 CHAPTER 7  
THE EPILOGUE

The Dimasa nationality question thus had strong historical roots. The post-1947 period is marked by the several phases of autonomy movements. Dimasa people have overcome the stage of ethnic group through this period and have developed into a nationality. The shared values of traditional customs and historical continuity through the ages of state formation have contributed towards the nationality formation among the Dimasa. The historical territory or homeland claims, their public and cultural history have justified their nationality status. Various political mobilization since the independence of India has shown the urge of the Dimasa to protect their traditional culture and identity, thereby attaining the status of nationality like its several counterparts of North East India.

**Tradition, myths, legends and folklore played a significant role in moulding the Dimasa nationality question.** In present times the Dimasa inhabit North Cachar Hills, Karbi Anglong, Nagaon, Cachar, Karimganj districts of Assam and Dimapur in Nagaland State. The Dimasa tradition divided the entire Dimasa people into four divisions, viz. the people of Dimapur, Dhansiri of Karbi Anglong are called as Dijuwasa and people of Nagaon are called as Demrasa; while the people of North Cachar Hills and Cachar are regarded as the Hasawsa and Harawasa respectively. However most of the Dimasa of Harawasa converted into the Hindu Brahmanical faith while Demrasa followed the Vaishnavaite tradition. The Dimasa of Dijuwasa and Hasawsa still follow their traditional belief system.
However despite these changes, the people of Dijuwasa, Demrasa, Hasawsa and Harawasa are still entrenched in particular beliefs such as the legend of *Arikhidima* and the system of *Daikho*. The Dimasa believed that, they are the sons of *Arikhidima*. Likewise the *Daikho* system occupied an important position in the lives of the Dimasa. According to the *Daikho* system, twelve *Daikhos* have controlled the Dimasa hereditary land. Moreover, the system of *Sengphong* or Petri-clan and *Julu* the matri-clan are prevalent among the Dimasa. Accordingly all Dimasa are divided into 40 *Sengphong* and 42 *Julus*. The matrimonial relation and the social stratification are strictly determined by the *Sengphong* and *Julus*. These traditions are significant in the formation of the Dimasa nationality question in that they show the shared values and mutual commitment. These traditionally shared values have strengthened Dimasas social wisdom which played an important role in developing social commitments among the Dimasa. A Dimasa may live either in Harawasa, in Demrasa or Dijuwasa or in Hasawsa but he shares the traditional values which ultimately leads to a commitment of social responsibility towards its own people.

The entire process of habitation, specifically the history of Dimasa people had its origin with the river. The river had a significant role to play in shaping its history. They lived in the banks of rivers like Dhansiri, Kopili and Barak. History tells us that the Dimasa, who were living in the banks of the river Dhansiri i.e. Dimapur shifted to Maibang, which was situated in the banks of river Mahur. The last vestige of Dimasa was at Khaspur in the banks of river Barak. Another section developed their chieftainship in the banks of the Kopili River. The Dimasa people regard them as the sons of water. The religious practice of holy bath at Kopili River is still prevalent among the
Dimasa. That belief led them to live in the bank of a river. Moreover the river was used as the rout for trade and communication. The Jamuna River was an important trade route for Mohung Dijua. A considerable amount of trade passed through the Kopili-Jamuna area. It also mentions that Jenkins and Pemberton, who visited this area in the early years of the nineteenth century, noticed that a large number of traders from outside participated in the big market at Mohung Dijua. Thus the river played an important role in society-polity and economy of the Dimasa people.

The state-formation process of Dimasa had its origin at Maibang. At Maibang the Dimasa came under the influence of Brahmanical Hinduism, for which Madan Konwar assumed the name Nirbhayanarayan and was proclaimed as the Raja. It is also mention worthy that all of Nirbhayanarayan’s predecessors had tribal names. The tradition goes that the prince in his difficult times came across a Brahman who predicted a good fortune for him. The young prince was delighted with the Brahman’s prediction. He accepted the Brahman as his Dharmadi guru (Dharmadhykshya) and gave him an important position in the court. The Raja with the help of Dharmadi traced his descent to a divine origin. The state formation process was initiated and strengthened by descent of divine origin. The Raja emerged as the head of the state and he was helped in his administration by the ministers called Patra and Bhandari. The head of the council of ministers and other important state officials were from the Dimasa tribe. Each division of the tribe called Sengphong, sent a representative to the royal court called Mel. The numbers of Sengphong, however, increased in due course of time. The state formation process was completed at Khaspur of Cachar plain. This stage was marked by two features: Sanskritisation
(Brahmanical Hindu) of the royal family and aristocracy and second, the large-scale use and patronisation of Bengali language and literature.

