CHAPTER VI
RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION

TRADITIONAL BELIEF SYSTEM:

The traditional belief system of the village is based on the fundamental belief in the existence of supernatural powers. The belief in the existence of the God or gods forms the core of the belief system and it is the guiding principle of their conduct in life. Traditionally they believed in the existence of several gods or Tsungrem who are associated with creation, keeper of the land of dead, mountains, stones, rivers, forests, etc. They believed that these gods are the fountain of all blessings for human beings and that he provides them protection and prosperity. Therefore each individual is enjoined to revere God and conduct his/her personal life to merit his blessings.

_Lijaba_ is believed to be the creator of the earth and all living things and vegetation upon it. He is powerful and he causes natural calamities too when he is displeased with man. A person may earn _Lijaba_’s blessings or incur his wrath according to his attitudes towards him. _Lijaba_ is believed to reside below the earth and is responsible for everything that happens on earth.
Tsüngrem known as Meyutsüngba is believed to be the ‘God of the land of dead’. He is considered to be the God of justice as he judges the souls when they reach his gate to enter the land of the dead. Every person is judged and awarded merit or punishment by Meyutsüngba according to ones deeds on earth. Meyutsüngba is the God of Righteousness and so he demands a just life, purity, high moral, ethical standards and honesty. That is why the qualities of honesty and truthfulness were so assiduously emphasized upon in the traditional society. The judgment of Meyutsüngba is final and at his gate there is no scope for forgiveness or redemption. He is implacable and therefore there is no form of worship which is offered to him. At the gate of Meyutsüngba every sin will be revealed and disclosed for shame and punishment.

Apart from these gods there are hosts of other gods worshipped by the villagers. They are kini Tsüngrem (Homestead God), Tsutsung Tsungrem (Lake God), Tsutha Tsungrem (Lowland/ stagnant water God), Tekong Tsungrem (Mountain God), Along Tsungrem (Stone God), Mosakni Tsungrem (Indigo Cultivation Site God), Kiniou Tsungrem (Deserted Site God) and Longlangba Tsungrem. It is believed that if anyone neglects or insults the deities; these Tsungrem could wreak havoc upon the people through their powers. For instance, it is believed that Longlangba Tsungrem, acts dangerously in the form of thunderstorms when insulted or stumped on it.
When villagers are about to undertake any venture they first and foremost worshipped the God of Longlangba for protection and prosperity.

**TRADITIONAL RITES & RITUALS:**

The Longkhum people worshipped Lijaba every year at a place called achendang. The worship place being located at the Longchar’s land, the senior most member of the Longchar clan was entitled to lead in worshipping Lijaba. Therefore even if the Priest fell sick and was bedridden, his clan members would carried him to the achendang to perform the rituals. Rituals involved a pig which was sacrificed to evoke blessings of Lijaba for abundant rainfall to enable crops to grow healthy.

Besides, they also worshipped public wells especially when the water becomes scarce. Any ordinary persons cannot perform the rituals except a Priest They offered the best fowls available in the village. There is sanctity attached to the Priesthood and the Priest is obliged him to lead an ideal, moral life failing which it is believed that great calamities would befall to the entire village.

The cycle of worship and sacrifices mostly revolved around agriculture and forest as the people depend on natural environment for their daily requirement. Some important agriculture related rituals are given below:
**Melong:**

The ritual was performed the following day after burning the field for jhum cultivation. An egg was sacrifice to evoke blessings by all the families in the village in their respective fields. After performing the ritual, they are taboo from going near dead bodies or visit dead man's house for six days.

**Tenten:**

The ritual was performed by the village Priest on the onset of sowing where a cock was sacrificed. None of the villagers were allowed to initiate sowing prior to this ritual.

