Chapter III

Changes brought about by Colonial rule, Village Councils and Village Development Boards on socio-political institutions of the Angami Nagas

The socio-political institutions in different parts of the world had certain similarities in their origin, development and functioning. However, Colonial rule and constitutional bodies in the post-colonial period brought about a number of changes on socio-political institutions in different parts of the world. The Angami Nagas of Nagaland are no exception. The Angamis were isolated from the outside world but found no difficulty in governing their villages because of the traditional socio-political institutions, which existed in their society. The British broke their isolation from the outside world. They were the first among the Naga tribes who encountered the British, on 18 January 1832. They initially resisted the entry of the British, but the British were able to establish themselves in the Angami territory mainly because of their superior fighting weapons. The administrative policy of the

142 Ibid.

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British was to secure the allegiance of the hill tribes to maintain law and order in the hill areas. They had nothing to gain much economically from the Naga Hills but they had to control the Angamis and other Naga tribes to protect their own economic interests in the valley of Assam from where the Nagas carried out regular raids. The British policy was not to interfere with the traditional way of life of the tribals, their customs, practices and their traditional institutions. Instead, the British evolved a method known as the system of ‘internal management’. Under this system, the traditional chiefs and traditional institutions were allowed to rule their people under the supervision of the British Political officer. With the expansion of the loose British administration over the various Naga tribes, and the establishment of the Naga Hills District in 1866, the British government brought the different Naga tribes under one administration either directly or indirectly. Thus, the introduction of the British administration first brought the different Naga villages under one rule.

Changes brought about by British Rule

Gaonburas

The Angamis, unlike other Naga tribes had no recognized chiefship, but *Phichü kehou* (informal council of elders) who had limited authority over the

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143 The system of internal Management had its origin at Bhagalpur Hills in Bihar introduced by Augustine Cleveland as early as in 1789. The system was experimented in Northeast India with some modifications by David Scott in Garo Hills.

villagers. The role of the elders was mere advisory and as a result, the younger generations who acted as village force sometimes played important roles particularly on matters relating to tribal warfare. The immediate task before the Political Officer was therefore to select one or two Gaonburas from each village. It was felt that without a chief for each village, the work of administration would be immensely difficult. Earlier in 1847, Captain Butler, had appointed one Sezwal, \(^{145}\) who had authority over all Angami tribe. The main duty of the Sezwal was to supervise the activities of all the Angamis. At the beginning of 1882, the British appointed Gaonburas to assist the colonial administration in carrying out their respective village administration. The intention was to make them loyal agents of the colonial administration at the village levels. Thus, the institution of Gaonbura brought into being a semi-official functionary in every village to act as their agent, tax collector and liaison officer between the colonial administration and the traditional village councils. The Angamis had no tradition of paying house tax, but under the British rule, it became compulsory for them.\(^ {146}\) Initially the house tax was Rs. 2/-per household but was further increased to Rs. 20/-per household.\(^ {147}\) Though they did not get a monthly salary, a red blanket was issued to them once in three years. Further, they were exempted from house tax and a rebate of 5 percent commission was given.

\(^ {145}\) An officer employed for collection of revenue.

\(^ {146}\) Interview with Mr. Rügelie Nakhiro, age 72, Head Gaonbura, Jotsoma village on 4 August 2006.

\(^ {147}\) Interview with Mr. Visalhou Räpreo, age 73, Gaonbura, Chiechama village on 7 February 2006.
to them from the revenue collected. With increasing reliance on the office of Gaonburas, the customary hold of the Angami elders over the village began to decline as the appointment of Gaonburas for life not only brought in an element of extra village authority but also infused the cult of chiefship, which was unknown in the Angami society.