The three hundred years of state-formation process was checked by the colonial power. The British divided the Dimasa territory into several parts and created new administrative units. But despite these divisions, the Dimasa regarded the territory bounded in the east by the river Dhansiri, Kopili in the west, Mahur in the middle and Barak in the south as their historical territory. It is this geographical entity which formed the basis of their unity and integrity. The history of Dimasa’s habitation and state formation is also associated with these territories. Thus this geographical territory not only provided the historical continuity of Dimasa culture but also provided the genesis for the formation of the Dimasa nationality question.

The Dimasa people shared this territory as their common territory and regarded its history as their own. Here the role of Noblairaji or village organisation is significant. The term Noblai refers to a cluster of houses and the Raji refers to the inhabitants of that village. The village head is called the Khunang who exercises judicial and civil powers. This Noblairaji occupies a central point in Dimasa village organisation which is also connected with the territory. A federal relation among these Noblairaji strengthens the question of territoriality among the Dimasa.

Culture itself is a strong phenomenon in the process of nationality formation. The Dimasa dialect is rich with folklore, folk songs, ballads, phrases and idioms. Though the absence of a recognised script created several difficulties in the development of the language and literature, its colloquial form plays a cementing role among the Dimasa people. The performing arts
like music and dance alone reflects the richness of Dimasa culture. **The use of Risa, a traditional muffler is significant as a cultural marker.** The youth dormitory Nodrang plays a crucial part in cultivating the cultural aspects like dance, music, art forms etc. Thus culture itself distinguished the Dimasa people from other ethnic groups. The cultural markers are thus the identity of the Dimasa. **Festivals like Busu-Dima play a cohesive role among several clans which forms a traditional entity.** This cultural manifestation is certainly a factor which helps in nationality formation among Dimasa. The Dimasa are extremely cautious in protecting their identity, preserving cultural ethos, customs and tradition, and this explains why they could check the infiltration of Christianity into the Dimasa society. **The protection of identity** is also clearly evident in their political demands, which is regarded as very significant for nationality formation.

**The Dimasa history plays an important part of the nationality formation process.** The early phase of Dimasa history started from the Sadiyal branch and the Herembial branch. Although this early phase is legendary, the term Sadiyal -Kachari emerged since the time Manik was enthroned as the Raja of Sadiya. However the Dimasa migrated towards Dhansiri valley through the foothills of Nagaland. The Doyang-Dhansiri valley archaeological evidences bear proof to the presence of Dimasa culture. Thus the Sadiyal branch formed part of early Dimasa history extending from Sadiya to Dhansiri.

The Herembial branch of the Dimasa history was originated in the Kopili-Jamuna valley. The incidents of conflict with the Tripura Raja took place in this valley which caused the migration of Tripuris from this valley to present-day Tripura. The concept of Dimasa originating from Hirimba had its roots here and hence the term Herembial branch came into use.
The major phase of Dimasa history started only in Dimapur. The fortified city, its archaeological evidences reveal the **significance of Dimasa history at Dimapur**. Moreover the Ahom-Dimasa relations took a new turn at Dimapur. The Ahom had attached the Dimasa capital and occupied the territory of Dhansiri valley. The Ahom created a new post of Morangi Khowa Gohain to take charge of the Dhansiri valley. The Dimasa then shifted their capital to Maibang. **The Maibang phase was significant** in that it marked a process of sanskritization when the Dimasa Rajas assumed the title of the Hindu supreme God Vishnu or Narayana. This process had a tremendous impact on the society, polity and economy of Dimasa. Moreover the Ahom-Dimasa relations were turned into *foe and friend* in Maibang. Several times the Ahom attacked the Dimasa capital at Maibang; The Dimasa Raja also retaliated. However the animosity turned into friendship during the period of Dimasa Raja Tramadhvaj. The process of friendship was further strengthened by matrimonial alliances.