**Jangpet melep:**

The ritual was performed in their respective fields. After performing the ritual they established the worship place *apuo* in their fields. The *apuo* was made in front of the field house where 6 bamboo posts were erected for performing rituals. All rites and rituals related to the field were performed in *apuo*. The feathers of the sacrificed fowl were placed in the bamboo and two plates of meat (six pieces in one plate and 5 pieces in the other) were first sacrificed in the *apuo* and the remaining were shared and exchanged among the relatives. However the ritual was not compulsory as it involved the sacrifice of one pig and a fowl which many poor families in the village could not performed. Those families who could performed the ritual placed a leave
called jangpet wa at the door of their house. It signified that the family had performed the ritual.

Mountains are also worshipped by the villagers. There are five major mountains worshipped by the villagers in the olden days. Those were: *Longzaktejak Tenem* in the eastern side, *Sangpursokong Tenem* in the western side, *Inikong Tenem* in the north-east, and *Lailakong & Jangmetsükong Tenem* in the south-west of the village. Usually they worshipped these mountains on the eve of war for victory. They offered eggs to the first three mountains and fowls to the last two.

*Yim Külem* (Village worship) was performed thrice in a year. All the villagers participated in the *Yim Külem* lead by the village Priest.

**Ritual for Birth**

There are no particular rituals or ceremonies related to birth. However, certain taboo is to be observed by both husband and wife when the wife is pregnant. They believed that a woman must be very careful when she is pregnant and abstain from all food forbidden to her. If she finds a tasty beetle in the fields she should not tucked it into her mekhla at the waist otherwise her child will be born with a birthmark. Pregnant women neither kill a snake nor a slow worm, as they believed that if they do so the child born will have deformities. It is also believed that both husband and wife should
abstain from eating or killing tortoise. A pregnant woman and her husband are debarred from eating twin bananas, or any twin fruits or vegetables for fear of birth of twins. It is observed that even today this believes continues.

Normally delivery of a child takes place at ones own house or at the parent's house. Usually a female companion assists the woman and those women who had complication during delivery are not allowed to visit, as they believed that the same might happen to expectant mother. As soon as the child is born the umbilical cord is cut by the female attendant and tied with a thread specially prepared for this. The placenta, nuchem is then buried with due care in the outskirt of the village. It is considered most important that the father should be present at the birth of the child or else delivery becomes difficult. Therefore, if husband happened to be away from home, he rushes back home as soon as he hear the news and be there for the delivery. On the second or the third day the child is given a name. If the child cried after the name is given, it is believed that the child does not agree with the name given to her or him. Thus an alternative name is given. The name should either be a name of an ancestor or new name, narokūm. A living relatives' name cannot be given nor would give the name of a person who had died at a young age or who had died of menen (unnatural dead). It is believed that if child becomes weak and ailing, it signifies that the name given to her/him is too great to bear and as such an alternative name is given.
Rituals for illness:

Before Christianity, every sickness was considered due to the influence of evil spirits. When a person falls sick, the family in consultation with diviners *Rachenlarl Arasentsur* offered pigs, fowls, dogs, eggs and drinks to *Tsüngrem*. They categorized sickness into names according to the nature and offer sacrifice accordingly. When a person suffers from a protracted illness, it is believed that the soul of the patient is captured by evil spirit of the place where he or she had explored and offerings of eggs, cocks and pigs were made to appease evil spirits.

The following are the rituals related to illness.

Renten:

*Renten* is the first ritual performed for any prolonged illness. Before initiation of the ritual they first approached the diviner *rachenlar* to make sure about the place from where the sickness had been inflicted. Further, the family also asked the *rachenlar* who should perform the ritual. They referred this as *folang emvi*. The family would suggest some names and the *rachenlar* choose the person from the names suggested by the family. The performer will be accompanied by few people. They would go to the place as directed by the *rachenlar* and made *apuo* (ritual place) where six bamboo posts would be erected if the sick is a male and five bamboo posts for a female. This ritual involved a cock, an egg and a pig. In the *apuo*, they killed the animals and shells of the egg and the basket in which they brought the pig are all placed.
on the bamboo erected in the apuo. The cooked meat was then offered to the Tsüngrem pleading for the early recovery of the sick. After performing the ritual, the food is shared among themselves while the remaining portion is given to the sick family.

