CHAPTER - VI

PERSPECTIVES AND RESPONSE TO NAGA INSURGENCY
There has been substantial research on the Naga tribal literature. It indicated in a stress that has generally been in the form of our response to the (supposed) oddities of tribal behaviour and attitude (than the otherway round). Much of the tension and misunderstanding in the state's relation with tribes has arisen from the fact that, we are only ready to react to tribal intransigence, when confronted with their practices and attitudes. We do not sufficiently consider and weigh their reactions (within the context their environmental framework).

There are various tribal groups in Nagaland. Each of these tribes have, through centuries, evolved their own distinct pattern of culture, language and code of laws. All of them have (untill recent times) succeeded in maintaining their identity despite modernization around them. The differences between these tribes are, partly geographical and partly dependent upon their level of socio-economic base that exist. The impact of these factors are inherent in their political aspirations and ideology(see chapter II and IV).
Viewing the environmental influence and the British occupation of the Naga tribal belt, the area has had witnessed a succession of events that had the tendency to give into the changing conditions and circumstances. This, ultimately exposed the operational effects of administration. The most precipitating event was the manipulation by extremist leaders, who were deluded by the fact that the interest of the Nagas lay in the independent Naga statehood. Looking at the other way round, it can also be inferred that it was not only the succession of events but also a concatenation of events, such as urban growth, spread of developmental activities and subsequent contradictions, that induced uneasiness and unrest in the rural areas (where the insurgents were supposedly to have a stronger base). With the development of each individual Naga group, the social process was initiated embryonically as a stimulus. This was probably introduced by enigmatic action within the Naga tribal groups, that enabled them to acquire characteristics that was influenced by the environmental factors.

1. The term 'Environment' has often used by geographers to denote space. It is also been used in its broader sense as well as for its specific purposes of study. The present analysis includes (besides above) also the objective dimensions, where the behavioural aspect of the environment exists as a complex sub-set of the total geographical milieu. It also includes the socio-
As a consequence of the symbiosis, Naga tribes fell into the distinctive groups. Each with their own territory and features. This enabled them to acquire a clear pattern of ideological conviction that obliterated any question of tolerance for other ideas or phenomena (that which was contrary to what they had perceived and understood). The resultant political stance(s) thus constituted what was argued to be a sufficient rational for insurgency. These political interaction. In the study it is also perceived to include the psychological environment (isolation and its consequent impact). This is obvious from the dichotomy of location both in respect of the state and the tribe, where the tribal elements are considered as secondary to other elements.

The total or gross geographical environment has been considered to be effective - equivalent phenomena, can be measured through space and time. The environment has been taken as to include the elements that are not perceived by individuals/groups and at the same time excludes those elements that are not required for the normal functioning. This then suggests that existing gross environment on which the insurgency of Nagaland operated, suggest the following equation (from the politico-geographical point of view).

Environmental context of insurgency in Nagaland
motivations can also be taken as responsible for the distortions that latter emerged.

But, though all the Naga tribes experienced (as conditions permitted) an essentially similar process of group development, they were subjected to the vicissitude of environment, history and accident. These alone were the source(s) of the specific(s) that divided them under the circumstances of relative isolation. In the process, this created spatial interrelationships, both within and outside the Naga tribal groups. However, in the early stages of insurgency, the extremist leaders, within their boundary - whether in close association or in isolation - wanted to develop

a common platform of independent Nagaland and its manifold specificities. Again these were the tendencies that can be derived from the Naga's environment. As also from the influence that the environmental change has brought to this society. For, then by varying means, this lead to relative isolation. The environmental influences have divided and impressed Naga tribes.

The trend and intensity of the insurgency had repeatedly changed since independence. After independence, there was a series negotiations between the extremists and government representatives. However, this did not produce any concrete results. Within the Naga scenario, the moderates continued to direct their efforts towards reconciliation between the insurgents and the government (Moderates were not in favour of separation and wanted to remain within the Indian Union). Their efforts were thwarted by Paizo (who was able to exercise a dominant influence over the Naga tribes), who expressed his profound reservations about the interpretation and usefulness of the Hydari agreement.

Skipping over the stage of coalition fronts, the extremist scored an unusual advance in compressing (or squeezing) the political phase. The first act of the Naga

resistance under Phizo, claimed to have received a favourable mandate of the population. This was the time when the Naga insurgency began to acquire mass support and general sympathy. This was also demonstrated in 1952, when none of the Nagas, filed nomination papers and nor did anyone turn up for voting in the election of representatives to the Assam legislature and the parliament.