Initially, there was no resistance for such exogamous institutions like Gaonbura and Dobashis because they had rather helped the “traditional” administration to work smoothly. The indigenous or pre-British Angami polity was a loose democracy and their social structure was egalitarian in character. The values of their social and political institutions had enabled them to survive the stress and strength of time and circumstances. Initially, the imposition of the British rule did not change the village administration much as the Gaonburas did not enjoy more powers than the former Pehumia (Phichü kehou). However, the appointment of Gaonburas for life infused the cult of chieftaincy or even bureaucracy and brought in the element of extra village authority in village affairs. Justice and police administration ultimately passed over to the colonial administration. In the administration of civil justice, the Gaonbura and the village authorities along with the village elders in the council were empowered to try cases but with certain

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148 Interview with Mr. K. N. Pusha, age 78, Gaonbura, Viswema village on 1 February, 2009.
reservations. Firstly, they were not allowed to try suits in which a native of the plains or native of another village was a party. Secondly, all suits were decided in open durbar, in the presence of the parties and at least three witnesses.

**Dobashis**

The difficulty of communications and judicial administration influenced the British to introduce the institutions of *Dobashis* in 1869-70,\(^{151}\) when they were officially called “Residentiary Delegates.” As the term implies, either they were able to communicate with the government officials in Assamese or broken English and conveyed government standing orders to their fellow tribemen. They were interpreters who enjoyed certain powers and privileges and gradually became custodian of customary laws. Thus, *Dobashis* were appointed to act as intermediaries between the British administrators and the villagers or the tribal people in general. Similarly, they conveyed the problems, views and ideas of the villagers to the government officials.\(^{152}\) Consequently, the British sought their help while giving judgments on matters relating to village disputes. Thus, they were paid and employed not only to interpret different dialects but also customary law, leading to decision of cases in the courts.\(^{153}\) The *Dobashis* (DBs) were allowed to go out on tour to various areas of the villages and settled cases regularly. They also

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accompanied the British administrators who visited their areas of administration once a year and assisted them in deciding cases. As the *Dobashis* could hold clear-cut adjudication powers, the post of *Dobashis* was much sought after not because the pay was high, but the prestige was great. However, at the village level, all kinds of disputes except heinous cases like murder continued to be settled and adjudicated *Phichü kehou* in the case of the Angamis. The *Dobashis* were the most useful tools used by the British officers to act as intermediaries and to look after their respective villages according to the wishes of the British.  

**District Administration**

The third institution adopted by the colonial administration was the District Officer who supervised the overall administration of the district. The district officers, who did not directly interfere in the internal matters of the Nagas, in fact, framed all policies and directions were given to the *Dobashis* and *Gaonburas*. Further, since the Europeans exclusively held these offices, a non-Naga began to involve in their village administration for the first time. Another new development was that historically, there had been no district level council in the traditional Naga society. In contrast, each Naga tribe occupied its own specific territory independent from other tribes with village administration as the highest form of organization. With the introduction of district administration, every Naga village had adopted a common

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154 Interview with Mr. Visalhou, age 73, *Gaonhura*, Chiechama village on 7 February 2006.
system under the direction and supervision of the district officers. The district officers travelled throughout the district, visiting one village after the other, met village Gaonburas, public, built relations with them and settled disputes brought to them during the course of their journey. Apart from the maintenance of law and order, the Deputy Commissioner was involved in all the activities of the district ranging from the supervision of constructing link roads, collection of house tax, giving guidance for the improvement of agriculture, supply of medicine to the dispensaries inspection of school etc. In his judicial functions, the district head possessed the powers of a session judged and exercised the power of life and death subject to confirmation by the Chief Commissioner. However, the whole 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. According to Nari Rastomji, “the district head was a jack of all trades; there was no field of activity that did not come within his purview.”

Thus, the British government transformed the polity of the Angami Nagas into three-layer system not directly but indirectly to suit the convenience of the government to maintain good relations with the Nagas. They adopted certain customs and tradition in selecting Gaonburas and Dobashis. No doubt, before the British colonized the Naga Hills, each village was independent, and the traditional

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156 Bengal Judicial Proceedings, August 1892, No. 77.
*Phichū kehou* was the sole authority to frame policy and maintain law and order of the village. Nevertheless, there was no common policy among the tribes. The British colonization introduced a system, which every village had adopted as a common system and administered under the direction of the District Officer. During the pre-colonial period, the *Phichū kehou* covered executive, legislative and judicial powers but the appointment of the *Gaonburas* by the colonial government made them responsible in all matters relating to the village like a village chief. Similarly, the *Dobashis* also appointed by the colonial government enjoyed a higher level as he had to acquaint the British officers with the customary laws and practices. It was also his duty to inform the District Officers about the response of the Nagas to the colonial rule. It was definitely a far-sighted policy of the colonial government to introduce the institutions of *Gaonburas* and *Dobashis* for consolidating their control over the Nagas. The introduction of District administration restructured the traditional Angami polity into a completely different direction in that the chiefs and village elders who enjoyed supreme authority without any interference was demolished.