Rakie:

After performing renten if the sick shows no improvement, they perform the next ritual rakie. In this ritual they follow the same procedures as that of the renten, however, in case of the rakie, the remaining meats are not given to the sick family as a sign of giving away all they have to the Tsungrem.

Kitsüng Külem:

The ritual does not involves the rachenlar or any other relatives except the family members. The ritual is performed when there is constant illness in the family though may not be very serious, shilu manem. The family would kill a pig and prepared a meal for the family. On that particular day, the whole family members remained indoors and were allowed to come out only after sunset.

Illness such as stomach pain, stomach upset, diarrhea or indigestion are considered due to the influence of the evil spirits in the house-site called kitsüng Tsüngrem (house-site deity). For such sickness, house-site
deity is pleased by releasing a cock or hen in the jungle on behalf of the victim. Every sicknesses and misfortunes were considered as the handiworks of the evil spirits and deities which cause sufferings to the villagers.

**Medicine**

Today people prefer modern methods of treatment as it ensures more accurate diagnosis of various diseases, and moreover the healing process is faster. They no longer sacrifice animals for sickness; instead it is used to provide nutrients to the sick as well as those who are nursing. However, indigenous medicine like *nangbūra, tangma* etc are still used by the villagers for mild stomach upset, vomiting etc.

**Case study 1**

This is a case of Alila, 20 years of age, who had stomach upset during Christmas. She stated ‘due to excess consumption of meat I had diarrhea. So I boiled *nangbūra* leaves and added a tinge of *tangma* and consumed the preparation. This healed my stomach upset. I always believed in the efficacy of these indigenous medicines’.

With regard to certain cases like bone fractures they still follow the traditional methods of treatment, however this is done without any rituals. When people gets their hands, legs and other portions of their body fractured or dislocated they go to those experts, locally termed as *kobiraaz. Kobiraaz*
are able to know whether the bone is fractured or dislocated, and if the bone is fractured, the patient is taken to the hospitals for proper medical care. Both men and women could be a kobiraaz. At present there are about 9 to10 kobiraaz in the village. Thus, it may be noted that people still adhere to indigenous treatment though without any rites and rituals.

Ritual for the Death:

People believed in life after death. They believed in the existence of a place called Asû Yim/ Diphu Lima, which may be literary translated as the 'place of the Dead'. When the soul leaves the body, it is believed that it journeys towards the land of the death. They believed that the soul of the dead lingers near the body for six days in case of men and five days in case of women. Therefore, relatives of the dead offered food and drink to the dead in order to make him or her happy and contented to take the journey. Till today this believe still continues and the relatives never finished up everything that has been cooked in the house as they believe that the spirits of the dead would feel dejected when nothing has been left for them at home. On their way to the land of dead it is believed that they took bath in a stream called Longritsu Enden, which is just 2 or 3 kms away from the village. In the stream there is a huge flat stone and smaller one are placed on top of it which is believed to be used by the dead souls for grinding nuts (külông/sheing) used as soap. It is a general believe among the Aos that every soul has to cross Longritsu Enden, and they believe that if someone other than this villagers
see Longkhum in their dream they would die soon. It is stated that even today people of other villages are reluctant to visit this village, as there is a general believe that if a person fails to visit the village three times consecutively their life gets shortened.

Having crossed the *Longritsu enden*, carrying ones load, which may be heavy or light depending on ones ethical and moral life, the dead man reaches the gate of *Meyutsungba*. Every soul has to walk down the streets of *Meyutsungba*’s gate carrying the load of ones earthly deeds. It is believed that the good people’s load is light while for the thieves and dishonest man the burden becomes heavy and faces difficulty to reach the destination.

