CHAPTER VII
CONCLUSION: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

The objective of this chapter is to present a resume of the preceding chapters and highlight the factors responsible for continuity and change in the village under study.

The first two chapters do not naturally contain any findings for summation here. The main body of this thesis is constituted by the four subsequent chapters dealing with social organization, economy, political and religious organization. Therefore the summation relates to these four chapters only.

**MAJOR FINDINGS:**

**SOCIAL ORGANIZATION**

A typical Ao family is nuclear type where the father, the mother and the unmarried children together form a family.

The family being patriarchal, the position of the father in the family holds great authority, prestige and responsibility. He assumes the leadership role in the family. Though both mother and father share responsibility over their family, the father has certain rights and obligations. In any decision
relating to family matters both wife and husband deliberate on the issues together, however, the father's decision became final. The father has absolute power over the family property. Although patriliny places husband at a higher pedestal wife displays a strong will and character. All the matters relating to domestic life are decided on the basis of mutual consent. Relations between the couple grow stronger with the length of time they have been married, mutual respect, ability to discharge one's duty and economic stability. Relationship between couple and their respective in-laws are generally cordial. It is expected of a girl and boy to have learnt their respective roles in life before marriage. With elders the relation is expected to be one of respect, which is expressed by addressing them with appropriate kinship terms.

The residence is neolocal in nature. After marriage the parents of the bridegroom construct a new house and set up household for them.

Owing to patrilineal nature of inheritance, property moves down the male line. Properties like ancestral land, house, furniture etc are inherited by sons. The eldest son is the heir of the family and he inherits lion's share of the property and the rest are distributed among the younger ones. The eldest son is not only the heir of the family but has many responsibilities. Besides his responsibilities towards his parents and brothers he is considered as the guardian and protector of his sisters. Normally a man having no male heir
divides his property among his nearest male relatives. However, father may
gift a house site or plot of land to his daughter with the knowledge of his male
relatives. A mother’s personal properties like dresses and ornaments go to
her daughters. However lion’s share of her personal property is given to the
eldest daughter. If the husband dies, as temporary provision, wife is entitled
to maintain her husband’s property till her death.

The present study reveals that the family structure, role of parents,
and role of children have undergone certain changes whereas some aspects
of the same have continued. Family played an important role in providing
education. However certain kinds of education in artisanship, training for
warfare, custom, beliefs and practices etc were provided by an institution
known as ariju (boys’ dormitory) and zuki (girls’ dormitory). Disintegration of
this institution has led to some change in the basic role of the family
particularly the parents.

It is observed parents desires for lesser children to enable the
parents to provide better education to all the children. These trends had given
opportunities to both sexes to become educated and be economically
independent.

Thus, it may be noted that a typical Ao family is nuclear type,
patriachal, neolocal and patrilineal in form.
It is observed that the rules of clan exogamy, monogamy and incest taboo are still strictly adhered to by all. Longkhum is broadly divided into two groups i.e Chungli and Mongsen. Under this, the clans are broadly divided into rapi and atsung. These two are further sub-divided into different sub-clans.

In chungli group, rapi is sub-divided into two clans i.e Jamir and Pongener and atsung is constituted by one clan i.e Longkumer. Longkumer clan is further sub-divided into Soyah, Müsütoba, Azüsentak and Mosümbo. Rapi and atsung are intermarriagable.

In Mongsen group, rapi is divided into two clans i.e Jamir and Longchar. Jamir is further sub-divided into Ani and Ngümbo. Atsung is constituted by Imchen. Imchen is further sub-divided into Yar, Mongro, Alang, Pangchen, Iota, Sangtsung and Arong. Rapi and atsung are intermarriagable.

In both Chungli and Mongsen group, all clans are placed under common terms i.e rapi and atsung, however it may be noted that between Chungli and Mongsen group rapi and rapi are interemarriagable and similarly is the case between atsung and atsung. The main reason for such practices is because of the fact that Chungli and Mongsen belong to different dialect
groups. It is also believed that chungli and mongsen are the descendents of different ancestors.

It is customary that formal proposal is initiated from boy’s side after negotiations between the two concerned parties and the date of marriage is fixed.

