Chapter IV

Changes brought about by socio-economic factors on socio-political institutions of the Angami Nagas

Like other tribal communities, the Angamis were closely-knitted and self-contained social units and their comparative isolation tended to foster their insular outlook and made them prisoners of customs and traditions. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to consider the Angami society as closed society. Indeed, change is inherent in the nature of society and no society can remain at a particular equilibrium point for all time to come. The role of socio-economic factors in affecting changes and modifications in tribal communities is well recognized. This chapter analyses the changes brought about by Christianity, education, Angami elites and changing economic activities on the socio-political institutions of the Angamis.

Christianity

Colonialism and Christian mission activities are two distinct entities that often move alongside to any new venture but opposed to each other fundamentally in their objectives and approaches.165 While the primary objective of the former

was predominantly economic, the latter aimed at transforming the socio-cultural and religious lives of the people. Nevertheless, both had one thing in common: they were often not welcomed in a strange land where they encountered opposition from the local traditions. As recent studies aptly stated “Missionaries followed hard on the heels of soldiers and administrators,”\textsuperscript{166} and in most cases “if the missions did not precede the colonial movement, they did follow in the heels of colonial powers.”\textsuperscript{167} The mission to the Nagas became a subject of discussion and a matter of urgency soon after the arrival of American Baptist missionaries to Assam in 1836. Major Jenkins, the then Commissioner of Assam, promised to give the missionaries all possible personal help and official assistance. Both Christianity and tribal society in general had distinct and clearly defined identities and cultural contours. Thus, their encounter, interactions and resultant shapes taken by them are bound to be interesting for various reasons.

Christianity was introduced into Northeast India over a century and a half ago. Though the tribals of Northeast India differed among themselves linguistically, ethnically and culturally, they also have in common many structural and cultural characteristics.\textsuperscript{168} For centuries, they lived in isolation from the


outside world and as a result had little contact with other communities. However, with the coming of Christianity, the tribal society in this region had undergone immense changes in its worldview, languages, cultures, social habits and economic activities. The process of interaction and change is still very much alive. While some customs and traditions relating to traditional faith and practices have become obsolete following the spread of Christianity, those relating to social structure have survived.

Christianity first came to the Nagas in the year 1839 and subsequently in the Angami area in 1878. Thus, began the work of the Baptist mission in the Naga Hills.\textsuperscript{169} Rev. C. D. King was the first Christian missionary among the Angami Nagas and Mr. Sieliezhü Sorhie as the first Angami converted to Christianity in 1885. The attitudes of the Angamis towards the early missionaries were very hostile in the beginning. The early converts also underwent untold persecution for embracing the new faith. The Village elders drove Christian missionaries, pastors and evangelists away from their villages and even those villagers who remained in the villages were denied many facilities as pressure tactics on them not to embrace and preach Christianity. The earliest Naga converts had to face tortures and oppositions from the villagers.\textsuperscript{170} Sanyū observes that those who converted to


\textsuperscript{170} Hokushe Sema., Emergence of Nagaland: Socio-economic and political transformation and the
Christianity had been persecuted or excommunicated by their Angami brethren. However, when the Nagas realized that Christian missionaries had no motive other than to render service to them in the name of God, they voluntarily offered themselves as converts to the new faith.\textsuperscript{171} Since the Nagas were fond of music and singing, the missionaries popularized Christian songs and music, which often paved the way for them to have easy access to the youngsters.\textsuperscript{172} One wonders why and how the Nagas gave up their fascinating and delightful old religion and embraced Christianity. In spite of their initial opposition, the Nagas of today are indebted to the pioneering missionaries for their work in the field of education, medical services, and humanitarian work. The propitiation of fearful spirits was very costly and beyond the means of many people. They believed that lack of such an appeasement always invited vengeance and calamities from the wild spirits. On the backdrop of such a socially obligatory and economically expensive religious beliefs and practices came Christianity. The Christian message of freedom from fear, superstitions and above all from wild spirits did appeal strongly to the Angamis. The most effective way of attracting the simple villagers to Christianity was by telling them about Hell-Fire. The central message was that all persons who were not Christians would be burnt alive forever in an undying fire after their death. As a result, many felt that it was safer to become a Christian