In the olden days they kept the corpse rolled in a bamboo mat *abak/bakti* on a raised platform, four to eight feet high called *Lepchang*. They kept the dead bodies for six days in case of male and five days in case of female after which they are buried in the village cemetery. The corpse was kept in such a way that when the bamboo post gets rotten, the limbs should fall on the ground first. But if the head falls first on the ground the man is declared to have lived a dishonest life. Thus this grave falling *Leptsü* revealed whether the dead had lived an honest or dishonest life. Children who died during infancy are always put on a platform close to the relatives so that they would not feel lonely. They observed mourning period *Lükümong* of six days for men and five days for women.
No particular rituals are performed for the dead. However, when a child dies, the father would shout and cried aloud calling the child’s’ name. If any of the family members died coinciding with the felling and cutting of the jungle for the jhum cultivation, the villagers were refrained from going near the bereaved family as it signifies bad omen. It may be noted that the person who performed the rituals tsûngîba is given a house site or a plot of field by the bereaved family and relatives. The performer may either be a relative or a best friend who was very close to the death during his lifetime. Normally such kind of commitment is made between friends during lifetime. The one who performs the ritual kill a chick and put in the armpit of the death, facing the cemetery and uttered his final word of and wish him happy journey to the land of the death.

**Superstitions**

The villagers were very superstitious about certain deaths and they performed all the necessary rituals no matter how hard it may be in order to avoid unpleasant consequences. Death caused by mauling by a tiger, falling from trees, or cliffs, drowned, burnt, death on delivery etc are all considered as menen (unnatural death). The names of those who died of menen are not even uttered. Instead they refer to such the persons as tiamakasang, which literally means ‘unlucky ones’. The name of the person who died due to unnatural death was not renewed by his/ her clan. If a man is killed while assisting the village against an enemy it is considered not fully menen but his
body is disposed without ceremony. Another case is that of a man falling from
a tree, a fowl was speedily sacrificed at the foot of the tree so that the
responsibility for the man's death is shifted to the animals. If a person dies
due to the strike of lightning, it is also considered as menen.

The worst case of menen is the dead caused by a tiger, as it leads
to many unpleasant consequences. For instance the spot from where the
tiger carried its victim to the place where it ate its kill became prohibited
areas, locally known as tamachidak / temechayin. This has caused many
cultivable areas to be abandoned for example, there was a ferocious tiger by
the name of Chensangla mela / Chensangla nüla, (named after a woman
Chengsangla who practiced witchcraft) which lived in the forest near the
village. It is believed that the tiger had killed four villagers. The four spots or
area where the tiger had carried the victim are all considered as prohibited
places. The four prohibited areas are sungilong, longmenden, jangpojangtsü,
and aküchemein. The villagers believed that once in a year, a deadly disease
called küra breaks out, which may be equated to cancer. It comes swirling like
a cloud and is considered very unfortunate if a person happens to be in the
prohibited place on such fateful day as they are engulfed by the disease. The
villagers never cultivated these areas nor collect vegetables and fodder even
for the animals from these prohibited area as they are scared of küra.
The present generation no longer believes in these superstitions, however, some people are still reluctant to cultivate these areas till today. They still have the fear for kūra and if a person falls sick after exploring the prohibited areas, they believe that the sickness may be due to kūra.

If any one died within 30 days after falling from a tree or a cliff it is considered as menen. But any died after 30 days it is not considered as menen. However, the cliff or tree from where the person falls is not prohibited in contrary to the place from where the tiger mauled its victim. Similarly in the case of drowning, burning or death on delivery are considered as menen if the people die within 30 days. However, the pond or lake from where a person is drowned is not prohibited but in the case of a person, scorched by fire in the house, the house site is considered prohibited site locally termed as menen keni /menen kimong. If any of the family members died of menen, the entire family had to undergo purification from the defilement by abandoning all their belongings and property.