**Evolution of Village Councils**

Nagaland, which became the Sixteenth State of the Indian Union in 1963, has special constitutional protection provided under Article 371(A). It provided that no Act of Parliament in respect of religious or social practices of the Nagas, their
customary laws and procedure, administration of civil and criminal justice involving decisions according to Naga customary laws and ownership and transfer of land and its resources would apply to the state without approval from the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland. It is in this context that the role of the Village Council assumes significance. The Village Council is the overall authority for the administration of justice within the village. The State of Nagaland has been exempted from the purview of 73rd Amendment of the Constitution, due to the existence of local self Government activities through Village Council and Village Development Boards.

The Nagaland Village Council Act 1964 was the first legislation enacted by the Nagaland government to administer the affairs of the village, to impart justice to all the members of the village, to promote harmony and cordial relationship between the thepfi or chienuo in the village and to enforce the directives given by the government. Thus, the main functions are to act as an instrument of the government and try all civil and criminal cases within the jurisdiction. A Chairman assisted by the Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, village members, Gaonbura, and Area Council member heads the Village Council for a period of three years. The Nagaland Tribe, Area, Range and Village Councils Act of 1966 provided for the creation of a Tribal Council for each tribe and an Area Council for Kohima and Dimapur, which was repealed by the Nagaland Village, Area and Regional Council Act of 1970.
This Act of 1970 established Village Councils in every village having a population of not less than one hundred. In 1978, a new act was passed which did away with the Regional Councils, while the duties and powers of the Village Councils were more elaborately defined including that of constituting a Village Development Board. In 1980, statutory rules were promulgated to cover the latter also. The Nagaland Village Council Act 1990 abolished the Area Council.

**Village Council**

Under the Nagaland Village Council Act, 1990, every recognized village in Nagaland, established according to the usage and customary practices of the population of the area is required to have a Village Council, with a five-year term unless otherwise dissolved by the state government. The state government may extend the term of the Village Council by a notification in the gazette for a period not exceeding one year at a time. The Act also provides that hereditary village chiefs, *Gaonburas* and *Angs* should be Ex-officio members of the Council with voting rights. The Village Council chooses a member as Chairman and can select or appoint a Secretary of the Village Council who may or may not be a member of the Village Council. If the Secretary is not a member of the Council, he does not have voting rights. Thus, Nagaland evolved from a three level system to a single tier local system known as the Village Council.
Powers and Duties

The powers and duties of the Village Council as per the Act is to formulate
development schemes, to supervise water supply, roads, forest, education and other
welfare activities. The Village Council also has the power to borrow money from
various sources. It has the power to administer justice within the village in
accordance with customary laws and practices. It is given full power to deal with
internal administration of the village. The village council shall have the following
powers and duties:

i) To formulate village development schemes; ii) To help various government
agencies in carrying out development works in the village;

iii) To borrow money from the government, banks or financial institutions for
development and welfare work;

iv) To take development works on its own initiative or on request by the
government;

v) To apply for and receive grant-in-aid, donations, subsidies from the government
or any agencies;
vi) To provide security for due repayment of loan received by any permanent resident of the villages from the government, bank or financial institution;

vii) To lend money from its funds to deserving permanent residents of the village and to obtain repayment thereof with or without interest;

viii) To forfeit the security of the individual borrower on his default in repayment of loan advanced to him or on his commission of a breach of any of the terms of loan agreement entered into by him with the council and to dispose of such security by public auction or by private sale;

ix) To enter into any loan agreement with the government bank and financial institutions or a permanent resident of the village;

x) To realize registration fees for each litigation within its jurisdiction; to raise fund for utility service within the village by passing a resolution subject to the approval of the state government; Provided that all monetary transactions shall be conducted through a scheduled Bank or the Nagaland State co-operative Bank;

xii) To constitute Village Development Board and to initiate preventive measures in the event of an epidemic.