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{171} future, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1986, p.50. \\
\textsuperscript{173} Angelina Lotsüro., Op. cit, p. 75.}
in order to secure oneself from the dangers of Hell-Fire. The new Angami converts did away with much of the old religious traditions, some of which were now superfluous, but some of which are now seen to be irreplaceable loss. The British officials often complained against the missionaries for destroying the culture of the Nagas by restricting their participation in festivals, dances and drinking of Zu. Christianity for the new converts was a religion from uncertainty to certainty, from darkness to light; from death to eternal life; damnation to salvation.\textsuperscript{173} The success of Christianity not only depended on the superimposition of Western religion on the Naga religion, but also the condemnation of the Naga way of life.\textsuperscript{174} Consequently, Christianity has become one of the greatest factors, which brought about changes among the Angamis, touching every aspect of their socio-economic and religious life.\textsuperscript{175}

Before the advent of Christianity, animism was the religion of the Nagas, which dominated substantially the temper and texture of social, economic, political and cultural life of the Nagas. The Angamis believed that there was an unseen divine power behind the creation, the course of events and destiny of man. A.W. Davis wrote, “The Angamis have practically no religion”.\textsuperscript{176} In contrast, the

\textsuperscript{174} Ibid. p. 32.
\textsuperscript{176} For details, See, A.W. Davis, A Report on census of India 1891. Vol-I.
Angamis recognized a supreme creator called *Terhuopfu*. However, the coming of Christianity, their whole concept of religion underwent a great change. Gradually, the wave of Christianity reached all the Angami villages including the four villages under study. Mr. Vithse Nakhro was the first convert from Jotsoma village in the year 1905. Mr. Lhourüvi of Chiechama village and Mr. Viriho Kikhi of Viswema converted in 1910 and 1928 respectively. Although Christianity in Medziphema came late, Mr. Vineizo became the first convert in the village in the year 1942.

With the successful spread of the gospel, a shift in the socio-economic, cultural and religious institutions of the Angamis was inevitable. The effects of Christianity were more on socio-economic, cultural and religious institutions rather than political institutions. According to N. K. Bose, conversion to Christianity is the main factor for change in the tribal culture both in terms of economic and socio-cultural life of the people. P. T. Phillip also said that Christianity is responsible for bringing about changes in the Naga society. The advent of Christian missionaries on the Angami society brought about a great change in the outlook of the people because the missionaries were completely...
against some of the Angami customs and traditions, which they considered were against Christianity and not healthy for the people to practice or follow. As a result, most of the socio-political institutions of the Angamis, which helped the functioning of the village, had undergone changes.

The institution of *Kichuki*, which was considered one of the most important institutions of the youths, began to decline as the Christian missionaries forbade young boys to attend *kichuki*. In the words of H. D'Souza, the biggest change brought about by the Christian missionaries in the Naga village life is that they forbade the converts to live in their Morung *(kichuki)*. The reason often given against the institution of *Kichuki* was that it fostered sexual promiscuity. Haimendorf quotes a Baptist pastor questioning as to how a Christian boy could sleep in these houses of the heathen (*kichuki*) as this was against Christianity. M. Alemchiba is also of the opinion that, the function of the *Kichuki* declined with the ban on head-hunting, because the necessity of *Kichuki* as a guardhouse, was no longer there. The art of singing and dancing taught in the *Kichuki*, which coloured the social lives of the Angamis suffered a setback because the Christian missionaries regarded everything done in connection with the tribal ceremonies

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185 Ibid.
and festivals as an act against Christianity. Christian hymns in Western style began to take the place of old songs and many dances, which celebrated head-hunting raids. The handicraft for both boys and girls taught in the Kichüki has now become indispensable. The abolition of the Kichüki therefore destroyed a valuable disciplinary agency. It also affected the grooming of young people for future Phichü kehou, as Kichüki was a training ground for the young boys in the socio-political, economic, as well as religious and customary practices in the society. The role of Kichüki had largely been taken over by the schools, colleges, churches and village organizations.

