracts' and to extend to them any enactments in force elsewhere, which might seem desirable to bring into operation. Thus in accordance with the provision of Clause 5A of Scheduled Districts Act, 1874, the Government passed in April 1884 the Assam Frontier Tract Regulation II of 1880 as amended by Regulation 111 Section Clause 2 of 1884, and extended it to the Naga

Hills District.¹ This regulation enabled the government to administer the Nagas in a simple and more personal manner. By virtue of this Regulation, Naga Hills were excluded from the operation of enactments relating to elaborate codes of law; the Code of Criminal Procedure, and the Civil Procedure Code were never in force in any Hill district. On the other hand, Naga administration continued to function under their chiefs and headmen free from alien legal technicalities.

The next constitutional change came with the Government of India Act, 1919, Section 13 (52-A(2) of the Act categorized the Naga areas within the Naga Hills District as 'Backward Tracts' and the Governor of Assam governed it as the Agent of the Governor General. The Governor was given the responsibility of bringing the inhabitants of the said tracts under close administrative control, so that in due course the responsibility of administration

¹ For, Deptt., Extl-A, February 1890, no.167, K.W.
Hunter, W.W., Gazetteer of India, April 1884, Part I, p.163. 'By section 2 of this regulation, the Chief Commissioner was empowered with the sanction of the Governor General in Council to direct that any enactment in force in a tract to which the Regulation has been extended shall cease to be in force there in'. Simultaneously, the Indian Stamp Act, 1879, the Transfer of Property Act, 1882, and the code of criminal procedure, 1882, all ceased to be in force in the Naga Hills District from that date, April 1884.
could be transferred to the Provincial government. ¹
Accordingly, the Governor of Assam administered the Naga Hills through his administrative agencies, viz., the Deputy Commissioner, his assistants and other local administrative functionaries such as the Gaonburas and Dobashias. ²

The last constitutional change was the Government of India Act, 1935, which was implemented in April 1937. With no significant changes from the previous act so far as the Naga areas were concerned this act classified Naga Hills, Lushai Hills and NEFA tracts as 'Excluded Areas' of the Government of Assam, and under section 91(1) of the Government of India (excluded and partially excluded area order, 1936). As an excluded area, the Naga Hills district came under the direct charge of the Governor who administered the district under section 92(3) of the said act through the Deputy Commissioner, Kohima. The constitutional position as it stood in 1937 in respect of Naga Hills district continued till 26th January, 1950, the date on which the Constitution of India came into force, except that with effect from 15th August, 1947.

¹ Elwin, V., Nagaland, p. 35.
² Ibid.
the Governor of Assam was divested of his discretionary powers in respect of the administration of the district which, since that date, vested in the provincial government, the Governor acting according to the advice of his Council of Ministers.¹

III

Administrative Posts

The British established their administrative head-quarters with the sole purpose of controlling the tribes especially those which defied their authority. Trouble spots thus largely determined the places for the establishment of the district administrative posts. The district of Naga Hills was firstly established at Samatuing (Chumukedima) in 1866 with the policy of checking the raids of the Angami Nagas into the plains' districts of Assam.² However, later in 1878, it was shifted to Kohima for the control of the principal Angami villages.³ Similarly, a new sub-division was first established at Wokha in 1875 for the control of the powerful Lotha villages of that area, who had recently killed Captain Butler, a British Survey

¹ Luthra, P.N., op. cit., pp.5-9; and Elwin, V., op. cit.
² For details, see Mackenzie, A., op. cit., p.119.
³ For, Deptt., Pol-A, January 1880, no.506.
Officer. ¹ But later on when these tribes became amenable to the control of the government, it was shifted to Wokokchung for the control of the trans-Dikhu tribal wars.² Along with the establishment of their administrative centres at different strategic regions of Naga Hills, the British followed simple administrative arrangements for the district.³ The administrative networks were followed by the general administration of the district as as two-tyre systems, viz., the village and the district. The head of these administrative units were the Gaonburas at the village level, sub-divisional officer at the sub-division level. The Deputy Commissioner was at the apex of district administration. He was in turn responsible to the Governor of Assam, who was the Agent to the Governor General of India.⁴ The same administrative arrangement remained intact throughout the colonial administration of Naga Hills from 1881 to 1947.

IV

Pattern of Colonial Administration

The British introduced no significant basic changes in the administration of the Nagas. Nagas were mostly

¹ For, Deptt. Pol-A, April 1876, no. 326.
² Assam Secretariat, 1888, File no. 576.
³ See, for details, Appendix III, p. 1.
left to continue to rule and administer their villages according to their respective customs and traditions with only 'Loose control'. By the Government. Conversely, while the techniques of control and administration remained informal, native system of administration functioned under British paramountcy. This popular technique of administration served the dual purpose of keeping the Nagas free to govern themselves in their traditional ways and at the same time immensely reduced the responsibility of the government from the detailed and costly affairs of administration. Thus the British adopted the system of native administration which would suit local tastes and at the same time be conducive to the maintenance of law and order among the tribes. In other words, the British did not seek to interfere in the internal affairs of the Nagas nor try to administer them on the European model. Accordingly, they re-inforced traditional form of administration which well-suited the

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2. Ibid.
peculiar conditions of its people and society. This system ensured social continuity and at the same time facilitated the acceptance of British rule. In pursuance of this policy objective, the Government readily used the existing institution based on local customs and tradition. It made no attempt to introduce any measures based on the alien concepts leading to an elaborate administrative system which might estrange the tribe people. By recognising the traditional leaders and elders as 'Chiefs and Gaonburas' they tried to integrate the existing leadership into the colonial administrative framework. Thus in consolidating their power, the British based their administration primarily on the existing native system. The native leadership consisting of the village Headman and his assistants was empowered to supervise and maintain law and order in consonance

1. Although at the apex of the district administration, the D.C. and S.D.O. supervised the general aspect of it, at the village level or at the actual native administration, the Gazis were made responsible. For details, see Native System of Administration, pp.54-57 of this chapter.

2. Without introducing a new administrative system of their own, the British readily recognised the village chiefs in some communities and elders or Gaonburas in some other communities as their representative for carrying out the orders of the Government in their respective villages.

3. For details of Pattern of Native Administration, see Appendix III, p. 7.
with their established tribal customs and traditions.¹ This system of administration was uniform all over the district. The village Headman became the agent of the colonial administration; the people had direct contact with their chiefs or Headman and had little to do directly with the district officials. Their direct concern was with the linkman and not the foreign rulers. Thus, the structure of the district administration left the Nagas with no direct weight of alien rule; British rule did not in anyway seriously affect the basic social structure of the Nagas, it remained traditional in character and content.²

Native Administrative Agencies

In the main, the colonial administration utilized two layers of native administrative agencies. First, the village Chiefs whose traditional leadership at the village level was utilized for village administration. This began with the extension of British protection to the Naga Villages in 1874,³ because protection automatically bound the chiefs