**The next phase of Dimasa history started at Khaspur, Barak valley of Cachar**. The Dimasa-Dehan matrimonial relation played an important part in this phase, which ultimately became the driving force towards the shifting of the capital from Maibang to Khaspur. Here the Brahmanical Hinduism, Sakta cult and the Vaishnavaite tradition played a cohesive role. These three factors contributed towards the social transformation of Dimasa people.

**The process of Sanskritisation which had started at Maibang was completed at Khaspur**. A new identity of Dimasa emerged as Barman-Khatriya. Moreover, both the Manipuri and Assamese form of Vaishnavism could influence the activities of Dimasa Rajas at Khaspur. This phase was also known for the internal conflicts, which paved the way for British control
in the Barak valley. The British occupied Dimasa territory and started a new set of economic and administrative arrangements to suit their colonial interests.

The next phase of Dimasa history became evident in the Kopili-Jamuna valley. The coronation of Kohidhan marked the beginning of this phase while the surrender of his son, Tularam marked its culmination. Though Tularam could establish supremacy in the Kopili-Jamuna valley, his reign was marked by both external and internal difficulties and the economy was also on the decline. As per the agreement with the British, he received a monthly pension of fifty rupees, but he had to pay Four hundred fifty rupees to British as an annual tribute. He ruled this territory with the help of his son, Nakulram and Brajanath. The descendants of Tularam were also subjected to poverty. Hence after his death the territory, covering an area of about 2160 sq miles, was made over to the British. Therefore, as reported by Bivar and supported by Jenkins and A.J Moffat Mills, Lord Dalhousie, the Governor General of India approved the proposal of annexation of Tularam’s territory on 27th August 1853. Accordingly the territory of Tularam was finally annexed in 1854.

A new phase started with the intervention of British colonial power. The British created a new administrative structure by dividing the Dimasa territory into several parts viz. Nagaon, Cachar and Naga Hills. Then they introduced the system of land revenue and direct taxation with a view to exploit national resources like timber and coal. They introduced Railways and other road communication systems. However the changes introduced by the British were not unopposed. The Revolt of Sambhudhan Phonglosa is noteworthy
here, although it ended in failure and the British could establish their supremacy in Dimasa territory.

The colonial period was a remarkable phase of Dimasa history as the introduction of western education and market economy played a pivotal in social change and mobility. The colonial power also declared some areas as excluded area and partially excluded area, where the process of urbanization started in several pockets of Dimasa-inhabited areas. These pockets turned into centres of education, market economy and administrative headquarters. These factors were largely responsible for the emergence of the Dimasa intelligentsia, which played a hegemonic role in society, economy and, particularly in the field of politics. The Railway, Bajar and the town had played an important role not only in the field of economy but also in the linguistic culture of the people. Dimasa language was confined among the Dimasa people only. A lingua franca called Haflong Hindi developed during the construction of railways. People of different places came to North Cachar Hills as labour, contractor, officer, engineers etc. Most of them were Hindi speaking people. After the completion of the work, a section of these people settled themselves in Haflong, Harrangajao, Ditekchhari, Maibang etc. These people communicated through the new lingua franca, a mix of Hindi and colloquial dialects, which was known as the Haflong Hindi.

However the socio-economic condition of the Dimasa people was deplorable. The colonial power used the common people as and when their free services were needed. The forceful recruitment of Dimasa people in railway construction was one of the reasons of the revolt of Sambhudhan. But in some cases like administrative development, education etc the newly emerging
Dimasa intelligentsia extended help to the colonial rulers. This reveals the fact that the Dimasa were not really attempting to support the colonial government but tried to capitalize on the situation for the uplift of their own status, under the mask of protecting their society and culture. Their collaboration was based on the belief that resistance would become a threat to their own position. However, it must be noted that it was not just a case of total cooperation: there was resistance too at some levels. This is also proved by the fact that Hagjer refused to allow the British Government to form a labour force during war times from the Dimasa community.