Christianity also not only led to the disappearance of some social and communal institutions but also led to the emergence of the spirit of new individualism leading to the erosion of family (kikru) and clannish ties (chienuo). Christians began to defy the rigid orders of the village authority and broke away from both the old religion and fellow villagers, which helped in the process of village disintegration. The stress on personal salvation introduced a new individualism in place of the former community spirit.

Zatho, which was an important socio-economic and religious function for enhancing the social prestige of the people, was abolished. The missionaries objected it presumably because the animals consumed during Zatho were not just

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slaughtered but sacrificed to appropriate invocations from the spirits.\(^{189}\)

Nevertheless, for the Angamis, spending the accumulated wealth for redistribution to the poor was a pride as well as for receiving \textit{theja} from \textit{Ukepenuopfù}. Further, feasts or festivals were always accompanied by large quantity of \textit{zu}, providing of which was considered a sign of hospitality. In contrast, the missionaries enforced a strict ban on the drinking of rice beer. Giving up of rice beer was considered as a sign of commitment to the new faith.\(^{190}\) However, many people found it difficult to abstain from drinking wine as Haimendorf said; “Although the spirit is willing, the flesh is often too weak. And not all converts find it easy to remain true to their resolution; many drink secretly.”\(^{191}\)

\textit{Kekinyi}, which had been an important diplomatic feast between \textit{chienuo} of different villages and between different warring villages have been modified with the coming of Christianity. While the warring villages exchanged spears as a sign of peace, Christians now exchanged the Bible as a sign of peace. The Christian Angamis have not been able to lay off their belief in the spirits and many of them still participate in the \textit{penie}. They fraternize with non-Christians during feasting, hunting and observe \textit{penie} and honour the days of commencing sowing, transplanting and harvesting paddy.\(^{192}\) This is partly true in reference to Viswema

village. In certain *penie* days such as storm, severe hailstorm, accidental deaths etc, the villagers still observe *penie* with the non-Christians.\(^{193}\)

The authority of village *Phichū-u* was directly affected as the newly convert Christians began to defy the orders of his authority since they gave primary importance of membership to the Church over clan and village affiliation. *Theja* that was considered most appropriate to be given by the *Phichū-u* by the virtue of his post and age declined with the introduction of the Church pastors. Thus, the village *Phichū-u* and the *thepfū Phichū-u*(s) also lost their authority to the missionaries in matters of some customary practices. Christianity had direct impact on the institution of the *Phichū-u* and *Kemevo* who interceded with *Ukepenuopfū* for blessings to the villagers. Before the coming of Christianity, *Phichū-u* and *Kemevo* appeased the spirits who were believed to have caused destructions, epidemics or natural calamities by performing certain *nanyū*. The Baptist Christian faith professed no mediator between the individual and God. Thus, the role of pastors undermined the role of *Phichū-u* and the *Kemevo*. Christians refused to pay customary contribution of meat to their village elders who had not turned Christian. Ultimately, the government intervened and passed an order for payment of customary meat as usual.\(^{194}\) *Phichū-u* and *Kemevo* announced a number of *penie* and *kenyu*, which controlled the life cycle of the

\(^{193}\) Interview with Mr. Kidesc. age 37. Viswema village on 14 February 2009.

Angamis in the past. Any violation of these *penie* and *kenyū* had to face severe consequences. However, with the non-observance of *penie* and *kenyū*, their roles had declined. Neikha is also of the opinion that not all *kenyū* that their ancestors observed were negative. In fact, *kenyū* that were observed by them coincides with the Bible. It was a *kenyū* to tell lies, to steal, to show disrespect to the elders, not to help others in times of need etc. In the olden days, nobody used lock and key but there was no fear of anybody stealing or robbing their houses because everybody adhered to the *kenyū* strictly. Today, the Christians therefore need to learn and imbibe the good values, which their ancestors have taught them.\(^{195}\) According to H. D’Souza, *genna* was not a mere taboo (*kenyū*) with only a negative meaning, but had positive aspects too. In the positive sense, it meant the celebration of life, of re-building one’s energies, one’s life; in short it was a day to rejuvenate as Christian on Sunday fulfils the same function of rest and rejuvenation physically and spiritually.\(^{196}\) Thus, all rituals connected to an individual from birth to death and even the concept of life after death underwent a great change.