1. Ibid., p.3.
2. For detail, see p. of this chapter.
3. For, Deptt. Pol-A, December 1875, nos.68-70.
to abide by the policy of the Government in matters of
t heir relations with the tribes beyond British control
as well as their obligation to pay annual house tax.
However, symbolising their special responsibility and
relation with the administration, the chiefs were presented
red blankets.¹ This system continued as a basic feature
of Anglo-Naga relations even after the introduction of
regular administration in 1881.² Secondl y, the Dobashi
system which was first started in 1842 as a system of
trial residential delegates from the different Naga
clans, was later in 1859, when the system was proved to
be useful for the promotion of Anglo-Naga relations,
continued on a regular basis. In due course it became
a basic institution of colonial administration in Naga
Hills.³

To the native administrative agencies the government
dele gated maximum responsibility of district administration
and the district officers functioned only at the supervisory
level. As for instance, the village headmen or chiefs

¹ For, Deptt. ExtJ 3, June 1891, nos. 62-68. The Chiefs
received red blankets once in three years and that
too at the time of the submission of annual house tax.
In 1891 alone, the government bought 600 yards of red
broad cloth for presentation to the Naga Hills Tribes.
³ For, Deptt. Pol-A, April 1863, no. 315.
were made responsible for the collection of annual house tax from their respective villages. In addition to that responsibility, the administration of justice was assigned to the Gaonburas who maintained law and order in their respective village jurisdiction. On the other hand, the role of the district officers was to receive the collection of revenue from the Gaonburas, and intervened in the village administration only in disputes involving cases which could not be settled by the native courts - Gaonburas and Debasish. 1 This system of administration largely left the Negas free to run their local administration without much intervention from the British. It eliminated the sense of domination that is a basic feature of alien rule and at the same time it smoothly controlled them without direct involvement of the foreigner in their village affairs.

Native Agency I: The Village Chiefs

In understanding the important role of the village chiefs an appreciation of their status and position in traditional Naga society is an indispensable prelude. The evolution of leadership in the Naga society began with the eldest member of the family. He, by virtue of his seniority, commanded traditional respect of his family.

and, corresponding to that, responsibility of the family also devolved on him. Seniority as a factor thus determined the position of leadership of a family, although it did not exclude personal factors such as influence, wealth, and intelligence in case of brothers contending for the same dignity. Secondly, by founding a new village, a man could become the chief of the village ipso-facto. From family headship, a man would rise to the position of the head of his clan and his village. Whatever might be the means of their accession to the position of leadership, the chiefs were the influential individuals of most consequence in their respective villages. They represented the common interest of the family and the welfare of the village both in war and peace. These enterprising individuals were the ones to whom the people of the clan or the village looked for leadership and direction in all important aspects of the community. They were also generally known for their superior wisdom. They had influence on their fellow clansmen or villagers either because of their physical prowess or sound economic position or because of other qualities of head and heart.

4. Ibid.
Knowing fully well of the commanding position enjoyed by the village chiefs in the Tribal community, the authorities at Calcutta from the very beginning of their relations with the Nagas advised the political agents to first befriend and communicate directly with the chiefs in dealing with the tribes. In doing so, an agent was to make a chief feel that he esteemed him to be a man of the greatest importance in his community.¹

With the gradual extension of their administration, the British also appointed, beginning in 1882, village chiefs according to local practice and the customs of various communities.² The government's interest was served best if they could be recognised and appointed to assist the colonial administration in the carrying out of their respective village administration.³

Although the chiefs were given due recognition as undisputed leaders of their traditional societies, their recognition as village chiefs was made mainly with the intention to make them loyal agents of the colonial administration at the lower reaches.⁴ Thus, while

1. For. Deptt., Pol-A, August 1840, p. 93.
continuing as leaders of their people, they at the same time became the agents of the alien administration. They became an important link between the British Government and the tribal masses. This same pattern became a general practice of the British rulers in Naga Hills.

Powers and Functions of the Village Chiefs

The powers and functions of the village chiefs as representatives of colonial administration were determined by the government.¹ The ruled and their chiefs had no participation in formulating the policy regarding their own affairs. On the other hand, the chiefs only received directions and paternalistic supervision from the district officers.²

As native leaders, the functions of the chiefs were multifarious and yet relatively simple. They collected the annual house tax for the government, settled cases of civil and criminal nature according to their respective tribal customs and established usages, and were responsible for the maintenance of law and order in their respective

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¹ See Appendix I and III. Rules for the administration of Naga Hills District, which was first made in 1872 and later it was revised in 1937. See also Bengal Judicial Proceedings, August 1872, no. 77.

² For, Deptt, Pol-A, December 1866, no. 138.
village jurisdiction. Thus apart from administration, the village authority consisting of the chiefs and their assistants was delegated with police role within the boundary of the village. They maintained law and order in the village, but cases of repression of disturbances of serious proportions were left to the organised police force. As for example, clause II of the rules for the Administration of Justice and Police in the Naga Hills District regulated the role of the village authorities: "Mauzadars, Gaonburas, Chiefs, Headman of Khels and all other village authorities may pursue with hue and cry an offender fleeing beyond their jurisdiction and arrest him, but ordinarily no mauzadars, gaonburas, chiefs, headmen of a khel or village authority shall attempt to arrest an offender beyond his own jurisdiction, without the cognisance and co-operation of the mauzadars, Gaonburas, chief, headman of a Khel, or chief village authority of the jurisdiction to which the offenders had fled..."

Native Agency II: The Institutions of Dobaahi

One institution that served both as an instrument of pacification of the Nages and as a native team of

1. Ibid.
2. For details of the function of the village chiefs, see Appendix III. p.4.
intermediaries between the rulers and the ruled was that of Dobashi. ¹ This institution was one of the chief means through which the British government established successful relations with the diverse Naga tribes.

Beginning from the early 1840's the British started making earnest efforts to have good relations with the Naga tribes. ² As a part of their effort towards facilitating intercourse with the Nagas, the British government started the system of receiving Naga visitors of the plains areas specially of Sibsagar and Nowgong. From these two towns of Assam, the Government encouraged their frontier officers to promote close relations with the then mostly unacquainted hill tribes. Accordingly, the frontier officers actively encouraged the Nagas to visit the plains towns by entertaining them with meals and giving presents to the visiting chiefs and their followers. ³ Thus system of receiving and entertaining the Naga visitors continued

¹ The word Dobashi was derived from Dobhasias which etymologically means two languages. Literally it means a man of two languages. See Andrew Clew, The Future of Assam People, p.10.

² For, Deptt, Pol-A, 1842, no.9, Lt. Bigge's Peace Mission.

³ For, Deptt, Pol-A, October, 1842, nos.156-59.
throughout the 1840s.¹ The objective of this policy was to promote goodwill and understanding with the tribes towards whom the British had been making overtures to establish friendly relations.