The Village Council is empowered to administer justice within the village in accordance with Naga customary law and usages. In case of disputes between villages falling in different areas or districts, two or more Village Councils may
settle a dispute in a joint session. The village Council is the auxiliary to the administration having full powers to deal with internal administration of the village. No transfer of immovable property could be affected without the consent of the Village Council. The Village Council is subject to the Central Superintendence of the State Government/Deputy Commissioner/Additional Deputy Commissioner or Sub-Divisional Officer (Civil) in-charge of the Sub-Division, Extra Assistant Commissioner or Circle Officer.

**Changes brought about by Village Council**

The Nagaland Village Council Act, 1990, which established the Village Council for every recognized village, revived a single tier local system on the pattern of traditional village administration. The role of the traditional leaders (*Phichū Kehou*) has been sidelined in that they are recognized as Ex-officio members of the Village Council. However, the method of choosing the members of the Village Councils as per this Act continues to be in accordance with the prevailing customary practices and usages. The villagers choose the members of the Village Council for a five-year term, which was not the practice in their traditional society. The members of the Council of Elders in the Angami traditional society held positions for life. The choosing of the Village Council Chairman by its members is not democratic in the
real sense of the term, although the practice of choosing and selection of leaders was unknown to the Angamis. Another significant change is the introduction of the post of Secretary in the Village Council through selection.

In the olden days, the *Phichū kehou* settled all-important matters pertaining to the village without any outside interference. In contrast, the list of the Village Council members is sent to the government through the Extra Assistant Commissioner/Sub-Divisional Officer (Civil) for approval. Further, the state government can dissolve the Village Council before the expiry of its term or can extent its term by one year. The Village Council is subject to the Central Superintendent of the State Government. While in the past, seniority in age was the main criteria for holding positions, the prescribed age for becoming a member of the Village Council is 25 years as per the Nagaland Village Council Act 1990. Unlike in the past, most of the members of the Village Council are from the younger generation. The villagers generally choose educated persons as representatives of their *chienuos* and *thepfis* to the Village council. The Village Council is made the highest authority in the village administration.

When there is any issue between individuals pertaining to theft or robbery or petty cases, elders of the *chienuo* settle the disputes. However, matters of complicated cases are referred to the Village Council, which facilitate and set the date for the dispute to be heard. The Judiciary Board of the Village Council and the
Gaonburas would settle the matter. When there is dispute between and among chienuos in a runa, the elders of the other chienuo along with Gaonburas and the Judiciary Board settle the dispute. In case, the parties to the conflict do not accept the decision, they go to the Area Public Organization such as Western Angami Public Organization (WAPO), Southern Angami Public Organization (SAPO), Northern Angami Public Organization (NAPO), Chakhro Angami Public Organization (CAPO) or the Dobashi court. When there are disputes among different thepfū (khel) the Chairman and Secretary of each thepfū (khel) along with Gaonburas and the Judiciary Board settles the dispute. However, if the parties are not satisfied with the verdict, the matter is referred to the Dobashi Court or their respective Area Public Organizations. The Area Public Organisation or the Dobashi Court decides disputes between the runas. Overall, the Village Council has largely taken over the role of the Phichū kehou. The Village Council functions as the highest court in the runa and function as the custodian and manager of village common property. However, the Village Council, like the traditional Phichū kehou in the Angami society comprises of male members of each family in the village.
Village Development Boards

The Village Development Board is a statutory body functioning under the Village Council. Declared as “Financial Intermediaries” or “Non-Banking Financial Intermediaries,” Village Development Boards are synonymous with the concept of decentralized grass root level planning. It was first conceived in 1976 by A. M. Gokhale, the then Deputy Commissioner of Phek District at Ketsapomi village in Phek district of Nagaland. On seeing the success of the Ketsapomi Village Development Board, an intensive interaction was initiated with village elders, Council members and public leaders during the period from 1981 to 1982. Based on overwhelmingly positive response, the concept of Village Development Board was accepted. Accordingly, a general conference of all Village Council Chairman and Village Development Board Secretaries was convened at Kohima from 20 to 22 May 1980, where mass scale adoption of Village Development Boards in the state was taken up. The Nagaland State Assembly passed the Village Development Boards in 1980 under clause 12 of Section 12 of the Nagaland Village and Areas Council Act 1978, which was amended in 1994. The concept institutionalized with the enactment of Village Development Board Model Rules, 1980. The concept, which was initially