The Independence of India brought new changes. The Dimasa intelligentsia pressed the demand for a tribal council before the Gopinath Bordoloi Committee. However the Committee disregarded the demand and forwarded the provision of Sixth Schedule to the North Cachar Hills district along with the other hills area of Assam. Accordingly the Dimasa-inhabited North Cachar Hills was separated from Cachar district and amalgamated with Mikir Hills. A new district United Mikir and North Cachar Hills district was created with two District Councils for the Dimasa and Karbi people. The entire Dimasa people were included in several schedule lists in different nomenclature. Thus the Dimasa nationality was divided as Kachari in Nagaland, Hojai-Kachari in Nagaon, Barman in Cachar and Rukmini Barman in Karimganj districts of Assam. Only the Dimasa of United Mikir and North Cachar Hills was regarded as the Dimasa. Despite anthropological characteristics, historical background, cultural similarity, such divisions are not appropriate. Dimasa nationality had to suffer a sense of uncertainty due to the faulty policy of the Indian state.
Against this background, the Dimasa intelligentsia took a lead role in the election processes of the District Council. The Council became the constitutionally declared instrument for development. It rendered service in the field of education, road communication, health service etc. However the limited power and jurisdiction of District Council could not satisfy the urge of the intelligentsia. Therefore they also actively participated in the movement for Separate Hill State along with the Khasi, Garo and Karbi intelligentsia. Meanwhile the Official Language Issue raised by the Assamese Middle Class prepared the ground for discontent and strengthened the Hill State movement. But the moment when the Hill State movement reached its peak and the State of Meghalaya was born, the Dimasa intelligentsia disassociated themselves from the Separate Hill State movement. There were several reasons for this. The Karbi and the Dimasa unlike other hill tribes are pro-Hindus being largely influenced by Hindu religion and culture. Quite a large number of Garos and the Khasis are Christians and are influenced by a culture that it was western in outlook. Moreover, they had been all along against joining the Hill State on grounds of religion, culture, custom and language. The Garos and the Khasis are matriarchal whereas the Karbi and Dimasa are patriarchal. The numerical strength was also a reason. Karbi and the Dimasa were heavily outweighed in number: Garo Hills : 3,072,288 : Khasi and Jayantia Hills : 4,62,152; and North Cachar Hills : 2,79,726. Besides, the Karbi and Dimasa were the most backward both economically and educationally. The percentage of literacy in Karbi and North Cachar Hill was 12% whereas in the Khasi and Jayantia Hills it was 27%. Therefore for the Karbi and the Dimasa to join the proposed autonomous district was out of question. They moved for an understanding with the Government of Assam,
which resulted in the bifurcation of United Mikir & North Cachar Hills District into two districts i.e. the North Cachar Hills and Mikir Hills. The Mikir Hills was later declared as Karbi Anglong in 1976. Some administrative powers and departments were given to the concerned Councils by the Government of Assam.

However the aspirations of Dimasa intelligentsia remained unfulfilled. In alliance with the Karbi intelligentsia, it soon started the mobilization for separate state comprising the two hill districts of Assam along. Initially, this mobilization was confined among the intelligentsia and the course of movement was confined to submission of memoranda only. But eventually it mobilised mass support and the movement turned into a mass movement. The demand for creation of an autonomous state comprising the Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills under Article 224 (A) of the Indian Constitution, acquired mass support. Several civil society groups and other pressure groups extended their support towards the movement. The leaders could capture the power of District Council and even passed resolution in favour of their demand which assured its constitutional legitimacy. However the Government of India was not ready to provide an autonomous state by a further division of the Assam. Ultimately it resolved to sign the Memorandum of Understanding by providing for more powers with 29 departments and budgetary provision to the Councils named as Autonomous Councils. This MOU could bring some administrative change to the Councils, but could not fulfil the aspirations of a section of the agitational forces.

The Dimasa intelligentsia remained unsatisfied and it pressed demand for a separate Dimaraji state. It demanded the inclusion of all Dimasa-inhabited areas into a single administrative unit, carved out of the areas of Nagaon,
Karbi Anglong, North Cachar Hills, Cachar and Dimapur of Nagaland. Here the role of student’s organisation is mention worthy. The All Dimasa Student’s Union (ADSU) played a pivotal role in moulding public opinion. They could introduce their organisational network in almost all Dimasa-inhabited areas. The call of ADSU received wide response from the common people. Several social groups of Dimaraji area viz. All Assam Bengali Youth & Student federation, Nepali Students Union, Hrangkhol Hallam Committee, Baite Students Association, Jayantia Students Union, Hojai district Scheduled Cast Apex Committee All Barak Valley Students Federation, Barak Valley Tribal Right Protection Front, All Assam Rongmai Students Union, Barak valley Khasi-Jayantia Students Union and All Assam SC/ST Unemployed Association extended their support.