Persons who are widowed and divorcees are also allowed to marry and this kind of marriage is generally very simple and no special feast is given. Levirate and sorrorate marriages are not encouraged due to the belief that they may not bear normal child and it is not proper to replace his/her sibling’s place. Marriage between maternal cousins up to third generation is not allowed though they belong to different clans because they are closely related by blood.

One of the most remarkable features observed is that unlike in other Naga tribes, women after marriage continue to retain her clan even though all their children take the clan of the father. Women have a certain degree of freedom after marriage; they do not have to submerge their clan identity, and their maiden name continues, which indicates their higher gender status than other Naga tribes.
Marriage within the village is still preferred due to familiarity of a person's line of descent. However, marriage outside the village becomes inevitable due to interactions with different people and cultures while venturing outside the village in search of education, jobs and other avenues.

Marriage for both men and women is not only considered normative but also much more acceptable than being single (unmarried). Though those who could not get married are not ill-treated they are looked down upon by the society. Earlier people normally got married soon after they attained puberty. But today the scenario has changed; most of the girls and boys normally get married after 21 years of age.

With the coming of Christianity, the practices of traditional marriage system have changed. Both bride and groom wear modern dresses and get married in the Church. However they still adhere to some traditional practices regarding management and distribution of the wedding meat. During the wedding feast, a group of people referred to as 'tümmlaker' played an important role in management and distribution of the meat. There are two categories of tümmlaker; soden tümmlak (constitutes those men whose mother belong to groom's clan), and jala tümmlak (men who have married women of groom's clan). Thus, once men get married they become important members of their wives' clans. This practice continues till today.
Kinship plays an important role in the regulation of marriage and avoidance of incest. They trace their descendants only through father's side. As far as kinship is concerned it is still protected.

**VILLAGE ECONOMY**

The main occupation of the people is agriculture which is practised in the form of *jhum* cultivation. Agriculture is based on simple technology, primarily using simple implements like big knife (*dao*), hoe and sickle which are employed for cutting, weeding and harvesting purposes. In the village the *jhum* cultivable area is divided into two categories—*arzen* and *luno*. For *arzen* the interval for cultivation is 20 years and for *luno* it is 10 years. The first year of cultivation is known as *lozen/looti* and the next year of cultivation is known as *bün/abün*. It is customary that the *Samen* (Village Council) demarcates the plots for cultivation every year.

In the village, the cycle of Jhum/Shifting cultivation begins from the month of December to January. First an area is identified and selected by the *Samen* and begins jungle clearing. Sowing of paddy is done in the month of March to early April. The method of sowing for the *looti* and *aben cultivations* is different. They use different varieties of paddy in the two fields. In *lozen/looti* they use bigger paddy known as *jakja* and in *bün/abün* smaller paddy.
known as manen is used. They stated that jakja grows well in fertile soil, where as manen can be grown in less fertile soil also.

The first phase of weeding is called manuya which begins in the latter part of May, when the grains are grown about 2 to 3 inches tall. The second phase of weeding begins in mid-summer when the weather is very hot and humid. The third phase is done just before harvest to remove weeds to make harvest easier. The paddy harvest begins in early September.

An important characteristic of the agricultural practice is the co­ordination among the villagers in the form of exchange of labour. It is interesting to note that if any families lag behind the rest of the villagers due to prolong sickness or death, the kin (clan) members initiate a collective work to enable the family to catch up with the rest. Another form of exchange of labour, they called yangteba is normally between friends. They work on each others field alternatively and this form of labour is required most in the second phase of weeding and harvesting.

It may be noted that in the village there is no particular group specified as labourers, because labour is often combined with other occupation. Thus it is difficult to estimate how many households are engage in labour occupation. The regular wage labourers are mostly from other tribes who are employed in agricultural activities. At present the villagers have the
wage laborers from the Konyak tribes. Rs.100/- and Rs.70/- are paid for men and women respectively. However, the amount paid to the labourers varies according to the nature of work.

At present 63.24% of the families are agriculturalists. In the olden days, their economy was based on simple barter system and agriculture products and handicrafts were used as mode of exchange with other villages and neighbouring tribes. Traditionally, reciprocity between neighbours and between kin groups was a common phenomenon, agricultural surplus was shared among them but today due to high demands from market they have become more commercial.