Here I would like to explain in brief, the process of purification. It is a norm that the family members should exit from the back door while the clan members hit the house with stone as a sign of chasing the evil spirit. They then proceed to the jungle and stay there for 3 days in the hut built by the clan members. During their stay in the jungle, their relatives supplied foods and clothes although they are to refrain from talking. After three days, they return
to the village and begin a new life in a new house constructed by their relatives. It is stated that the entire process is very painful and difficult. However, they believed that those who adhered to this custom lived a prosperous life generation after generation.

Case study 2

This is a case of Asangba, whose father died of *menen* (unnatural dead) in 1912. He said ‘though I was still a kid I clearly remember my family undergoing purification from defilement. We had to live in the jungle for three days leaving behind all our belongings then after we returned we lived in a new house constructed by our relatives’. He said ‘It was a painful experience and the agony still lingers in my mind till today’.

TRADITIONAL FESTIVALS:

The two major festivals of the Aos are *Moatsü* and *Tsüngremong*. The villagers referred these festivals as *Moyatsü* and *Asemni amu* respectively.

*Moya tsü* is a festival of evoking blessing for healthy crops and good health which is observed for three days after sowing every year. On the eve of the festival the villagers would clear the field path starting from the village vicinity. From the first day till the last the village priest and members of the *ariju* are taboo from having physical intimacy with their wives. The families
who reared pigs and cattle meant for the festival should also maintain chastity.

On the first day of the festival a group of ariju members are engage in collecting pigs from those families who have volunteered to rear pigs for the festival. Meanwhile these families lavishly served rice beer, with a sense of competition among themselves. The pigs are then taken to the ariju where the priest offered rite and initiate the ceremony.

The cut meats are distributed accordingly. The head and leg are given to the priest while the remaining meat are cooked and served during the community feast. It is customary that serving should start from the eldest to the youngest. Community dancing yar tsünsang is a special attraction of the Moya tsū. Young and old men cooperate and dance along the footpaths of the village in traditional dancing attires and ornaments, singing of folksongs. Themes of life such as head hunting, war and heroism, love and romance are associated with Moya tsū festival.

Asemni amu festival is another major festival of the village. It is celebrated just before harvest every year. Ninang tsüteba (tug-of-war) is one special feature of asemni amu festival. On the first day a pig is sacrificed and meats are distributed to every household in the village. They believe this as offering to Lijaba. The remaining meats are relished by the village elders. In
the evening every family makes offerings at their respective hearths and on that night the man and his wife are taboo from having physical intimacy. The next day they are prohibited to go anywhere beyond the village or do any household chores. In the evening men are not allowed to visit the girl’s dormitories and the houses of widows. They spend the following day in the same manner. However, the villagers are allowed to go to the fields or do household chores. It is customary that on the third day all the villagers should take bath and in the evening visiting of girls by male counterparts is highly prohibited as they believed that Tsungrem visit the village on the third day and that everyone must avoid loitering in the footpaths. Rice beer (vũ/ ayi) was an essential drink during these festivals.

**Feast of Merit:**

In the olden days it was an ambition for any able people to perform the feast of Merit whereby gaining the coveted right of wearing certain shawls and ornaments, and being able to decorate his house in a particular way with the skulls of the sacrificed animals at the front side of the house. No one but a married man could give the feast, for the wife played an honourable and conspicuous part throughout. For every mithun sacrifice she gained a wazami (feather) in her headgear which was not possible for any ordinary women.

The Chungli and the Mongsen groups have different stages of performing the feast of Merit. For the Chungli, three stages are required to
attain the status of the 'giver of the feast of merit'. However for the Mongsen they have only two stages.

For both the Chungli and the Mongsen the first stage is the same. Chungli called the first stage as kika and the Mongsen called it akikaba, where three to four pigs are sacrificed.

The second stage for the Chungli is called nafü atsūba, where a cow was sacrificed, where as the Mongsen group need not have to sacrifice a cow.