Although the system continued for some time, following the introduction of the policy of non-intervention in March 1850, the system of receiving Naga delegates was also discontinued, as the Government would have nothing to do with the Nagas. However, with the re-occupation of Samaguting in 1856, Lt. Gregory, the officiating Deputy Commissioner, strongly suggested the desirability of resuming the system of receiving Naga delegates at Samaguting (Chumukedim) especially for the purpose of maintaining relations with the warring Naga tribes of the frontier. In view of the unfriendly attitude of the Nagas to the British forces, it was considered inexpedient for the

¹ For, Deptt, Pol-A, January 1845, no.61; For, Deptt, Pol-A, March 1845, nos.33-34; For, Deptt, Pol-C, June 1846, nos.35-36; For, Deptt, Pol-C, January 1947, nos.6-7; For, Deptt, Pol-C, June 1847, nos.42-43; For, Deptt, Pol-C, June 1847, nos.47-48; For, Deptt, Pol-C, October 1947, nos.36-38; For, Deptt, Pol-C, December 1847, nos.61-64; For, Deptt, Pol-C, February, 1848, nos.132-36; For, Deptt, Pol-C, June, 1848, nos.139-42; For, Deptt, Pol-C, July 1848, nos.70-72; For, Deptt, Pol-C, November 1848, nos.31-34; For, Deptt, Pol-C, January 1849, nos.7-9, For, Deptt, Pol-C, September 1849, nos.12-15.
Government to despatch police force to remote villages, and accordingly hoped that the visiting delegates could be tactfully employed for the settlement of disputes among the Nagas there. In 1869, the Bengal Government accorded sanction to the proposal with the hope that the system would also benefit the tribes.

The policy of receiving residentiary delegates of Naga clans at Samejuting proved to be quite good to the Government. Although its original object was to settle existing feuds and to check their recurrence among the Naga Hills tribes, the representatives also effectively acted as the escort and intelligence department of the political agent. Although at the beginning there was difficulty in securing representatives from the villages, gradually it became a point of competition among Naga clans, because the system enabled them to lay all matters affecting their welfare before the authorities. Even villages which had formerly held aloof from the government became eager to have the privilege of having their own representatives with the political agent. This circumstance enabled the political agent to select the representatives

of his choice from the principal villages and tribes. Meanwhile, retention of this system on a permanent basis was under serious consideration of the Government.

After two years of trial, Captain John Butler, the Political Agent, Naga Hills, reported to the Chief Commissioner of Assam: "I am more than ever convinced that we cannot do better than introduce the plan whenever we advance into a new country of the kind which lies all around our Assam valley". 1 In view of the fact that the government of India had become convinced of the usefulness of the native delegates, the system was made permanent in 1881. 2

Initially, these representatives of the khels and villages were known as delegates. Ostensibly, apart from their representative character, the Government had less choice as to their appointment. However, with the retention of its system in 1881, 3 it appears that ability to translate one's tribal language to the British Officers and vice versa became a requisite qualification for the representatives. The native representation to the government were

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3. Ibid.
thus known as interpreters. As a matter of fact, the Hindu words, "Dobashias" which literally means "a man of two words" became a popular usage for the Nagas as "Dobashis".

With the gradual incorporation of the Naga tribes into the fold of administration, the appointment of new Dobashis for representing tribes having different linguistic groups and regions became increasingly necessary. To meet these requirements, more of them were recruited according to the needs of the government and in keeping with the tribal ratio that was maintained by the Government. As for instance in 1930, the tribal ratio of Dobashis in Kokokchung sub-division stood as follows: Aoas - 10; Lotha - 4; Semas - 4; Changs - 3; and Konyaks - 1. These figures strongly suggest that the ratio was maintained on the basis of the population of the tribes within a particular administrative centre. These Dobashis were the picked men of the Deputy Commissioner representing the various principal villages and tribes, their qualification being the enterprising ability of the individual to work as a

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2. GoO's Diary, D.R.O., Kokokchung, April 1930, see Inspection notes of J.P. Mills, Deputy Commissioner, Naga Hills.

3. Ibid.
spokesman of the people he represented and also the
knowledge to interpret broken Assamese, the Lingua-
franca through which the British government maintained
communication with the Nagas.¹

Powers and Functions of the Dobashis

The institution of Dobashis was an integral part
of British administration. Its personnel were paid colonial
employees² who were primarily used as a link between the
native population and the colonial administrative officers.
As native administrative assistants, the Dobashis were the
righthandmen of the colonial administration in the district.
Though their recruitment was made on the basis of their
individual resourceful character at the local level, they
were employed as handmaiden of British administration. As
medians of communication, they were entrusted with the
responsibility of furnishing district officers with native
news thus acting as informants as well as the personnel
of the intelligence department. All the government orders
to the tribes were communicated through them.³ In his
book, 'The future of the Assam Tribal Peoples', Sir Andrew


². For, Deptt. Pol-A, June 1872, no.510, K.N. 13. During
the early 1870's, the monthly pay of a Dobashi was
£.10 only.

³. Ibid.
Clow, Governor of Assam, made a comment on the appointment and function of the Dobashis as follows: "They are proposed by the people and selected by the Deputy Commissioner; the younger ones stay at his headquarters and the old ones in their areas. They may hear and decide cases which the village cannot finally settle but an appeal can always be preferred against their conclusion to the district officers."

Thus, in addition to their services as liaison between the government and their local people, the Dobashis were at the same time employed as native judges. Having been accredited with the authority of the Government, the Dobashis enjoyed the respect of the native people. As experts on native customary laws, the Dobashis also advised the British officers in the settlement of cases. Moreover, in local quarrels among the Naga villages, Dobashis were often despatched for timely intervention and pacification of the tribes. In 1944, a tribal war broke out between the Yimchunger village of Kitsukelong and a Sangtam village of Horui. As an agent of the Government, Hosukhu, a Dobashi of Mokokchung town, intervened and persuaded the two villages to enter into a peace agreement with the

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customary exchange of food and drinks. ¹

It should be noted that the services of the Dobashis were effectively utilised by the district officers in many other ways. They helped and strengthened the Deputy Commissioner in his administration of the district and enabled him to have free access to the local people in perfect security. Even his tours were escorted by the Dobashis, who did everything for the welfare of the entourage. ² The supply of ration and porters were under the efficient supervision of the Dobashis who were instrumental in procuring essential services and supplies from the inhabitants of the villages. ³

The importance of the role of the Dobashis went so high that under special circumstances the senior ones among them were given charge of the administration of the subdivision.⁴ Although such cases were rare, they indicate

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1. This information was provided by Holuvi, an Ex-Dobashi of Mokokchung, who accompanied Mezukhu at that time, during my interview with him in his residence at Mokokchung town on 4th December 1984.


3. For. Deptt. Pol-A, February 1876, no. 103.

4. D.C.'s Standing Orders, DNO, Mokokchung, November 1976. During the absence of the S.D.O., the senior interpreter was given the responsibility to officiate as the in-charge of the administration of the sub-division.
the extent to which the government could repose confidence in their loyal service.

The colonial administration thus effectively utilized the services of the native administrative agents for the perpetuation of their rule in Naga Hills. In fact, it appears that the colonial administration made progress because of the valuable services rendered by the native agents.¹

The District Officers

The overall administration of the district was under the efficient supervision of the Sub-divisional Officer and the Deputy Commissioner. These executive officers were exclusively manned by Europeans.² As executive agents, the district officials exercised a wide range of powers and functions.

The colonial administrative encouraged district tours as a means of promoting relations with the people and affecting 'civilizing' influence on them through constant contacts.

¹ According to Holuvi, during the British Raj, the British ruled in name only, otherwise the actual control over the people was in the hands of the Dobashis. Interview with Holuvi, op. cit., 4th Dec. 1984.