Old customs of *kiya* ceremony was also replaced by Christian traditions, like getting married in the church solemnized by the Pastors, wearing the gown and veil by the bride, etc. *Kiya* is also instituted for life by a covenant before man

\(^{195}\) Interview with Mr. Puthavil Neikha, age 48, Rev. Pastor Viswema Baptist Church on 2 January 2006.

and God. The advisory function of the Themumia also lost its role in the decision making of the village authority because the converted Christians considered such practices of seeking the help of Terhomia as evil and sin. Mr. Megoyazo Keyhie, a Themumia himself converted to Christianity because he strongly believed that these are all against the ethos of Christianity. Mr. Pezau Seyietsu of Jotsoma village, though not converted to Christianity does not practice themu, anymore because of the influence of Christianity. Even the non-Christians rarely consulted him. Terhümavi were accorded higher status in the village because of their bravery. As a sign of their bravery and achievements, certain attires were assigned to them. However, their importance declined after putting an end to head hunting because of Christianity. Smith states how the Angami men complained; “The younger men complained bitterly that the British, by stopping their raids and so preventing them gaining works of distinction, have made it impossible for them to get wives.” Such complaints were not surprising as women always preferred to get married with warriors. To the Angamis, the greatest work of the Christian missionaries was that the constant feuds and head hunting of the people were put to an

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197 Interview with Mr. Megoyazo Keyhie (who was a Themumia), age 72, Medziphema village on 25 February 2009.
198 Themu refers to the practice of Themumia
199 Interview with Mr. Pezau Seyietsu (who was a Themumia), age 70 on 17 April 2008.
end and replaced it with the new doctrine based on love, peace and goodwill.201

Christianity also came with medicine, a stronger remedy for their sickness and diseases. According to the traditional belief, illness was due to the displeasure of the spirit. The offended spirit had to be identified propitiated by observance of *kenyũ* and the offering of sacrifices by the *Phichũ-u* or Head priest. However, with the coming of the missionary doctors, the treatment offered was not only much cheaper than the traditional sacrifices but also more effective. This was interpreted to mean that the religious power of the missionary doctor was greater than that of the traditional Priest. Thus, with radical Christianization of the people, the religious powers and functions of the *Phichũ-u* has not only lost its importance but also shifted to the pastors and the other church leaders.

As Westerners who shared the colonial notions of cultural superiority, the missionaries and the native assistants they recruited played a major role in undermining tribal traditions, some of which could have been retained without compromising essential Christian values. Protestant missionaries condemned the brewing and consumption of *zu*, animal sacrifices, tribal dances and music. Christian sexual mores were enforced and tribal dresses associated or signs of

201 Interview with Mr. Puthavil Neikha, age 48, Rev. Pastor Viswema Baptist Church on 2 January 2006; Interview with Mr. Megovotso Kuotsu, age 55, Pastor, Baptist Church Medziphema village on 26 February 2006; Interview with Mr. Vinitha Nakro, age 68, Assistant Pastor Christian Revival Church, Jotsoma village on 3 January, 2006.
sexual activities or head hunting. Thus, conflict arose between the Christian converts and those who sought to live by old ways, while the traditional leaders lost their authority to the missionaries in the matters of customary practices. The religious powers and functions of the indigenous institutions were shifted to Church and Church leaders, who began to enjoy considerable social authority.

**Education**

Social transformation among different tribal societies of Nagaland was indeed very rapid. What accelerated this process was primarily the spread of education. By 1904, Rivenburg, the father of the Angami alphabet, had produced the Gospel of John, the Acts, an Angami Primer, an Arithmetic book and a book of 100 hymns in Angami dialect. In addition, from 1913 to 1914, the Baptist Mission was running 14 schools. Thus, education began to open up the minds of the Angamis into a new world, new ideas and change. The spread of education in Angami society gradually changed its complexion as well as character. The colonial education not only revolutionized their cultural ethos but also led them to a new dimension of valued system of life. With the progressive dissemination of modern education, the outlook of the people, which formerly remained narrow significantly, developed and along with it, the people began to appreciate modern

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202 Interview with Mr. Yieselie Riipreko, age 64, Assistant Pastor Christian Revival Church, Cheichama village on 5 February 2006.
education. This has led to an increase of enrollment in the educational institutions. The development of broader and healthier outlook of the people enabled them to accept the new trend of change in their society. Because of the modern growth of education, the Angami society witnessed gradual tendency for social cohesion, the characteristic of which was conspicuously lacking among them in pre-colonial period.