Besides agriculture there are various occupations which bring money to the family. Production of horticulture has been taken up in large scale. Passion fruit, chili, tomato etc. are produced in large amount which are in great demand from the wholesalers in Mokokchung town. In fact, today the village economy has changed from subsistence to cash economy. Some villagers own shops in the village and 27.94% are government servants employed in different categories of jobs. Animal husbandry also brings significant amount of money to the family as these are reared mostly for commercial purposes.
However in spite of these changes, landholding is one area that remains untouched by the changes. Even today, 70% of the land belong to clan and remaining land belongs to village and individual. It is very significant to note that the villagers still feel strongly about their land. Selling of land to the outsiders was not known and till today not even a single plot of land has been sold to outsiders.

**POLITICAL ORGANIZATION**

The political organization of the village is connected with the concept of clan. The village is ruled by five age groups, ‘foso’. These are medemjanger, mevongjanger, müjenjanger, kochajanger and riyongjanger and each foso rules the village rotatively for 30 years. The members of the reigning foso are referred to as Samen (Village Council). In Samen there is a group known as ‘elders’ and under their leadership Samen rules the village. Each clan is represented in the category of ‘elders’ and each clan unanimously chooses its representative on the basis of age, morality, ethical standards and ability for leadership and service. Members to be represented should have no physical deformities, should be trustworthy, hardworking and responsible. The fundamental principle of clan division facilitates the political organization of community life among the people and assure the smooth running of the village.
The chairman and secretary of the village council are selected from among the 'elders' for a term of five years, taking into consideration both the chungli and mongsen groups and all clans in the village. Thus, under their leadership the Samen rules.

Besides having duties and responsibilities in the village, the members of the Samen have certain duties in the larger political network. Nine members of the Samen are chosen as Gaonburas who act as mediators between the Samen and the district administration. During the colonial period the Gaonburas were chosen by the British on the basis of knowledge of customary laws. Today the Samen members are able to choose their representatives who of course need the approval of the district administration. Gaonburas are identified by a red shawl, which is specifically meant for them, a tradition started by the British.

The Samen enjoys both executive and judiciary powers. Samen controls the entire administration of the village, which includes students union, youth organization and women's societies. The Samen also supervises and controls the Village Development Board (VDB) to ensure that the VDB implements developmental works effectively. It also initiates audit on VDB's developmental works for which it appoints auditors and the reports made by the auditors are either approved or rejected by the Samen. It is the duty of the council to frame the rules and regulations concerning internal, external and
tradition-related cases and also to ensure that offenders are duly punished. Though women have no direct role in village administration, their welfare is not neglected by their male counterparts. VDB (Women) gets 25% and youth organization gets 20% from the total allocation of VDB fund.

Besides the Samen, there are two bodies known as Yim Mungdang (Village Conference) and Senso Mungdang (General Village Citizens Conference). Yim Mungdang is held every year where only the residents of the village assemble, while Senso Mungdang is held once in three years where all villagers both residents and non-residents (those in urban areas) get together. It needs to be stated here that inspite of the physical distance, the villagers residing in urban areas continues to maintain its membership in the Senso Mungdang.

All male adults are entitled to participate in both the Conferences failing which fines are imposed. Agendas for discussion are introduced in the conference and the members attended are allowed to present their views. In adopting decision the consensus of all the clans are drawn forth. Enforcement of laws and orders including the functional actions undertaken by the Samen are presented in the conference for the endorsement of the entire village citizen. They also examine the undertakings of the Samen and discuss about all matters relating to the welfare of the villagers.
The present study reveals that age group system and clans continue to be the core of the political set up of the village. With change of time the village has been drawn to the larger political network through certain institution and political organs, which operate at various levels in relation to the larger political set up. For instance, after the inception of Nagaland statehood in 1963 there are certain linkages between the village and the wider political system. These linkages assume particular importance at certain crucial periods as during the general election. The village council plays a crucial role as its approval is required in order to contest in the General Election. By doing so, the candidate has chances of winning the entire electorate of the village, as he becomes the official candidate of the village. Hence the political parties connect the rural electorate to the state legislature and the government.

**RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION**

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 Tsüngrém who are associated with creation, keeper of the land of dead, mountains, stones, rivers, forests, etc.
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.

Another 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 one’s deeds on earth. Meyutsüngba is the God of righteousness and so he demands a just life, purity, high moral, ethical standards and honesty. At the gate of Meyutsüngba every sin will be revealed and disclosed for shame and punishment.

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. 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 and they no longer follow the old practice of curing illness like renten, raki and kitsüng külem; instead they go to the medical dispensaries for modern facilities. However, use of indigenous medicines like nangbūra and tangma is very common among the
people. With the coming of Christianity, the people have given up certain beliefs and practices. They no longer make expensive offerings in times of sickness or abandon their 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).

At present 99.97% of the people are Christian, and during the course of fieldwork, only three families belonged to their traditional religion. The village has two churches belonging to Baptist and Revival denominations. In both the churches, pastors officiate the services and perform baptismal and confirmation rites. The pastor is assisted by deacons. Baptist and Revival churches have separate administration and it cannot be denied that there are attitude problems between these two denominations. Numerically Baptists are larger but Revivalists are more closely knitted and they consider all the church members as a family.

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 Nagaland. This organization was started forty years back to encourage women's participation in the
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 CHANGING SCENE**

The introduction of Christianity, monetization of economy, education and improvement in the communication system have transformed the village. The villagers have adopted small family norms which have positive impact in the economy as well as living standards of the people. Their expectations and aspirations have undergone certain change. Agriculture and horticulture products and also products like rice plates, bamboo spoons, and mugs etc which were hitherto produced to meet daily requirements are now sold in the markets in other towns. Monetary surplus generated by such process is channelized in various directions like purchasing television, installing telephones, educating children in reputed schools, college and universities etc. Since 1903 there has been gradual expansion of educational facilities and at present the village has three primary schools and one middle school.

Modernization has many positive impacts in the life of the villagers particularly the life of the youths. Students' organizations like Longkhum Students Union and Christian Youth Endeavor impart Christian values and beliefs and also provide a platform for the young girls and boys to utilize their
talents. However, the negative impact of modernization cannot be denied. The superficial westernization in matters of dress, food habits, music and other activities becomes popular among the younger generation. And such development has seriously challenged the traditional ways of life. Moreover, the disintegration of the institution ariju (boys' dormitory) and züki (girls' dormitory) has certain negative impact among the younger generation. These institutions played an important role in moulding a young member's personality. It was the place where traditional values, behaviours, beliefs and practices etc were taught. Thus the present generations know very little about such practices and about their ancestors and local history.

Longkhum village reveals dual characteristics; one adopting modern culture and the other following traditional practices. For instance, the very basis of political organization is interconnected with the concept of clan. The age-old traditional practices of age group system which was initiated in the institution of ariju is the basis of present political organization in the village, though ariju no longer exists in the village. Although they have embraced Christianity and believe in the teachings of Christ certain traditional practices still find place in the social, political and religious life of the people. For instance, people still fear to cultivate the areas that were demarcated by their forefathers as prohibited areas with a fear that the evil spirits might harm them.
CONCLUSION

It is observed that there are three agents that have brought changes in the village and they are British rule, Christianity and modernization. With the coming of the British rule the tribal areas were systematized and classified for administrative reasons, though this agent did not have much impact at the village level. The major changes in the village have been brought through Christianity and modernization.

One of the changes brought about by Christianity is that it tried to do away, with greater or lesser success, with superstitious beliefs, animal sacrifices and rituals. It also encouraged cleanliness and education.

Modernization has led to changes in social organisation, political organization and village economy. Further, the national and state politics have entered the village politics and now they have become a part and parcel of the larger politics. Subsistence economy has been changed to cash economy.

However, in spite of so many changes there are certain aspects which continue. For instance, kinship system, marriage rules like clan exogamy, monogamy, incest taboo etc are still protected. Traditional festivals are still observed with great gaiety although without traditional rites and
rituals. Even in agricultural practices, certain rituals and practices function even if they do not have the same meaning as they used to have once.

Thus it is observed that the villagers have the capacity of adapting to the changing environment and at the same time maintaining certain traditional practices.