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157 In Nagaland, 21 out of 52 blocks are unbanked covering 421 villages. Thus, VDBs have declared as “Financial Intermediaries” or “Non-Banking Financial Intermediaries” to integrate credit mechanism for faster economic development in rural areas.
extended to all the existing 918 recognized villages in 1980-81, is at present extended to all the 1083 Village Development Boards of the State.\textsuperscript{158}

### Salient Features

The salient features of the Village Development Boards are:

All the permanent residents of the villages constitute the central body of the Village Development Board;

i) There shall be a Management Committee to manage the affairs of the Village Development Boards for a period of three years. A quorum of not less than 51\% of the Management Committee is required to pass resolutions.

ii) The Village Council concerned chooses the members of the Management Committee of the Village Development Board. The members of the Management Committee (MC) may include members of the Village Council and women members would constitute 25\% of the total members.

iii) The Deputy Commissioner of the District is the ex-officio Chairman of all the Village Development Boards under his jurisdiction. All funds received by the Village either as grant-in-aid and matching cash grants are operated by the Village Development Board but only with the sanction of the Village Council.

iv) The chairman and the secretary of the Management Committee shall jointly operate all cash accounts maintained by the Village Development Board. Thus, all funds/cash transactions need to be cleared by the Ex-officio Chairman (Dy. Commissioner) before the Village Development Board can draw the same for various developmental purposes.

v) All funds/accounts are operated jointly by the Chairman/DC and the Secretary of the Village Development Boards;

vi) Village Development Boards are to maintain their Fixed Deposit Accounts as this forms the main basis for the existence of the Village Development Board;

vii) Funds received and program/scheme selection are taken up during the monthly meeting. A panel of auditors approved by the Chairman audits the Village Development Boards accounts annually.

**Basic objectives**

The basic objectives of Village Development Boards are;

i) To make each of the 1083 VDBs as vibrant, with powers to take decisions and implementation of schemes within the guidelines both for State and Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS);

ii) To enable themselves to mobilize its internal resources for investment in various income generating and economically productive activities;
iii) To check migration of educated unemployed rural youth to towns by ensuring self-employed opportunities through their involvement in taking up income generating and economically productive activities in the rural areas;

iv) To gradually transform the rural areas into the standards of semi-urban areas in so far as availability of the basic common facilities is concerned and

v) To facilitate acting as financial intermediaries to manage their own rural credit and loan activities

Grant-in-aid

Grant-in-aid to the VDBs is a state sponsored scheme introduced during 1980-81 for the creation of minimum infrastructure and special employment programme in every recognized village in Nagaland. The Grant-in-aid is allotted each year to the VDBs based on the taxpaying households. The initial allocation was Rs. 100 per households during 1980-81. At present, it increased to Rs. 800 per households,\(^{159}\) to ensure that each citizen of the State is equally involved and provided for in all rural development activities. This is the only assured fund provided for taking up development activities best suited to their requirements for the villagers. This program ensures participation of women by earmarking 25% of the Grant-in-aid allotted to each VDB for their development programs. Another 20% and 55% of the

\(^{159}\) Ibid. pp. 2-3.
fund is also meant for the youth and general welfare in all the villages. To ensure that the benefits under the programs are not deprived to small villages, a minimum cut off ceiling @ 66 household for all small villages has been fixed. It has been well established that a number of Developmental Programs which have resulted in the creation of durable assets including infrastructure have been made possible mainly through this unique program