Prior to the colonial administration, the Angamis depended exclusively on oral traditions and the concept of any written script was unknown to them. The elders who interpreted the history, culture and tradition of the Angamis administered the village administration. Thus, the villagers respected seniority in age and bravery. Today, educated persons are given more respect, although the village elders are consulted on issues relating to customary laws. The Phichü kehou, which played the most important role in the village are recognized as the Ex-officio members of various constitutional bodies such as the Village Council. They are no longer the sole authority to decide the affairs of the village but other members who have modern education dominate them. Since the State Government of Nagaland has given pressure to the village authorities that all records of the village administration, utilization of funds, orders etc be written in black and white for transparency and future reference, villagers prefer to send
people having modern education and communication skills in English as their representatives.

In addition, a more organized administrative framework has replaced the old traditional political institutions, which confined only to the village level. The disadvantages of living in independent and isolated villages dawned upon the Angamis and the feeling of tribal unity surfaced, primarily through those who had the benefit of missionary school education. This feeling and idea of unity found expression in the shape of student’s conferences and Christian associations. Education has also enabled them to remove ignorance and superstition, which kept them narrow and isolated, and led them to a broader worldview thereby, rendering the traditional system of administration more and more irrelevant since it was limited to chienuo, thepfu and rüna levels.

Every household was in itself an educational institution, educating the children in the way they should grow up to be good and successful homemakers and warriors. Home schooling was mostly supplemented by their dormitory experience where both boys and girls learnt social customs of their own.204 The introduction of colonial education, however, disrupted the indigenous system of

204 B. B. Ghosh., Gazetteer of Nagaland. Mokokchung District, pp.72- 209. In the dormitories, the girls learned cotton spinning, spindling, folk songs and dances. The boys on their part learned making of bamboo baskets and various other handicrafts, folk songs and dances, martial art both for defensive and offensive purposes etc.
learning at Morung.\textsuperscript{205} Education also affected their religious beliefs, behavior, customs and habits. Consequently, the educated Angamis, who were converted to Christianity, were largely responsible to the native conversion for they acted as pastors, teachers and native evangelists.\textsuperscript{206} As a result, the role of Phichii-u and Kemevo in performing religious functions began to decline as more and people that are more educated converted to Christianity. The spread of modern education have tended to demolish traditional barriers and isolations and are facilitating the growth of modern outlook based upon rationalism, liberty, equality and fraternity.\textsuperscript{207}

**Changing economic activities**

Land and forest were primary economic resources of the Angamis. The use of land was not only to produce food but also to produce surplus food. The laden of social prestige by individuals was only by accumulating sufficient surplus produce to afford the lavish sacrifices and feasts. In other words, it is not the economy of selfish and greedy accumulation of wealth but accumulation with the idea of sharing. This was an indication that the private property had a strong social dimension among the Angami Nagas. The people were largely engaged in

agriculture. The methods of cultivation practiced among them were jhuming, also known as the ‘slash and burn’ or ‘shifting’ cultivation. However, the methods of terraced cultivation were also found among the Angamis, besides the Tangkhuls, the Maos, the Chakesangs, the Rengmas and the Zemis. Other forms of economic activities were rearing of domestic animals such as cows and pigs, dogs and chickens. The village society was so organized that the basic requirements of food, clothing and shelter were guaranteed to all its members. Thus, generally speaking, the Angamis were self-sustaining and provided themselves well for their basic needs. Thus, agriculture and animal husbandry were their basic occupation. The pre-colonial pattern of the Angami village economy that the British encountered was in the main primitive economic units with a system of subsistence agriculture, which provided them with barely enough for their needs. The economic condition of the people that prevailed during the early decades of British rule provides an insight into the pre-administrative economy. Most of the Nagas have sufficiency of food and clothing, but there was little accumulated capital, and some villagers had difficulties in raising the very moderate revenue imposed on them.