After a period of frenetic political activity, there was a widespread sabotage and terrorism in the state. In early 1955, the insurgents launched the guerilla warfare (State II) of insurgency (See Chapter V). Between 1953 to 1956 insurgency was at its peak with almost complete mass support. It was followed by the military phase (Stage III) or counter insurgency. Another contributing factor to this development was the Naga federal government's delusion of the fact that their base was strong and secure. But were in fact no better than isolated pockets and thinly occupied strongholds. The behavioral environment in the state, compelled the extremist leaders to falsely believe that their existing position will enable them to stabilise and declare independence from the Indian Union.

By early 1958, the insurgency started declining, but a large number of high ranking extremist leaders were still underground (probably hiding in their Burmese sanctuaries). Though, their mere existence was an indication of the level of support they enjoyed, yet, their escape to Burma showed the waning mass support. A stage was soon reached when large number of Nagas started openly demonstrating their desire to be with the Indian Union and their preparedness to confront the Naga federal army bands and to halt their depredation in the rural areas. The people lost their confidence and began to disassociate themselves from insurgents. This compelled the Naga federal army to be more cautious so as to ensure no further enlargement of the alienated section against their cause.

If the insurgency had united the diverse Naga tribes, their humiliating reverses and consequent sufferings divided them soon (This was caused by the operations conducted by the security forces in 1956-57). The extremist leaders found themselves in an enviable position - a position to retain the insurgent structure and cohesiveness as well as the sympathy of the populace for their struggle. Eventually after the beginning of the reverses, there was a large scale exodus of insurgent elements. Their mass
surrender (and becoming a part of the Naga society within the Indian constitutional framework once more, can considered as a severe blow to the insurgent movement in Nagaland). Moreover, it can also be added that the disillusionment of the insurgent elements about the extremist leaders and their internecine political rivalry provided no alternative except to give up the struggle that had no future except trial of endurance.

On March 22, 1957 the Ao tribe (was the first) publicly expressed their desire for peace, which was greatly encouraged by the government. The newly formed "All tribes Naga people convention" held its first Conference at Kohima in Aug, 1957 to evolve a method for a peaceful settlement of the problem. It was attended by 1960 representatives and 2,000 observers.

In 1958-59, "the Naga people Convention or NPC (claimed 75 percent support of the Nagas) presented a sixteen point memorandum for the formation of a separate state of Nagaland within the Indian Union. This was accepted by the government of India in March 1969.

Between 1960 and 63 the Naga insurgents (lacking local support) started seeking help from the neighbouring countries like Burma, China and Pakistan. This was possible because of the fact that, many units of the security forces were pulled back to counter the Chinese aggression of 1962. Later on, the Naga insurgent found themselves hard pressed by the Indian security forces, who by that time had adopted themselves to insurgency situations and started counterinsurgency operations.

In February 1964, the Naga Baptist Church Council held a convention in Wokha, that was attended by over 5000 delegates from various tribes and villages. They requested the government of India to appoint a peace mission to initiate talks for final settlement. Despite the efforts of the peace mission (from April 1964 to October 1967), the status quo was maintained. The emergence of Bangladesh in 1971 and suspension of peace operation in 1972, baffled the Naga insurgents more. They started looking for a peaceful solution of the problem that ensured peace without loss of face.

This resulted in the agreement that was signed in Shillong on November 11, 1975. The Naga Federal Government accepted the solution within the framework of Indian
constitution. Thus, from 1975 to the present day, the insurgency remained at a very low key. Although the organisational set up for insurgency still existed (but in a fragmented form) majority of the people had dis-associated themselves from the underground movement. The efforts of the Indian government in the development of their economy and education enabled the Nagas to have second thoughts about the viability of the underground movement (But this does not mean that insurgency in Nagaland has completely petered out).

Broadly speaking, these events can be attributed partly to the fact that British while maintaining the view of keeping peace in the area, actually wanted a probable buffer between them (in this part of Asia) and Central Asia (which was the play ground of imperial rivalries in the 19th and early 20th centuries). However, after independence, central government began to strive for overall economic development of the country. At no point, the government had denied the legitimate political aspiration of a section of people nor did they consider it to be an obstacle for overall growth. The only emphasis was the maintainance of territorial and national integrity of India.
Impact:

If we take the extremist leaders view point to have a independent state of Nagaland for the Nagas, the analysis so far makes it clear that it was not viable at all. Because the government of India considered the Naga insurgency as a destabilising factor and hence anti-national. They rather perceived that such movement can have their impact elsewhere in the country and strengthen the process of disintegration of India. They gave ample agreements in favour of Nagaland as a part and parcel of India. Pandit Nehru had explicitly declared that there was no point in trying to make the tribals a second rate copies of ourselves. Other considerations also show that it is in the favour of Nagas to be with India.