² Names of DC's and S.D.O.'s of Naga Hills district during 1881-1947, see Tables II and III above.
In 1982, emphasising on the importance of a tour by the district officer, C.A. Elliott, the Chief Commissioner of Assam, wrote: "I attach the greatest importance to constant and free personal intercourse between district officers and their assistance on the one hand, and that this intercourse is best secured when the officers are as little as possible at their headquarters and as much as possible on tours in the district."  

The general administration of the district was carried out smoothly during the district tours. The usual practice was that the people welcomed the visiting officers with presents - eggs, cocks, Modhu (rice beer) - and entertained the entourage with folk dances and songs. It appears that the offering of presents to the visiting officers was a compulsory practice which was imposed by the authorities. This can be ascertained from the comment made in 1898, by G. Headham, Sub-Divisional Officer, Mokokchung: "On arrival at Mododhya village I found the Gaonburas had supplied no foul or anything. My lunch had not been put up and no

1. For. Deptt. Foi-A, January 1882, no.135. The D.C. was supposed to spend 1/3 of the year on district tours. Thus for example in 1881-82 alone the district tours of Major Mitchell and McCabe, D.C.'s covered 102 days. Ibid., no.135.

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<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Mr. A.E.H. Sheworth</td>
<td>1880-82</td>
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<td>Mr. Fasson</td>
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<td>Mr. Brodie</td>
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<td>Mr. A.E. Davis</td>
<td>1886-90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mr. J.M.C. Maspratt</td>
<td>1890-93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mr. P.S.R. Anley</td>
<td>1893-94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mr. A.E.H. Shutteworth</td>
<td>1894-97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mr. E.D. Savi</td>
<td>1897-1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mr. Neel Williamson</td>
<td>1900-05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mr. W.C.M. Dundas</td>
<td>1905-09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Mr. J. Needham</td>
<td>1909-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Mr. C.H. Bell</td>
<td>1911-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Mr. W. Shaw</td>
<td>1912-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Mr. J.H. Hutton</td>
<td>1914-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Mr. J.P. Hills</td>
<td>1918-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Mr. H.C. Deaneby</td>
<td>1921-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Mr. J.P. Mills</td>
<td>1922-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Mr. C.R. Pawsey</td>
<td>1924-26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contd...

Sources: Taken from the Table of Deputy Commissioner's Office, Mokokchung.
Table II..contd...

Names of S.D.Os

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19. Mr. N.L. Bor, I.P.S.</td>
<td>1926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Mr. J.P. Mills, I.C.S.</td>
<td>1926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Mr. C.R. Pawsey, M.C., I.C.S.</td>
<td>1926-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Mr. Capt. G.S. Lightfoot, I.A.</td>
<td>1927-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Mr. C.R. Pawsey, M.C. I.C.S.</td>
<td>1928-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Mr. S.V. Lloyd Rees, I.P.</td>
<td>1929-32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Mr. J.P. Stewart, I.C.S.</td>
<td>1932-33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Mr. E.T.D. Lambert, I.P.</td>
<td>1933-35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Mr. H. Blah, A.C.S.</td>
<td>1935-36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Mr. W.J. Smith, I.C.S.</td>
<td>1935-37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Mr. H. Blah, A.C.S.</td>
<td>1937-39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Mr. P. Adam, I.C.S.</td>
<td>1943-44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Mr. H. Blah, A.C.S.</td>
<td>1944-46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Mr. P. Adam, I.C.S.</td>
<td>1946-47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Mr. G.W. Archer, I.A.S.</td>
<td>1947-48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE III

*Deputy Commissioners, Kohima, Naga Hills, 1866-1869*

**First Deputy Commissioner** - John Gregory

**Political Officers or Agents, Naga Hills:**

1. J. Butler 1869-1875
2. S.H. Davenport 1875-1879

**Deputy Commissioners, Naga Hills:**

1. Mr. T. Mitchell 1879-1881
2. Mr. R. McCabe 1881-1894
4. Mr. W.J. Reid, I.C.S. 1900-1907
5. Mr. A.W. Davis, I.C.S. 1907-1908
7. Mr. J.E. Webster, I.C.S. 1912-1913
8. Mr. W.C. Berners, I.C.S. 1913-1917

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*Source:* Taken from the Table from Deputy Commissioner's Office, Kohima.
breakfast and although told to supply at once, delayed another hour so I had to punish the village\textsuperscript{1}. The district officers travelled throughout the district, visiting one village after another, stayed in inspection bungalows, constructed for the purpose, met village chiefs, general public, built relations with them and settled disputes brought to them during the course of their journey.\textsuperscript{2} Moreover, in his general administration, the Deputy Commissioner had the power to make by laws. These laws were made often in the form of "Standing Orders".\textsuperscript{3} These orders of 'Dos' and 'Don'ts' were served on the public for the maintenance of law and order in the district.

Apart from the maintenance of law and order, the Deputy Commissioner was involved in all the multifarious activities of the district ranging from the supervision of the construction of link roads, collection of house tax, giving guidance for the improvement of agriculture, supply of medicine to the dispensaries, inspection of schools, etc.

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{S.D.O.'s Diary, D.R.O., Mokokchung, 31st January, 1898.}
\item Interview with A. Kevichusa, \textit{op. cit.}, 14th December, 1984.
\item As for instance, Standing Order No.1 prohibited sale of medicines other than provided by a qualified doctor, and No.2 prohibited distillation of liquor. See D.C.'s Standing Orders Nos.1-2, dated the 25th June 1923.
\end{enumerate}
Thus, summing up the role of the Deputy Commissioner in the district, Nari Rustomji wrote in 1983: "The district head (D.C.) was a jack of all trades... there was no field of activity that did not come within his purview".  

Besides the formal official functions, the district officer had to not only see that the people in his district lived peacefully but measures were devised to make them happy and prosperous.

In the matter of judicial administration, the Indian Penal Code and Codes of Civil and Criminal procedures were not in force in Naga Hills district. According to the Deputy Commissioner exercised a wide range of judicial powers as well. In his judicial functions, he possessed the powers of a session judge and exercised the powers of life and death subject to confirmation by the Chief Commissioner. Sentences beyond three years' imprisonment by the Deputy Commissioner were, however, appealable to the Chief Commissioner. The sentences passed by the Sub-Divisional Officer and other assistants could be referred to the Deputy Commissioner for revision within

sixteen days of their judgement. The nature of powers and functions of the Sub-Divisional Officer was the same as that of the Deputy Commissioner. Although he was the overall incharge of the sub-division, in his exercise of executive and judicial powers, he functioned as a subordinate of the Deputy Commissioner of the district. However, on the whole, the administration of the district, was under the general supervision of the Governor of Assam, who administered the Excluded Areas as the Agent of the Governor General of India. We reviewed the administration from time to time. As for instance, in 1938, Robert Reid, the Governor of Assam, visited Naga Hills district for 8 days; the entourage marching from Wagingmore bordering the Sibsagar district of Assam to Kohima via Lotha Naga country. Basing himself on his personal observation, he commented: "It gave me a good idea of what part at least of the Naga country looks like, and their problems in the way of cultivation, and so on. I have had before me a scheme which I should like some day to put into operation of getting an officer specially for agricultural work in the Excluded Areas, pressure of population in many parts

1. Allen, B.C., op. cit., p.64, Appendix I, p.10.
2. For detail, see Ghosh, B.B., Gazetter of Nagaland, Mokokchung district, pp.159-60.
and the necessity of preventing erosions point to the
great need of a change over from jhuming to terraced
rice cultivation and there are, I can see, many other
ways in which given the money and the staff, we could
do much to improve conditions amongst these primitive
people. A succession of Deputy Commissioners have done
a great deal of good work in this way, but as I see it,
we want someone to make a survey of those areas, decide
on a plan, and see that it is carried out.¹ This
observation of the Governor clearly reflected his official
responsibility towards the development of the Excluded
districts as well as the problem faced by the inhabitants
concerned.