208 According to 1901 census, 93.8 percent of the district population was returned as agriculturalist.
The means of production were decentralized and therefore the relations of dependence were not created within the system of production. Their household economy was self-contained and the food grains produced were largely consumed at home. However, the productivity in the agrarian sector was low and production was not sufficient to stock, and thus the economy remained fragile.\textsuperscript{211} Save for occasional exchanges, the tendency was to produce for the direct consumption of the producers. Surpluses were exchanged between groups or members of groups. The producers themselves exercised control of the means of production and labour. Everyone worked for an immediate need. Thus, the pre-colonial economy had not progressed much but was just sufficient for each family. Although, agriculture was their principle occupation, these farmers were also part time artisans. There was no separate artisan class. Therefore everybody made their own necessary articles such as \textit{Mekho}(basket), \textit{Zoprie}(mat), \textit{Mekhu}(wooden plate), \textit{Theba}(bench), \textit{Thezü}(bed), \textit{Zharü}(husking plate), \textit{Li}(earthen pot) and all the household needs were produced according to their domestic requirement which they learn from \textit{Kichüki}.\textsuperscript{212} Regarding their dress, women folk used cotton; spun them into threads and cloth was woven for family needs.\textsuperscript{213} Making of handicrafts, weaving of clothes and their processing as household industries were done when primary agricultural work permitted.

\textsuperscript{211} W. Robinson., \textit{A descriptive account of Assam}. Calcutta, 1841. p. 390.
\textsuperscript{212} Interview with Mr. Pfümirini Nakro. age 80, \textit{Phichimia}, Medziphema village on 26 February 2006.
\textsuperscript{213} Ibid.
The use of money as a medium of exchange was introduced only by the colonial administration and hence, there was no significant monetized system of trade in the pre-British period.\textsuperscript{214} Thus, they engaged primarily on agricultural activities as their main stay economy. The colonial administration which resulted in the introduction of “law and order” in the district accelerated the progress of agriculture and had an encouraging impact on its economy relatively. Earlier, it was the practice for all able-bodied men to guard the villages and fields for security reasons.\textsuperscript{215} Another notable impact on the agricultural economy was the promotion of the more scientific method of terraced cultivation. Although this method of cultivation was indigenous for the Angami Nagas, the government as a measure to check jhum cultivation encouraged this method. As a result, terraces cultivation became popular.\textsuperscript{216}

Trade and commerce, which were insignificant during the pre-colonial period, received impetus with the introduction of British administration. The pre-colonial trade was mainly based on barter system. However, it gradually changed to cash medium during the colonial period.\textsuperscript{217} Even costumes were also bartered for land and animals. One such example was \textit{Keno}, a kind of belt and a necklace

\textsuperscript{215} W. Robinson., \textit{A Descriptive account of Assam}, Calcutta, 1841, p-389. (Anarchical social condition compelled the tribes to be always ready for assault or self-defence and accordingly, it was the custom that the women should cultivate the field and the men prepare for battle).
\textsuperscript{217} Assam administration Report, 1882-1883, Part I-B, p. 10. In this year alone, the Angamis and the Lotha Nagas imported goods worth Rs. 35,612.
made by seashells. It was valued so much because it was not easily found. Since Keno could be brought only from Calcutta, the rich could only afford it. It was bartered with bigger animals like cows or lands because of its high value. The introduction of money in Angami area was clearly narrated by Mr. Pfürhicha in the following,

“The British introduced money in 1825. Since the people did not know the value of money, the British take the villagers into their custody for few days. While releasing them, they would tie a red cloth on their arms and gave them money in terms of one paisa to eight. The British would tell them that they would be able to buy anything with the money given to them. However, since they did not know money earlier, they could not quickly follow the language of the white people and could not follow their instructions. Therefore, the British again used to take them into their custody and repeated the same process. Later, some of the people who traveled to Calcutta were able to buy the Keno with the money given to them by the British. They were excited and came back home with those goods. This had influenced the villagers and slowly money was popularized.”^{218}