The Dimaraji Revival Demand Committee (DRDC) was formed to strengthen the Dimaraji separate state movement. Though DRDC participated in electoral politics it could not get the full support of the people. This organisation had to face several defeats in the District Council, Legislative Assembly and even parliamentary election. The weak organisational structure of DRDC was one of the reasons of its failure. Moreover they were not able to form a strong village committee or a constituency committee. Without forming such committees, the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary struggle was impossible. As a result it was not possible for DRDC to strengthen the Dimaraji separate state movement.

The participation of women was limited in the entire process of the movements for autonomy. It should be noted that although the Dimaraji Mahila Samaj was formed with the aim of women participation in such movements, there was no conspicuous active participation. This was a strong
limitation of the Dimasa intelligentsia, which failed to consider women as an important force to bring about change, despite their strong traditional social position.

At this critical juncture, armed opposition groups like *Dima Halom Daugah* (DHD) emerged with the same demand and created pressure on the Government through its armed activities. However the Government regarded the armed activities as a matter of law and order and used its apparatus to control the situation. As a result, the Dimasa public opinion opted for a peaceful dialogue process with the armed opposition groups. The DHD signed the cease-fire agreement with the Government of India. Their members were kept in designated camps. The formal process of peace was started between the Government of India and DHD on the vexed Dimaraji issue. This time the Dimasa intelligentsia could mobilize mass support in favour of the peace process and an amicable solution of the Dimaraji issue.

Violence began with the Hmar-Dimasa clash in 2003. The DHD split into two factions and the DHD (Jewel) came into prominence. Violence continued with the clash between DHD (J) and the armed forces. *Jadekhe Naiso Hosom* capitalized on the situation and moulded public opinion in favour of peace. As a result of such initiatives and pressure of police and para-military forces, the DHD (J) came forward for peace with Government by surrendering arms and ammunition. The Government of India appointed P.C Haldar, former Director-General of Intelligence Bureau as the interlocutor of the peace process. Though P.C Haldar was appointed and several rounds of discussion held between the parties, the concrete solution of the demand for Dimaraji is yet to be concluded.
Militant extremism became rampant among the Dimasa and several factors may be attributed to its growth. The political questions of the Dimasa remained unresolved, despite their series of movements. As a result, dissatisfaction grew among the youth and this led them to take up the path of armed struggle, being greatly influenced by the autonomy movement of the Mizo people under Laldenga and Bodo autonomy movement under Hagrama Mahilary, which became a source of reference. In both the cases, the Government of India responded positively and the movements had attained their goal. As a result, these two movements become the torch-bearers for other armed struggles of the North East. Moreover several other armed movements of North East have encouraged sufficient ground for armed activities.

The geographical terrain of North Cachar Hills and other logistic support of the armed groups of North East also contributed a lot towards the emergence of militant extremism among the Dimasa. It is also revealed in several reports that the international illegal arms trade has supplied necessary arms and ammunition to the armed opposition groups of the North East. The case of Dimasa militants is not different. They are said to have procured arms and ammunition from such arm-dealers. The armed groups often target corrupt bureaucrats and businessmen as their source of money. Their extortion drive is another source. Despite such sources, the Dimasa militants, mainly DHD (J) allegedly amassed money through the diversion of developmental funds of North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council for procurement of weapons. Nevertheless this aspect is under the scanner of National Investigation Agency of Home Ministry, Government of India. Nironjan Hojai, the self styled commander of DHD (J) was arrested from
Nepal on 4 July 2010. What seems attractive to the youth is the easy flow of money and its support for a comfortable lifestyle, while the buying and usage of weapons provided a life of excitement and adventure, particularly being in the limelight of the media. These are factors which would always prompt them to keep up the spirit of militancy, disregarding its impact on the ordinary people. The rise of the armed movements and violence was also the result of the apathy of the Indian state to the legitimate political aspirations of the Dimasa people. The armed groups while using the identity and historical issues to strengthen their claims have also used dormant inter-community conflicts for the same purpose.