V

The Colonising Agencies

The smooth administration of the districts could be
efficiently carried out only under condition of peaceful
acceptance of colonial rule. This required a transformation
of the attitudes of the Nagas towards their new rulers.
For this purpose military suppression had to be supplemented
with more sophisticated methods of subduing the spirit
and seducing the minds of the Nagas. Accordingly, along

¹. Linlithgow Papers, MSS, P.125/30, see letter from
   Reid to Linlithgow, 19 January 1938.
with the extension of active administration to the district, the British introduced a number of measures such as means of communication, taxation, education, judicial system, and public health. The development of all these involved the active participation of the people and, with this participation, they were in the process smoothly reduced to loyal subjects.

**Means of Communication**

Colonial administration could be carried out only with proper communication. This required building of roads linking all important outlying areas with the administrative headquarters. Accordingly, along with the extension of political influence, importance was given to the development of means of communication. Thus, the construction of strategic link roads closely followed the extension of political and administrative control.

It should be noted that the work on roads began with the re-occupation of Samaguting in 1866. Despite initial progress in making some link roads connecting Samaguting with Golaghat, Paponlongmai, Mosema and Wokha, for some years, there was no road which could be used throughout the year.¹ In 1876, Carney, the political

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¹ For, Deptt., Dol-A, September 1876, nos.1-13.
officer of Naga Hills, while suggesting more prudent measures to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, impressed upon him the imperative need for the further construction of road communications in Naga Hills primarily for the purpose of bringing the Nagas under closer British control. He wrote: "There is one thing above all other to be urged, that is pushed on of road; there can be no better success of introducing civilization than by opening out communication... with a people to whose main strength lies in the isolation and inaccessibility of their villages. Every bit of road made brings them more and more under our hand".1 Carney's policy was to use roads as a means of extending British influence and control over Naga tribes. This policy was approved by the higher authorities. In December 1876, the Secretary of State, in his correspondence with the Chief Commissioner of Assam, also emphasised the importance of road making. He said that the political agent, Naga Hills, "should exert any influence which he may possess over the villages within easy reach of Samaugting to prevent the recurrence of raids and outrages, and he should lose no opportunity of vigorously pushing on the work of road making."2

2. For Deptt. Pol-A, December 1876, no. 173.
Thus the initial policy for road building was to have military control as well as British influence over the tribes. However, notwithstanding early improvements in building roads, communication between the plains and the hills and with Manipur was extremely difficult, and this problem continued up to the year 1880. The absence of an all-weather cart-road between Kohima and Manipur and between the former and the plains of Assam was equally felt at the time of the Naga uprising of 1879-80. Even after the restoration of law and order, due to the absence of communication the political officers of Naga Hills had to face serious difficulties in provisioning the civil and military population of Kohima.1

In 1880-81, the improvement of transport and communications received the immediate attention of the local authorities. In 1881, Sir Stuart Bayley, the Chief Commissioner of Assam, while emphasising the importance of the establishment of communication between the hills and the plains, stressed the necessity of a reliable cart road between Kohima and the plains: "Till such road is constructed", he said, "our position will not be secure, the expense of feeding troops will be enormous, discontent

1. For, Deppt, Pol-A, August 1881, no.617. Also see Chief Commissioner's Memorandum on Naga Hills Affairs, dated January 29, 1881.
will continue. In the same year, the Government of India accepted the proposal and a new cart road was opened through Nambhor forest to Nichuguard. Similarly, in 1885 an improved system of communications was established by constructing a bridle path through Khonoma to Henima outpost, and from the latter across the Chuleni river to Semchor and Gunjong.

The incorporation of the Ao country into the Naga Hills District and its creation as a new sub-division in 1889-90 necessitated the construction of an inter-connected road. The construction of a good bridle-path from Wokokchang to Nakachari in the plains to Wokha, Longsa, Tamlu and from the latter part to Geleki at the foot of the Naga Hills, was at once taken in hand. Another bridle path went from Kohima eastwards to Chesiewjuma and was continued from that village to Shitumi in the Sema country. The Manipur rebellion of 1891 led to the making of a cart-road from Nichuguard to Imphal through Kohima, a distance of 122 miles. Thus gradually all the out-lying posts were

1. Ibid. See Chief Commissioner's Memorandum, Supplement to June 17, 1880.
4. Ibid.
linked with Kohima by good bridle paths, which were also extended into the Sema area. Comfortable Dak Bangalows, each at an approximate distance of 15 km., were also provided.1

These hill paths were constructed with impressed labour for which the workers were paid the minimal wage of five annas and four pice per head per day.2

The responsibility for the maintenance of road communications was with the Deputy Commissioner of the district. Each village was made responsible for the section of the path that passed through its land. Each village had to clear bushes and jungle on both sides of the road twice a year, to dress the surface once, to open up the drains and to remove obstructions from the road caused occasionally by land-slides and storms.3 In

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1. Home Deptt. (Confidential) Anglo-Vernacular News Papers in Eastern Bengal and Assam, 1910, part I, p.61. Rest houses popularly known as Dak Bangalows were constructed primarily to accommodate the touring gazetted officers, and yet sub-ordinate officers could also be accommodated provided they were not previously occupied by the former.


return for road maintenance, the villagers received Rs. 30 per mile per annum.¹

Having thus laid down a communication network throughout the district, the colonial administration could be carried out with a few civil servants and a limited number of policemen stationed at different strategic posts of the district.²

**House Tax**

One of the significant aspects of British administrative policy was the imposition of an annual house tax.³ It was levied on all Naga households within the district with the exception of the chief, ex-servicemen, widows and poor and disabled people.⁴

Although the amount of the tax seemed to be small, it had a potential significance attached to it, because with the payment of the house tax, Nagas also became

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., pp.63, 66 and supplementary note pp.28-29. With the S.O.C. at Kohima and S.D.O. at Mokokchung heading the administration of the district, the police stations and outposts were as follows: Kohima with a total strength of police force - 10; Henima outpost - 5; Zuba road post - 4; Nichuquard outpost - 5; Viswema roadpost - 2; Mokokchung - 100 (Naga Hills Military Policy Battalion) Tanlu - 50; Khonema - 25.

3. For details, see Chapter IV, Miscellaneous Revenue, pp.21-27.

British subjects. The areas brought within British influence were assessed at the rate of 3.2 per house. 1

Judicial

In the administration of justice, the High Court of Calcutta had no jurisdiction on the Naga Hills except in criminal cases relating to European British subjects. The Indian Code and the codes of Civil and Criminal Procedures were not in force. The magistrates were advised to administer justice in the spirit of the codes and not by their letter. 2

Although it was a policy of the Government to interfere as little as possible with the customs of the Nagas and to discourage litigation for the settlement of disputes, the Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills and his assistants exercised judicial functions as well. 3

Education 4

One important agency of British administration was education. It was used as an instrument of pacification

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2. Bengal Judicial Proceedings, August 1872, no.77.