The last and the most important stage for both the Chungli and the Mongsen is the mithun sacrifice. Chungli called it sū atsūba and the Mongsen called it atsū tsūba. It is customary that the actual killing is never done by the host of the feast, and he is not allowed to taste the meat of the animals sacrificed. The management and distribution of meat was done by temlaker.

During the feast all the villagers in full traditional attires showed up at the host's house and uttered aloud solemn prayers. They called this custom azū koaba which is done to evoke god's blessing to the family, prosperity and long life of the host.
This has been in practice till late 1970s by the limafor (believer in traditional religion). About 45-46 families are accounted to have given the feast of merit in the village. The feast of merit latently ironed out the disparities in wealth. The rich, in their passion to acquire prestige and honour spent a large part of their incomes in giving this lavish feast.

CHRISTIANITY

The first group of American Baptist Missionary made their first appearance in the Naga area around 1830 and the mission work started in 1881. The first American Missionary to visit was Dr Clark who visited Longkhum in 1885. The villagers were reluctant to accept Christianity initially with a fear that it would alienate them from their age-old beliefs and practices. They believed that the alien culture would engulf their beautiful tradition; however they were also aware of the positive side of the new religion, as it was contrary to the extreme and expensive sacrifices involved in the old religion. Christianity as a religion was formally established in the village in 1903. Longritemjen Namo was the first person from the Longkhum village to be ordained Reverend. Today the village has produced five Reverends, The Longkhum Baptist Church has celebrated Centennial Jubilee (100 years) in 2003 and the Revival Church is yet to celebrate the Centennial jubilee.

At present the village has two churches of different denominations, i.e Baptist and Revival churches. 308 families belong to the Baptist
denomination and 29 families belong to the Revival. In both the Churches, Pastor officiate the services and performs baptismal and confirmation rites. In the absence of the Pastor one of the seniors known as Deacons takes over the charge of the Pastor. Woman service is officiates by a Pastor (Women). In the weekdays, evening service is held twice i.e on Wednesday (Bodbar) and Saturday (Honibar). Women service tütsür sentep/ aniti sentep are held on Thursday (Bisdibar). The Pastor is assisted by Deacons and Assistants Mapangchar. Numerically Baptists are larger but Revivalists are closely knitted and they consider all the church members as a family. Both the Baptist Church and Revival Church have separate organizations and it cannot be denied that there are attitudes problems between these two denominations. As far as pattern of organization is concerned both Baptist and Revival follows the same pattern.

Fig: 3 CHURCH ORGANIZATION

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   Pastor
    /|
   / Deacons

   Women Department
   Youth Department
   Child Department
   Sunday School Department
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Women Department is headed by a Pastor ni (Pastor Women) who is assisted by arogolar (assistants). Youth and Child Department is headed by the Youth Director and Child Director respectively. Sunday School Department is headed by a Deacon who is assisted by the Sunday school teachers.

Pastor, Deacons and Pastor ni are appointed by a nominating committee constituted by Arogo Mungdang (Church Conference). They are appointed for tenure of five years; however, their tenure may be extended.

Youth Director, Child Director and Sunday school teachers are appointed by the Deacons for tenure of five years however it may be extended if necessary.

**TRANSITION IN RELIGIOUS LIFE:**

Christianity as a religion was formally established in the village in 1903. Since then there has been gradual change in the religious life of the villagers. Today there are only three families that continue to follow the old religious ethos. Out of three families only one has both husband and wife, while the rest constitute of a widow and a widower. They have strong faith in the traditional beliefs and have refused to change their faith.
Case study 3

This is a case study of a limafor (non-convert) Meya age 79. He and his wife (age 70) still follow the old religion even though all his children are Christians today. On being asked as to why he is reluctant to convert, on this he cited some personal opinions: Firstly he noted that he cannot abandon the beliefs and practices which he has follow throughout his life. Secondly he opined that as long as he remained honest and faithful, what religion he follows is not important. Another personal view includes the unconvencning life style of the Christians. According to him, it is apparent that many Christians do not strictly adhere to the teaching of Christ. However he made himself clear that he is not against any religion. He believes in honesty and truthfulness and expressed that he would rather remain a limafor than beng just a nominal believer of a new religion.