Ethnographic Unity:-

There is no doubt that Nagas form a separate ethnic group which distinguishes them from the rest but they have nothing in common with one another (between the Naga tribes themselves) for example as regards to customs, festivals habits, language (see Chapter IV). Accordingly one author states that the truth is that if not impossible it is exceedingly difficult to propound any test that can distinguish them from Assam or Burma tribes. Thus an ethnic

union of people can be grouped in one separate state provided no other problem comes in the way, such as economic, strategic and political. But following the principle that the boundary should ideally separate different cultures and ethnic units at the same time, it should not create difficulties by splitting up the functional units. Based on above arguments, Nagaland does not have basic pre-requisites to become an independent state. Moreover, the ethnography as a basis for an independent state is in itself a complex geopolitical problem (more so when the location is taken into consideration) that cannot be solved easily.

**Economic Consideration:**

The difficult hilly terrain presents a dismal picture economically. Nagaland lacks the requisite resources for establishing an economically viable state. For it is essential for an independent state to have sufficient resources, e.g. agriculture, minerals, industries etc. and firm educated base in the population to cater the need of administration etc. of the state (or at least it should possess substantial part thereof to maintain its identity). But the economy of Nagaland reveals serious
deficiency in these aspects (see Chapter III). Moreover, from the point of view of accessibility, it is Assam that provides an easier outlet that across the frontier in the east. For all practical purposes that insurgent claim for an independent state, will only be a puppet state with heavy foreign dependence.

Political Background:

It is obvious that majority of the Nagas were deprived of modern education (due to their socio-economic conditions) till recently. Most of their dialects (which cannot be mutually understood) indicated that Nagas in some part of the state are still to reach the take-off point. In most circumstances, an independent Nagaland would have created international complications, because the separatist movement among the Nagas was largely influenced by the inherent factors as well as foreign powers. Moreover, the Indian Constitution does not allow secession. The recognition of Nagaland as an independent state, would start blaknization of the country.

Strategic Consideration:

By virtue of its location, Nagaland has felt the impact of insurgent activities of Upper Burma. Added to
this, the massive Chinese invasion of India in 1962, clearly illustrates the vulnerability of the Indian position. A position whereby Indian has not only to take suitable measures to check the external military threat but also to ensure stability of its constituents units. Moreover, viewing the entire north-east, it is clear that the demand of Naga extremists will never be conceded by the Government of India. This is because otherwise will prove to be a geopolitical blunder and one which will be exploited by those forces who do not want a stable and united India. Again, hypothetically, the formation of Nagaland as an independent state may lead to two possibilities.

a) China may be invited by the Naga's to ensure security. As such China would find it easier to penetrate the Indian territory and to advance in this part of Asia.

b) Nagaland may ask for economic as well as military aid from U.S.A. and other powers. In which case the aid giving countries will be in a position to create a situation like south-Vietnam. Either of these possibilities are not tenable for the security of India.

**Internal Difficulties:**

The creation of Nagaland as an independent state will lead to a chain of internal problems. Like, Nagaland
there are other hilly regions in the country, whose inhabitants differ from rest of India in one respect or the other. Thus if such demands are conceded may stand divided and weakened.

The Indian leaders familiar with the political games of the sub-continent but unaware of the extent to which the Naga mind had been alienated, felt that vociferous agitation for Naga independence was only a prank for greater autonomy and enhanced finances. They realised the problem after the movement had entered the military phase. But by this time it was late (even though the government of India had agreed for the creation of autonomous Nagaland within Indian Union). The extremists adamantly pursued their goal of independent Nagaland.

**Responses:**

While it was a hope that that Nagas would grow friendly towards the plainsmen, if they were given an opportunity for closer contact, the result was opposite. As the plainsman were recruited on a temporary basis he took little interest in identifying himself with the Nagas. There was also a category of plainsman, who became so allured by the perquisites of office that they tried to ingratiate themselves with the tribal people so that
their service may be retained on a permanent basis. In the first case the officer put little heart into his work as his sights were set on his next assignment after completion of his tenure with hills. In the second, the officer had no scruples about tending wrong and harmful advices as long as it would be conducive to his continuance in the office (see Chapter II).

The relationship between the Nagas and outsiders deteriorated so much that only those candidates, who had failed to secure employment elsewhere in India, were ready to serve in the Naga hills as a last resort. The Nagas thus came, to be served by an indifferent and mediocre bureaucracy who did little to enhance India's image in the hillman's eyes. (a common tribal fear)

It would not be just to place the entire blame either on the inherent weakness of the democratic system or administrative policy as it operates in India or on the ambitious of and implementation by politicians and civil servants. The basic causes are more deeply rooted in the gross environment such as of cultural disturbances and maladjustment. Under the British, the administrative structure was so light that the Nagas scarcely felt its weight or presence. For more, pernicious, however was
the impact on an unprepared perception of ideas that may seem innocuous enough in the climate in which they have germinated. But can be of damaging effect in an alien environment whose people have not yet been conditioned and adapted to set up their defences. Unfamiliar ideas and beliefs were recklessly and indiscriminately injected into the minds of the Nagas, with little thoughts of the impact they may have on people of a completely alien background and environment. Thus it was not surprising that the effect was usually traumatic for the whole community. (See also Chapter II).