3. For details, see the section on the Powers and Functions of the village chiefs and District Officers, pp.147-148, and of this chapter.

4. For details of it see Chapter III, pp. 145-146.
as well as civilization. The object of introducing modern education in Naga Hills was to train the natives for the service of colonial administration. With this purpose, the administration encouraged the establishment of schools in Naga Hills.¹

Although the administration was keen in opening schools, initially they did not directly shoulder the responsibility. Naga education was left to the care of the American Baptist Missionaries.² However, later in the first decade of the 20th Century, the government gradually took over some of the Mission Schools and opened new schools on its own. Consequently, the number of missionary educational institutions decreased and, correspondingly, the number of government schools increased.³

On the whole, education as a colonialising instrument was to a great measure successful, especially as it was an agent of peaceful change.⁴

1. Interview with Padmashri Mayangnokcha Ao, op. cit., 7th December 1984.
2. For details, Early Naga Education, see Chapter III, Cultural Policy, pp.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
Public Health

British colonial administration followed both a policy of suppression and attraction. They did not lose sight of the welfare aspect of their rule. To win over the people, not only coercive means were used but equally humanitarian services were sought to be provided. Government wanted to project British influence as a source of blessing to the natives with whom they had come into closer contacts, so that this would have a salutary impact on the rest of the tribes still living independently of their control. Consequently, the British sought to follow policies which would convince the Nagas of their benevolent attitude and good intentions.

Thus simultaneously with their re-occupation of Samuguting in 1866, medical facilities were provided to the Nagas with a well-equipped dispensary. The initial reaction of the Nagas was that of reluctance to come to the dispensary because of reliance on and faith in their indigenous medicine. However, gradual appreciation of the medical service provided by the dispensary developed as is evident from the statistics of the year 1875. That

year 63 indoor patients were treated at Samaguting dispensary; the number of outdoor patients receiving treatment was 699.\(^1\) The increasing appreciation and response of the people to medical facilities is evident from the increasing number of sick persons treated at the dispensary. The number of patients increased from 34 indoor and 569 outdoor in 1880 to 199 indoor and 972 outdoor in 1881. To further bring home to the people the good intentions of the British rule, the Deputy Commissioner himself took personal interest and his entourage on tours was often accompanied by a well reputed district civil surgeon, Dr. Borah, who treated sick persons on these tours.\(^2\)

With the formation of the Naga Hills District in 1882, a Civil Surgeon was placed in charge of the public health of the district. In the beginning the district had two dispensaries, one at Kohima and the other at Wokha, besides the charitable dispensary at Samaguting. In 1890, another dispensary was established at Mokokchung to cater to the needs of the inhabitants of that area. Along with the establishment of these dispensaries, steps were taken

\(^1\) Ibid.
\(^2\) For. Deptt. Pol-A, August 1882, no. 36.
to encourage vaccination. The absence of Hindu religious superstitions among the Nagas enabled the vaccinating staff to carry out their duties without any difficulty. ¹

Table below shows the statistics of further progress of medical service in Naga Hills district during the period 1891-1901. ²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>Kohima Subdivision</th>
<th>Mokokchung Subdivision</th>
<th>Total District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of dispensaries</td>
<td>1 3 2</td>
<td>1 1 1</td>
<td>4 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily average number of indoor patients</td>
<td>16.18 7.34 13.60</td>
<td>.. ..</td>
<td>16.15 7.84 13.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily average number of outdoor patients</td>
<td>30.36 15.20 36.87</td>
<td>5.76 23.18 30.33</td>
<td>20.96 60.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cases treated</td>
<td>1,081 4,275 10,651</td>
<td>1,274 5,659</td>
<td>1,081 5,549 16,510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations performed</td>
<td>11 121</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>27 42 11 148 161</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus by 1891, the district had four dispensaries at Kohima, Kokha, Samaguting and Mokokchung respectively. The statistics of the cases treated during the period formed show a

2. Allen, S.C., op. cit., Table xv, p.86.
significant and growing appreciation by the people of modern medical services.

In 1905, the Government upgraded the Kohima dispensary to 10 bedded hospital and Wokha to 4. However, the hospital at Kohima was running short of surgical apparatus while Wokha hospital and Mokokchung dispensary were hard pressed by accommodation problems. Nevertheless, the progress of healing service continued gradually although the extent of its operation in the district was in quantity negligible. At the same time, on the whole, there had been a steady increase in the development of medical services.

Table below shows the increasing number of dispensaries and Hospitals and the number of patients treated in the province of Assam.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Hospitals/ Dispensaries</th>
<th>No. of patients treated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1912-13</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>1,939,305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916-17</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>1,627,945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921-22</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>1,628,632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925-26</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>1,471,239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932-33</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>2,297,511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938-39</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>1,994,687</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Assam Administration Report, 1912-1938. The purpose of the above table is to show the growing trend of medical services in the province of Assam. District-wise statistics are not available.
The increase in patients indicated that the dispensaries were growing in popularity, whereas its decrease was attributed mainly to the reduction of sickness in certain localities as a result of the favourable climate and improved sanitary condition and to the establishment of private practice by qualified physicians and surgeons.¹

The number of hospitals and dispensaries fluctuated from year to year, while their increase was attributed to the establishment of more dispensaries and hospitals both by Government as well as private agencies such as Christian missionaries, and local boards, their decrease was due to the transfer of medical officers to military department which correspondingly resulted in the shortage of qualified staff and closing down of dispensaries.² Despite some fluctuation from time to time, the development trend was largely on the increase.

The Second World War disrupted the normal life of the people in the province in general and Naga Hills district in particular. Although the war disrupted the normal medical service, it continued to function in a unique way. Hospital camps were scattered all over the district under the charge

¹. Assam Administration Report, 1925-26, Chapter VI, p.35.
of both military and civilian doctors for treating the wounded soldiers and sick evacuees. ¹

The closing of the war was followed by the establishment of the Naga Hospital, which marked the zenith of the development of medical services in the district during the colonial period. In August 1944, Lord Wavell, Viceroy of India, visited Kohima.² While acknowledging the help of the Nagas to the allied forces in the recent fighting with Japan, he asked as to what reward the Nagas would like to take from the Government, C.R. Pawsey, Deputy Commissioner, Kohima, voluntarily responding on behalf of the Nagas, opted for a "Modern Hospital". The hospital was then established at Kohima and given the name, Naga Hospital.³


2. Wanderel, Moon (ed.), Wavell, The Viceroy's Journal, p.83. Lord Wavell recorded his visit of Kohima in a few lines: "I was told that 15 or 20 Nagas would come to meet me at Kohima, actually 200 or 300 turned up, a picturesque sturdy looking people. They brought gifts of spears and head-dresses and woven cloths and chickens and eggs. I had brought rum and cigarettes for them but they were a great many more than we had expected. The Naga did us extra-ordinarily well in recent fighting".