**Implementation**

It is entrusted with assisting the village in formulating and implementation of development schemes on an annual basis. The funds released are being collectively pooled for implementation of the schemes for the benefit of the entire community. Unless unavoidable, all work under the VDB is executed by the entire community. The entire process of development in the village is transparent. The Deputy Commissioner (DC) is the Chairman of all VDBs in the district. Every VDB has a bank account in which the DC and the VDB Secretary are joint signatories. The profits are either shared equally or kept in the village account. Through the involvement of VDBs, several major schemes have been successfully implemented. Some of the schemes implemented by the Rural Department through VDB are, Grants-In-Aid (GAI), Matching Cash Grants
(MCG), Additional Grants in aid, National Saving Certificate Post Office Time Deposit (POTD), Indira Awaz Yojana (IAY), Pradhan Mantri Gamadoya Yojana (PMGY-GA), Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY), Swarnjayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY) which are Centrally sponsored as well as State plan sponsored schemes. This has been made possible by way of contribution of free community labour organized by VDBs to ensure that schemes are completed.

**Changes brought about by VDBs**

Many have considered the Village Development Boards (VDBs) as the beginning of women participation in the decision-making body for the first time as one-third of the total members of VDBs is women. Further, there is a provision for reservation of 25% of the total grant to the village for women’s programs. This is a major change in that the traditional institutions had shunted women to domestic arena rather than involving them in the decision-making process. In addition, the functioning of VDBs is more transparent than the traditional village administration because it is mandatory for all VDBs to hold monthly public meetings for review and monitoring of ongoing projects. However, the VDBs revived the colonial pattern of administration in that it makes the Deputy Commissioner (DC) or Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) of the district as the ex-officio Chairman. The study reveals that the establishments of Village Councils and Village Development Boards...
have not only replaced the limited functions of the traditional village hierarchy but also shifted to wider and modern trend of 'development administration.' In contrast with the traditional socio-political institutions of the Angamis, the Village Councils and the Village Development Boards has enlarged the scope of community participation in development and welfare programmes. The Secretary of the Village Development Board is also made as the members of the Communitisation programmes. The main qualifications for a member in both the bodies are no longer based on age, gender and lineage as it was in the traditional society but on having knowledge of the administration of the village and government offices. The establishments of Village Councils and Village Development Boards have not only replaced the limited functions of the traditional village hierarchy but also shifted to wider and modern trend of 'development administration.' Many have considered the Village Development Boards (VDBs) as the beginning of women participation in the decision-making body for the first time as one-third of the total members of VDBs is women. The induction of women in this institution is a departure from the traditional Angami socio-political institutions, which had shunted them to domestic arena rather than involving them in the decision-making process. Further, provision for reservation of 25% of the total grant for women’s programs and welfare is a major change in that the traditional institutions not only limited the role of women but also ignored their welfare and development. The funds have helped the women folk in
setting up weaving centers, piggery, and rice mill, etc. which are income generating and give opportunity for employment of women.\textsuperscript{160}

The functioning of VDBs as compared to traditional socio-political institutions is more transparent in that it is mandatory for all VDBs to hold monthly public meetings for review and monitoring of ongoing projects. The announcement of yearly allocation, names of beneficiary of schemes in a general public meeting, and recording of meeting resolutions, make the VDBs transparent and accountable. This was in complete contrast with the traditional socio-political institutions. The minutes of such meetings are submitted to the DC regularly. This entire procedure provides an ideal platform for unusual interfacing between the financial institutions, the government, and the villagers. Any withdrawal is authorized by the Village council in the form of resolutions signed by all the VCs and VDB members.

The VDBs revived the colonial pattern of administration in that it makes the Deputy Commissioner (DC) or Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) of the district as the ex-officio Chairman. In contrast with the traditional socio-political institutions of the Angamis, the Village Councils and the Village Development Boards has enlarged the scope of community participation in development and welfare programs. The Secretary of the Village Development Board is also made as

\textsuperscript{160} Interview with Ms. M. Nakhro, age 43, Secretary, Women Organization, Jotsoma, on 4 March 2008.
the members of the Communitisation programs. The main qualifications for a member in both the bodies are no longer based on age, gender and lineage as it was in the traditional society but on having knowledge of the administration of the village and government offices.