It should not be inferred, however, that the disturbed conditions prevailing in the Naga hills will continue. What has been sought here to be shown is that deeper malady underlies the disturbances. For unless they are brought to light no solution to the problem can be brought about. It has been demonstrated that there has been no malice or alienation on either side. The Government has shown generosity in its approach to the tribals in general and Nagas in particular. The Nagas have nevertheless had genuine cause to entertain fears and apprehension (as it was projected by the British to them). At the root of all this, has been ignorance
and misunderstanding on both sides and it is through this that they have caused such a situation to emerge. A view from time to time has been advanced that the Naga troubles have been mainly formulated and encouraged by the conspiracy of neighbouring countries, particularly, China and Pakistan. However, there are evidence that India's neighbours have taken advantage of the unsettled conditions along the frontiers. It would not be incorrect to brand them as one of the instigators, for they supplied the tribals with arms and ammunitions, to continue the armed struggle. They have been offered asylum across frontiers when pursued by security forces. They have been trained, equipped and supplied before recrossing the frontiers and resuming their hostile anti-government activities. But had it not been for the deeper causes underlying the disturbances (a very backward state economy) the question of tribal seeking support from neighbours would not have arisen. While the effort of security forces to seal off the frontiers will serve the limited purpose of depriving dissident Nagas of supplies, armaments and haven of refuge, a final solution lies in the removal of the malady itself (the implementation of the development policies has been regrettably taken by the state and Central Government). The position of the security forces is that
(now) insurgency is petering out in Nagaland and sooner or later the remaining insurgents will either surrender or be liquidated.

Accordingly, at present, there are two groups of Naga insurgents, The National Socialist Council of Nagaland under the leadership of Mr.T.Muiyah and Mr. Issackswak and the Naga Federal Government of the followers of Mr. A.Z.Phizo, who are now camping along the international border. However there is no confirmed evidence on whether these groups have joined hands or not. From time to time they have been sneaking into Nagaland to collect ration and taxes from the villagers. But it is felt that these collections are only to keep their presence felt.

With regards to sealing off the international frontiers, the author believes that the agreement between India and Burma allowing the border inhabitants of the two country to trade with each other, precluded any such move. Probably this was exploited by insurgents, who smuggled themselves into the Nagaland from across the frontier.

The signing of the Shillong accord on November 11, 1975 between the followers of Mr.Phizo and representatives

7. The Telegraph, 28th April, 1983 (Calcutta).
of the Indian Government was the outcome of the counter-insurgency operations. The people have come to realise the futility of bloodshed and nonimplementation of development works. It was the author's view that major part of security operations were carried on the basis of information given by the villagers. Reports in the newspapers about frequent clashes between followers of Mr. Issakwak and Mr. Muivah of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) and Mr. Khole of the Naga Federal Government (NFG) are suggestive of acute internal rivalry among the extremists. The NSCN has rejected Mr. Phizo and is trying to eliminate signatories of the Shillong Accord.

After the signing of the Shillong Accord, over 500 rebels have come over-ground. But for the first time in the history of pro-communist Naga socialist Council of Nagaland which was formed in 1979, hard-cores like the self-styled Major Ithoko Sema, bodyguard of Mr. Issak has surrendered. So far, 30 hard cores have surrendered along with their arms. These rebels have told newsmen that the life of underground is very tough. The Chinese authorities have refused them any sort of help and some of the rebels are at the point of starvation. Furthermore, many of them are treated no better than servants by the extremist leaders and their dependents.
There have been group clashes, mutual distrust and struggle for leadership enhanced by the fact that Mr. Muivah is a Naga from Manipur, while the majority of hardcore rebels hail from Nagaland. The author also infers that there exist no agreement between India and Burma to launch a joint offensive against the insurgents (officially). But both Burmese and Indian security forces have stepped up counter-insurgency operations in their respective areas. This does not mean the end of insurgent activities in Nagaland. The insurgents whose total strength is put at 500 are well equipped and may well keep up the struggle.

There is no gimmick that can solve and end the Naga problem. The problem will work itself out to its conclusion, but in its own time. We have observed some of the innerforces underlying the problem, and further seen that these forces cannot be summarily discounted or dismissed. India has behind her the experience of 35 years to guide her in her future relation with the Nagas. The government of India have gained by this experience, a clearer appreciation of the mainsprings of the Naga action and attitudes. (And through this experience, Government of India has been better equipped to deal with situations in Manipur and Mizoram). They will not be as harsh in their judgement and reaction as they
so often have been doing in the past. But if the Nagas do cherish in their hearts with sincerity the Christian doctrine of forgiveness and atonement. The working of the Naga problem to a happy end may yet prove to be a reality despite the bruises they have suffered.