3. Interview with A. Kevichusa, op. cit., 14 December, 1984. According to Mr. & Mrs. Kevichusa, C.R. Pawsey bought a plot of land from the Tsutonuma Khel of Kohima village for $720 and initiated high school. But later on, the school was shifted to the Mission compound and the land was given for the construction of Naga Hospital.
Besides the government's contribution to the improvements of public health, the services of the Christian missionaries were unique in this humanitarian work. Healing, like preaching and schooling, was an integral part of the missionary work. Thus, soon after his arrival in the Naga Hills in 1876, Dr. Clark side by side with his preaching and teaching did healing work with allopathic medicines. Later, Christian medical missionaries and nurses provided medical services to the Naga, functioning smoothly though parallel to the Government hospitals and dispensaries. Besides treating patients, the missionaries taught Nagas the values of cleanliness and sanitation.

VI

Administrative Impact

In trying to assess the results and significance of British administrative policy in Naga Hills during the period, 1881-1947, the prevailing conditions in 1881 may be recalled briefly. The Nagas had by then been living


3. Ibid.
in village states*, a society secluded from contact with the outside world and influences. For our purpose, it is not necessary to discuss here the classical Naga society and Naga culture of the precolonial period which confronted British colonialism. However, as pointed out earlier, in dealing with their new subjects, Britain neither tried to implant her own culture by destroying the prevailing customs and local practices of the Nayas nor imposed its civil and political systems on the latter. What Britain attempted and succeeded in doing was the modification of those aspects of Naga culture and practices which did not conform to the interests of colonial administration.¹

Besides the suppression of obnoxious practices such as headhunting, slave trade and female-child infanticide, the government did not interfere with the native ways of life. On the other hand, the colonial policy was directed to the utilization of the native systems wherever possible and paying full heed to the jealous Naga effort to preserve their culture against the new forces of change.² However,

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* "Village States" means each village living independent of the others and with no outside control of interference in their own ways of life.

as is discussed in another chapter of this study, the American Baptist Mission, which prospered under the patronage of the government, brought about major changes in the fabric of Naga society during the period under study.¹

With the establishment of their administrative foothold at Kohima, it was but a matter of time for the British to incorporate more unadministered areas of Naga Hills into the pale of their power and influence. In the administered district, the tribes were no longer in isolation but brought under regulation and control by an all powerful outside authority which introduced a settled system of administration.²

Immediately following the introduction of effective administrative in the district, the most noticeable change was the respect for law and order imposed by the Government. As a matter of fact, it was this respect and perhaps awe for the colonial administration which persuaded the tribes to live at peace with one another. Thus, claiming success for their strategic occupation of Kohima in 1901, Aitchison wrote:

In February 1881 it was finally decided that the British position at Kohima should be a regiment permanently stationed in the hills, and the district administered as British territory. Since that date the history of the district shows the progressive establishment of peace and good order, and the quick submission of the Nagas to British rule. 1

The desire for peaceful living was expressed by Naga tribes in their voluntary request for extension of British administration over them. 2 Often the desire to live under the government was accompanied by their willingness to pay house tax. 3 They welcomed the new administration as it had brought peace and relative order in place of uncertainty and chaos which had reigned in the period preceding British conquest. 4 The response of the Nagas to the British rule was, as Verrier Elwin noted, "unexpectedly encouraging." 5


2. For, Deptt. Pol-A, February 1890, no. 155.

3. For, Deptt. Pol-A, January 1890, no. 508.


In December 1884, expressing satisfaction of British influence in the district, C.A. Elliot, the Chief Commissioner of Assam spoke highly of the efficiency with which McCabe, the Deputy Commissioner, Naga Hills, had handled the Naga situation.

The work which Mr. McCabe has done in civilising the Angami Nagas and in spreading among them a spirit of content and loyalty is almost unprecedented in the present generation and may perhaps not unfairly be compared with the influence exerted by the greatest man in Anglo-Indian history over the Santhals, the Shills, and the tribes of the Derojat... and he was met everywhere by pleasant, cheerful faces. Each of which when McCabe was seen, broke into smiles of recognition... the country is now to all outward appearances as peaceful and safe as a district in Assam.1

The Anglo-Naga relations appear to have grown stronger over time, which also signified popular appreciation of the new administration. The effect of administration on the Negas was proved by the fact that the British could command the loyal service of the Nagas in all the important regional as well as global wars in which they fought. In 1891, the Nagas served the British Government during the Kuki Uprising, Abor war (1893-94) and in the First World War (1914-1919) in which 2000 Nagas were taken to France as member of the labour corps. This cooperation culminated in the Second World War, 1939-45, in which the Nagas1

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1. For, Deptt, Extl-A, September 1885, no. E37.
contribution to the allied victory in the Eastern sector of India has been an acknowledged fact.¹

Speaking of the active support of the Nagas to the British, Field Marshall William Slim wrote: "These were the gallant Nagas whose loyalty, even in the most depressing times of the invasion, had never faltered. Despite floggings, torture, execution and the burning of villages, they refused to aid the Japanese in any way or to betray our troops. Their active help to us was beyond value or praise. Under the leadership of devoted British political officers, some of the finest types of the Indian Civil Services, in whom they had complete confidence, they guided our columns, collected information, ambushed enemy patrols, carried our supplies, and brought in our wounded under the heaviest fire and thus, being the gentlemen they were often refused all payment. Many a British and Indian soldiers of the Fourteenth Army who met them will ever think of them but with admiration and affection".²

Physical Impact

The first consequence of colonial administration was the partition of the Naga inhabited areas. Since colonial

¹ Slim William, Defeat into Victory, pp.341-42; For further reference of Abor expedition, see Elgin Papers, MSS, Eur. P.84/64, Telegram from the Chief Commissioner of Assam to the Foreign Secretary, Calcutta, 6th March 1894.
² Ibid.
policy was deliberately directed to suit its own system of expansion, with the introduction of their administration, areas inhabited by the Nagas were divided into various sectors — some were within administrative circles while others were left ungoverned or free to administer themselves.¹ Thus with the formation of the British district of Naga Hills, Naga areas were divided into the princely states of Manipur, Assam and NEFA (present Arunachal Pradesh) and, on the Eastern side, left with a loose boundary with Surma.²

This feature was to figure in the later policy of the Government of independent India, and I may briefly discuss it as an aside. Speaking of the 'Divide and Rule' policy of the British and the strong reaction of the Nagas to it, in May 1949, Debeshwar Sarma, a strong Congress leader from Assam wrote to Sir Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the Home Minister of India: "If you will kindly look to a

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1. For, Deptt. Estt.-A, January 1910, no.6. The Eastern Nagas (present Tuensang and Sen districts) remained unadministered until 1949, when for the first time the Government of India established a military post at Tuensang and gradually brought them under orderly administration. See Ghosh, S.B., op. cit., p.36.

2. For, Deptt. Estt.-A, X Branch, P.130-X/40. Surma Government note to the Governor of Assam to demarcate the boundary after the Second World War.
map of this area it will be found that the Mao Nagas live in the territory adjoining Indian Naga Hills, but included in Manipur. Those Naga territories did not formerly belong to Manipur but were included as a gift from the British. The Mao Nagas do not want to be with Manipur but seek to join their own people, i.e., Naga Hills... Similarly the Maram Nagas who want to join the Indian Naga Hills and they do not want to be tagged to the backwardness Manipur state which did not till now care at all for the improvement of the Hill people... The Tangkhul Nagas and the Mache Nagas have also grown less friendly to India of late. These Hills people require sympathetic and understanding treatment. It can be definitely said that due to a faulty policy pursued by the late Governor of Assam almost all the Hills people in those frontier areas have grown either unfriendly or less friendly.¹ Nevertheless, no measure was taken at this time to integrate the Naga tribes.