The villagers were given contract works, although the villagers refused to take up such works. The people who took up contract works early were being able to accumulate their wealth and became known not only in their villages but also to

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^{218} Interview with Mr. Pfürhicha, age 61. Phichimia, Chiechama village on 6 February 2009.
the other parts of the Angami area.219 The improvement and the extension of the means of communication had significant repercussions of the economic life of the people. People of different parts became increasingly inter-dependent in their economic needs. With the development of the adequate communication facilities, they were no longer the sole consumers of their own produce. However, earlier their trade had been conducted in small local markets with the prices subject to variation from place and from time to time.220 The introduction of monetization had far-reaching effects. According to Imchayanger, the outcomes are “the political turmoil, economic instability, social disintegration and loss of identity”.221

The opening of communications, schools dispensaries and the introduction of money as a medium of exchange changed the economic life of the Nagas. Hitherto, wealth was assessed in terms of land and the number of Mithuns (Bos Frontalis) owned by a person. Although, trade and commerce was not encouraged in proportion to the pace of the administrative expansion, the establishment of an orderly administration helped in fostering trade and commerce in the Naga Hills. The integration of Naga Hills with the British Indian Empire and the subsequent development of roads and towns pushed the markets in the hill areas. As a result, the border markets did not remain as the only trading stations. The barter economy

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219 Interview with Mr. Mazielihuto Nakhro, age 72, Contractor Jotsoma village on 20 April 2008.
was replaced by money economy and the merchants’ community penetrated in the Naga Hills. The entire trade at Kohima was in the hands of a small number of merchants. There were altogether eighteen shops in Kohima, out of which, the Marwari merchants kept thirteen shops during the year 1904. Foreign goods and finished products began to appear in the markets. Indigenous goods were differentiated and people began to develop a fancy for foreign goods. Currency was made available to the local people. Payments for labour, salary, commercial transactions etc, were now made through medium of cash. The payment of land revenue and house tax in cash revolutionized the complete socio-economic system of the state. Women, as well as men undertook trade. Naga men and women work in large number as government employees. A very interesting scene of present Naga economy is women’s engagement in business. A large number of Naga women including the Angami women run business, importing huge quantities of foreign articles from neighboring countries.

In the Kichüki, youths learnt blacksmithy, weaving, basketry and other necessary articles such as earthen pots, wooden plates, bamboo cups, spoons, earthen jars etc. Now these articles have been replaced with modern articles like aluminum, steel glass, plastic and foreign products. The present generation is not interested in learning the traditional crafts anymore because the readymade goods

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imported from near and far are cheaper and better in qualities. Therefore, the
need to learn the traditional crafts in the kichüki declined with the changing
economy in the Angami society. Peli, which formed the backbone of economic
development also declined as modern methods such as tractors are used. Animals
like cows and buffalos are tamed to plough the fields, which also contributed to
the economic life of the people.

The new economy has also brought in new occupations requiring specific
skills, knowledge and training. As a result, a shift from agrarian occupation to
other occupations becomes necessary. Hence, a large number of Angami youth
are employed in the government institutions. Women, who were mostly confined
to their domestic works and fields, have now widened their horizon to other
occupations. Thus, changing economic activities in many ways affected the
institution of thethsü. Kiya, which was a simple affair, gave fewer burdens to the
groom for managing the marriage feast. With new occupation and the
introduction of money, the marriage feasts have become more elaborate,
involving a lot of money and slaughtering of a large number of animals for
feasting. Thema and thesa are still accepted in double and triple amount, of what,
were given in the past. The leisure time spent at the thehouba to sit and chat has
become a thing of luxury for the people who are in service as well as in business.
The institutions of Tsiakrū-u, Tekhusekrū and Liedepfû in performing
ceremonies in agricultural fields also declined with the decline of agricultural occupation. *Penie* and *kenyū*, which were strictly followed in their traditional society, are now considered as a hindrance to the economy of the people.