Since its inception, the VDB has established itself within the firmament of the Naga village set-up. One can discern the reason why its strength lies in its simplicity and logic, easily acceptable to the Naga ethos and psyche. This aided the transition to practical application of the theories of micro-level planning and de-centralization. Although initially set up to execute work under the department of rural development, today the VDBs have become the indirect instruments for most field level departments, covering the entire gamut from Public Health Services to Roads and Bridges to essential Public Services like Power, Water Supply etc. within the village. While the Village Council is part of the traditional milieu Angami Naga society, the VDB is an effort at dovetailing the former into a development framework. VC and VDB are structurally strong, although functionally there is a dichotomy between them. The VC has strong recognition rooted in tradition and is able to exercise influence on traditional spheres of land and family disputes, social and cultural sanctions, etc, but it has not been so successful in appropriating the VDB structure to take control over development resources and activities. Thus, there is a dichotomy at the village level itself.
wherein the strong traditional structure is unable to benefit from its advantage when it comes to the development processes offered by the state. In case of transgression in the social sphere, the NC was able to pass strong sanctions, but in the development arena, they have not demonstrated any such sway to bring to book the offenders. The consequence of this is that development suffers.

**Communitisation**

Nagaland, since its creation, has witnessed many changes brought about by societal action and official policy interventions. The latest initiative taken by the state government is the unique concept of Communitisation in order to build partnership between Government and the people through delegation of management responsibilities. Indeed, moving on from traditional institutions of governance, Nagaland is in the midst of a very innovative experience in democratic governance. The Nagaland Communitisation of Public Institutions and Services Act, 2002 has enlarged the scope of community participation in development and welfare programs in areas such as education, health, power, rural power supply, rural tourism, roads, forest, sanitation, rural childcare. The concept of Communitisation came about with the initiation of the government, but the responsibility was given to the villagers. The State with its unique concept of Communitisation wanted to build a partnership between the government and the people through delegation of management responsibilities to the community so that the performance of the public utilities is
improved. The salient features of the Communitisation processes are that a representative committee of the community to own and manage the communitised institutions; the community responsibilities include checking attendance of staff, repair and maintenance works, purchase of books, medicines, receiving funds from government for salaries of the staff and disbursing the same after operating the principle of ‘No work, No pay.’ However, the transition to democratic institutions has brought about changes in the functioning of traditional institutions. The system of Communitisation firstly experimented in the field of education. This program started in the year 2002 with a vision that, when the villagers are given responsibility to administer themselves, they would do better. Some villagers responded early and some later. Medziphema village responded in the year 2002\textsuperscript{161}, Viswema in 2002\textsuperscript{162} and Chiechama village in the year 2003.\textsuperscript{163} Jotsoma village embraced this system in the year 2004.\textsuperscript{164} However, it is found that of all the four villages under our study, Jotsoma village has responded well to this program. Under this program, a Village Education Committee (VEC) is formed. The total number of the committee differs from village to village, but, in all the villages, the compulsory members are the

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\item \textsuperscript{161} Interview with Kepelhubei Chakrūno, age 43, Chairman, Village Education Committee, Medziphema on 30 December 2006.
\item \textsuperscript{162} Interview with Mr. Ketobu Vitsu, age 30, Khel Games & Sports Secretary, Students’ Union Viswema village on 2 January 2006.
\item \textsuperscript{163} Interview with Mr. Vibilie Metha, age 50, Chairman Village Education Committee, Chiechama village on 22 December 2006.
\item \textsuperscript{164} Interview with Mr. Kepelhuto Nakhro, age 36, Former Students’ Union President, Jotsoma village on 4 August 2006.
\end{itemize}
Secretary of the Village Development Board, the head teacher of the Government Primary schools, a representative from women, a representative each from all the churches and few educationists. The chairperson of the VEC is elected from amongst its members who have the knowledge of the administration of the village as well as the administration of the Government offices. Their term of office is for three years. The VEC is also given the power to introduce any vocational subject in the schools like music, language etc. The concept of Communitisation in contrast with the traditional institutions has enlarged the scope of community participation in development and welfare programmes. It has affected the role of the traditional leaders, as it did not even co-opt them and instead make the Secretary of the Village Development Board, the head teacher of the Government Primary schools, a representative from women, a representative each from all the churches and few educationists as its members. The main qualifications for a chairperson is based on having knowledge of the administration of the village and government offices and not on age, gender and lineage as it was in the traditional society.