To the question as to whether there is any pressure from his children and Church members, to this he replied that initially there had been immense pressure from his children and from the Church members as well, saying that if he die before conversion he would suffers after dead. To this he opined that he do believe in life after dead as the old religion do have similar teaching. He said that their God Meyutsüngba would judge a person and award merit and punishment according to a person deeds on earth. According to him, their God demand a just life, purity and high moral and ethical
standards and honesty. Therefore he believes that whether he remained limafor (non-converts) or Christians, the life after dead would be determined by his own deeds on earth. Hence he always insists his children to lead a just life as being a Christian would not award them a better life after dead.

His wife also has the same opinion as that of her husband and she stated that she and her husband are determined to follow the old religion. They still continue to perform agriculture related ritual like melong, tenten, and jangpetmelep etc, however in times of sickness modern medicine are also used. They still brew rice beer for their consumption; however they keep in a small room behind the kitchen as they feel that it is improper to keep in common place, being exposed. Even today they perform all rituals although they have reservation about going to the field on Sundays because if anything happened to them on that day there would be no one to help them.

With the coming of Christianity, the villagers have adopted new ways of worshipping. Instead of worshiping Lijaba in achendang they worship the ‘Trinity of God’ in the Church. The mode of offering animals has been replaced by prayers. They have also adopted new ways of curing illness yet use of indigenous medicines like nangbūra and tangma is very common among the people. However, they no longer follow the old practice of performing ritual like renten, rakie and kitsüng küllum for curing illness; instead they would prefer to go to the medical dispensaries for modern facilities. They
also no longer make expensive offerings in times of sickness or abandon their houses and wealth in case of unnatural death. However they still adhere to certain traditional practices of ‘mourning period’ (six days for men and five days for women).

Even today traditional festivals like moyatsü and asemi amo are still observed with great gaiety although without any traditional rites and rituals. During these festival different functions are organized every year. Sometimes samen organized programme in commemoration of these festivals where Ministers and MLAs are invited to the village as Chief Guests and the youths organized inter-zonal or inter-village tournament etc.

Christianity has brought certain amount of privilege to the women as far as religious life is concerned. For instance in the olden days women were not allowed to perform rituals, however in the new religion women plays an important and active role in the Church services. Thus gender bias is observed to be less apparent in the new religion.

With the advent of Christianity, the village has become a part of the larger religious organization. Ao Baptist Arogo Mungdang (ABAM) is the apex body of all the Baptist Churches in the Ao villages and the Revival Churches are under the apex body of Nagaland Christian Revival Church. Ao Baptist Tetsür Mungdang (Ao Baptist Women Association) is the largest and
strongest Church based women's organization in Nagalang. This organization was started forty years back to encourage women's participation in the Church. In the olden days the villagers had their way of perceiving things and worshipped accordingly. It is observed that with the change of time the village is marching towards greater religious mobility and network.

The present study reveals that the advent of Christianity has resulted in the rejection of many of the old beliefs and practices of the people in the village. Christianity has created disunity through the coming in of different denomination in the village and has also resulted in the erosion of the rich traditional culture. However Christianity has brought much to the village, it has brought education, which is the backbone of all development. Christianity delivered the villages from the bondage of superstitions, the villages believed in the existence of supernatural powers and spirits for which particularly during sickness, when the villagers have nothing much left yet they have to offer as a living sacrifice whatever they have and people also led life in constant fear of such supernatural powers and spirits.

Christianity has also introduced hygienic living. People in the long run became cleaner and sanitation in the village became primary focus. A clear example today though people rear pigs, the pigs unlike the olden days have to be confined. Christianity created awareness and this has motivated
the villagers for better living and for various development activities in the village.