**Emergence and role of Angami elites**

The concept of middle class is a modern concept and peculiar to the capitalist mode of production and property relations. Middle class is a heterogeneous social order, which contains different functional and occupational groups. Although diverse in their callings, they possess similar social values, attitudes and behavior pattern. The emergence of middle class in India was a natural consequence of the colonial rule. We can trace the following broad categories of middle class. In the first category, falls that class which the colonials themselves patronized. It was realized by the colonials that external forces could never operate in a society unless the internal forces is not receptive of the same. The elite class, picked up from the native aristocracy and patronized by the British, served as the receptive agents. The latter become instrumental in two major colonial motives; in preparing a social base for colonial expansion and in containing any reaction that might well arise against the colonials. In the second category falls, the industrial middle class, this side by side with industrial

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223 K. Alam., “The Emergence of Industrial Class in Assam,” in Seminar on *Emergence and Role of Middle Class in North East India*. Shillong, 4-5 December, 1979, p. 1.
entrepreneurship also took part in the political machinery. In the third category, fall the nationalists who pleaded non-violence for national liberation. In the fourth category fall, the middle class revolutionaries pleading the path of violence as the only path for the emancipation of the masses.\textsuperscript{224}

The attempts at conceptualizing the middle class in Indian politics have often led to diverse and contradictory viewpoints. As such, it is but natural that in trying to trace the origin and growth of such a class in tribal society, one is bound to encounter diverse problems. The absence of caste as a factor in tribal social life and the more or less egalitarian build up of tribal society are, but a few points, which tend to make the issue more complicated. In fact, the tribal society was in many ways an egalitarian society due to various reasons such as abundance of land, common possession and use of cultivable and pasture land, absence of inter-tribal trade in general, minimum complexities of social life. The emergence of the middle class from the tribal society under study can neither be traced in the above categories, nor does it have much deep-rooted historical tradition. While the activities of the above categories of middle classes centered on a cleavage, mainly economic in character, the activities of the middle class in a tribal society cannot be immediately explained in terms of any conflict having an economic content. The reason is obvious. They felt the impact of colonial rule at a much later period.

and that also indirectly. The British policy towards them was one of least interference.

The emergence and growth of elites in the Angami society have been attributed to Christianity, advanced form of economy and education. Because of Christianity and education, many Angamis received vocational, medical and legal education. The Angami elites primarily constituted of the bureaucracy, businessperson ranging from affluent government contractors to big shopkeepers, and persons belonging to various professions such as medicine and teaching. Among these sections, the bureaucracy is the most important. The small elites that finally emerged in Angami social life had its roots neither in the landed aristocracy as was common in other parts of the sub-continent nor did it evolve through commercial development. It was linked with the spread of western education primarily at the initiative of Christian missionaries and the rise of professions. The growth of Angami elites was slow as the British did not encourage and finance for higher education for the masses. Moreover, the plight of business and enterprise in the hills was much worse, although there is some evidence of accumulation of wealth by some hill men in the British period. The only avenues open to this elites were service and professions. It is only recently
that some educated men are turning to business, and even, mechanized agriculture. This holds true in the case of the Angamis of Nagaland.

The Angami elites became instrumental in bringing political consciousness beyond the village levels as they along with other Naga elites spearheaded the formation of the Naga Club, Tribal Council and the Naga National council. Due to education, they became the most innovative, creative and articulate in their society. They became the leaders in the development of language and literature, infusing new ideas in religion and became instrumental in bringing about political and revivalist movements. The Angami society is not an exception. Elites are not only influential, but also a dominating group, and the interest of the elites depends on what ideology they wish to represent or to promote.

Angami elites have replaced the Phichü kehou who had very little mobility, were conscious only of their kikru, chimuo, kinship, and attached great significance to traditional nanyü. The elites are the most influential because of their economic, political and social status. Today, almost every family has an educated person who influences their parents, runa and the Phichü kehou. The elites because of their education and monetary power are brain behind many of its

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226 The formation of Naga club in 1918, the Tribal Council in 1945 and the Naga National Council are all indications of their integrating aspect.

socio-economic-political activities, although the elites in many cases became exploiters of the ignorant masses. The formation of the Angami Gazette Officers Union is one example of elites replacing the physically brave men, and the formation of Angami Women Organization is one such organization, which represent the Women elites in the society. Since the elites are economically powerful, they are more respected than the traditional leaders.