However, later, during the creation of the Nagaland state, the desire of the Nagas to bring their inhabited areas under a single administrative centre became more evident and strong. Consequently on 19 July 1960, the

¹ Sardar Patel’s Correspondence, vol.8, p.510.
Naga delegation headed by Dr. Imonglibe Ao met Prime
Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru at New Delhi and the 16-point
agreement was reached. Precisely vindicating the long
felt need of the Nagas, it included a clause for the
integration of the contiguous Naga inhabited areas into
the new state. Article 13 of the agreement says: "The
other Naga tribes inhabiting the areas contiguous to the
present Nagaland be allowed to join the Nagaland if they
so desire". However, soon after his return from Delhi,
he was assassinated by the Naga undergrounds signifying
their protest against the agreement between the leaders
of Naga people's convention and the Government of India.²

Impact on Village Administration

Though the British largely left the village administra-
tion to the native leaders, it also brought about some
important changes. The native leadership, which existed
loosely in the pre-colonial period, was recognised and
legitimised in the form of Headmen, and their appointment
was made where the system was found lacking.³ The new
administration reinforced this feudal structure of

2. Ibid.
leadership and integrated it into the colonial administrative apparatus. Consequent upon the recognition of the native leadership, it was institutionalized and infused with a certain dynamism. At the same time, the status of village administrative functionaries was changed significantly as they were given a quasi-official position and were no longer answerable to the village community of which they had been the representatives or servants.

In the interest of British administration, village administration was delegated with the powers to deal with petty local disputes, and yet, practically in almost every aspect of public affairs, the district administration invariably intervened in the name of maintaining law and order and its developmental activities. Thus although Government's policy was to interfere as little as possible in the internal affairs of the Nagas, this non-interference was superficial rather than real. Because its administrative machinery made inroads in the social structure of the village.

1. *Ibid.* As accredited persons in their villages, the Chiefs/Gombokuras became more powerful in their village administration being recognised as leaders both by the government and the villagers.

2. For details of the Powers of the Village Chiefs, see Appendices I & III.

Special government organs dealing with administration, education, agriculture and public health, had direct contact with the Nagas. The village communities were thus no longer left to manage their affairs without direct or indirect supervision. Notwithstanding the official position granting great deal of autonomy to the Nagas in their villages, the Government meddled in petty issues of all types. To cite an example, the Government forbade the felling of alders* in Jhum fields and ordered their preservation in the pollarded form.\(^1\) In another instance, the administration forbade fishing with cast nets in Doyang and Sagti rivers.\(^2\) Such petty cases highlighted the nature of the colonial administration which indulged in a measure of undue intervention in the internal affairs of the Nagas, even in aspects which did not pose any law and order problem for the Government.

Although different influences operated to undermine the social structure of the village community, to a certain extent the native system retained vitality at the village

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* A kind of tree specially good for the promotion of soil fertility.


level. As for instance, the village council still acted as a tribunal for the adjudication of petty cases, and the district officers intervened only in cases which the village authorities could not settle at their level of administration.¹

The next institution of local administration which was created by the British and had a lasting impact on the tribal administration was that of the Dobashis,² the personnel of which were recruited from the native population. Though appointed to interpret the tribal dialects, the Dobashis were also commissioned with the power to decide cases according to the customary laws of the tribes.³ They acted as liaison between the Naga community and their rulers. As accredited agents of the government, they had considerable influence over the affairs of the native people. They held a high status in the community because of the influence they wielded as the agents of the authority. This institution manned

1. See Appendix I, p.6.
2. Ghosh, S.B., Gazetteers of Nagaland, Mokokchung, District, pp.199-80. The Dobashis, although primarily appointed to assist the district administration, were found useful in the context of customary laws and other local situations. It was later institutionalised as Dobashi courts.
3. Ibid.
with prominent native leaders signified the inroad or intrusion of 'feudal system' into a more or less "class-less society". 1

Reformative Impact

The chief impact of administrative control was the virtual elimination of inter-village and tribal warfare within the district, and the gradual checking of obnoxious social practices such as head-hunting, slave female-child infanticide, slave trade. 2

Socio-Political Impact

Although colonial administration left the Naga territories scrambled over the administrative units of North East India, within the bound of British district of Naga Hills, it also had the positive impact of integrating the chronically unorganised Naga tribes. It was only under the aegis of the administrative symmetry of British Indian administration that the cohesion of the Naga tribes and their resurgence as an ethnic group of people began. 3 Thus with the acceptance of British rule

2. For details of reformative impact, see Cultural Policy, Chapter III, pp.104-116.
3. Historically Naga tribes were nowhere brought together as a tribal group but under the British India system of administration.
as a settled fact, a growing sense of unity was generated among the Naga tribes as a result of their common subordination to one supreme authority - Britain.\(^1\) The tendency towards the emergence and growth of common socio-political interests became more manifest by the formation of the Naga Club in 1918, and the individual tribal councils such as House of the Aos, Angamis, Lothas and Semas. All these semi-state formations worked as a gradual unifying force of the Naga tribes and awakened them to a new dimension of political consciousness culminating in the formation of Naga Tribal Council in 1945, and the Naga National Council the following year.\(^2\) The invasion and development of the new political ideas and their diffusion fostered the nascent spirit of nationalism as a unifying factor among the Naga tribes.\(^3\)

**Impact of Isolation**

The British Indian administration protected the Nagas from exploitation by the outside people. In their endeavour

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1. The formation of Naga Club in 1918, the tribal council 1945 and Naga National Council are all indication of their integrating aspect.


3. For details of this last process, see Chapter V, p. 7ff.
to maintain law and order within the district, the British sealed off the Naga Hills District in 1873 by the introduction of Innerline Regulation.¹ By this regulation the possible socio-economic exploitation of the Nagas by the plains people was effectively warded off. Thus speaking of this aspect of the impact of colonial administration, J.H. Hutton wrote:

Those tribes in Assam whose territory was surrounded and constituted into districts of British India are probably among the most fortunate of the primitive tribes of India in their relations with government... and have suffered comparatively little from exploitation by peoples of plains.²

On the whole colonial administrative policy of keeping Naga Hills isolated benefitted the Nagas in so far as it helped preserve and promote the Naga identity with all its consequences. As a corollary, although constitutionally Naga Hills was a district of Assam, for practical purposes it was never under the normal administration of the Province of Assam.³ As a matter of fact, Nagas continued

¹ See Appendix II, Barpuijari, H.R., op. cit., p.10. Under this regulation Nagas were, for the first time, formally enclosed and strict rules enforced for movement traffic in the District.
² O’Malley, L.S.G., op. cit., p.419.
to live within the reserved parameter of British district of Naga Hills devoid of normal practical administrative connection with Assam.\(^1\) Unsurprisingly, therefore, Nagas maintained an exclusive socio-political entity in a classical colonial situation.

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1. Ibid., p. 32.