The Karbi intelligentsia did not abandon the issue of autonomous state and while they tried to pressurise the Government through a constitutional process, a section of them, mainly the youth, had formed an armed opposition group and demanded a self-rule institution called Hemprek Kangthim. Both the demands for Dimaraji and Hemprek Kangthim reached a confronted position as both demands emerged in the same territory. This resulted in a conflict situation in which the Hmar-Dimasa clash of 2003 and Karbi-Dimasa clash of 2005 were the most tragic outcome, particularly victimizing the general innocent people. The loss of life and property became a common phenomenon. Thus the aspirations of the intelligentsia, supported by the masses, turned into a nightmare for everyone. The Dimasa nationality question thus received a serious jolt, when the masses withdrew their support of the movement.

Migration of other social groups into their homeland territory reinforced the Dimasa nationality question. As a consequence of migration, several ethnic groups settled within the boundary of the Dimasa territory. The first
among them were the Karbi and Jemi Nagas. The Jemi Nagas were followed by the Kuki, Hmar, Hrankhol, Baite etc. During the colonial period, the Bengali Hindu, Bihari and Pathans settled in the region with the introduction of railways and market economy. This process further accelerated after the independence of India. The economic potential of the area had attracted these migrant peoples, who made considerable contribution to the development of market and education.

However the presence of outsiders has created a fear psychosis among the Dimasa, of losing their identity, which became one of the props for the nationality question. Although several constitutional safeguards like Sixth Schedule, Reservations, etc, were introduced, the Dimasa found no guarantee for the preservation of their identity. A sense of losing their identity became an integral part of the nationality question. This fear has been largely responsible for the emergence of movements for autonomy. Moreover as the existing state administration could not protect the identity and in most of the cases, did not pay due attention, a sense of alienation developed which ultimately geared up the separate state movement.

At this juncture the Dimasa intelligentsia had an important role to play. They translated the questions of identity and homeland into autonomy movements. However due to its limitation it could not chalk out the structural drawbacks of the state system, of which they are an integral part, and hence they were also responsible for the socio-economic underdevelopment of the state.

Moreover, the Dimasa intelligentsia did not take cognizance of the historical truth that the Dimasa-inhabited territory has turned into the
common living space of several ethnic groups and that every group had their own legitimate aspirations for growth. These ethnic groups felt insecure in so far as life and property was concerned. Thus while the autonomy movement of the Dimasa was gaining momentum, the reaction of other ethnic groups got strengthened and resisted every move of the Dimasa intelligentsia, and instigated them to demand separate administrative units. Even the decision of North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council, which was dominated by the Dimasa intelligentsia, for changing the name of North Cachar Hills as Dima-Halali was sharply criticised by the other indigenous people. They registered their protest before the Governor of Assam. The Hmar people put one step forward by demanding a separate administrative unit for the Hmar and other indigenous people of North Cachar Hills.

The Government declaration for the creation of Dima-Hasao in North Cachar Hills District was strongly protested with several agitation programmes. The demand to bifurcate the Dima-Hasao district was also raised by the indigenous people. While the Dimasa intelligentsia raised their hands for protecting their identity, the identity question of other indigenous people was ignored and violated. Thus the exercise of hegemony itself created problems. It was a matter of irony for the Dimasa nationality question. The role of Government also created more complexity to the entire homeland question of the Dimasa and other indigenous people. Therefore a broad based policy was needed to be formulated for the homeland question without jeopardising the identity of other indigenous people.

The Dimasa nationality question gave lease to processes of change in Dimasa society. The Dimasa people began to pay more attention to the field of art, culture and literature. Attempts have been made by a section of Dimasa
to explore the potential of traditional art and culture, which had a tremendous influence on the mindset of the people, and attempts were also made for a fusion of traditional art-form with modern way of life. Thus culture becomes not only a symbol of identity but also a symbol of peace, unity and harmony. In the field of literature also a generation of writers and poets emerged. However due to the lack of consensus on the question of script a hindrance in the development of literature can be seen. Despite the richness of the Dimasa dialect, it lacked a proper script. The entire literary exercise of the Dimasa authors represents several scripts. Such as the Assamese Script, Bengali Script, Devanagri Script, and the Roman Script. Therefore a consensus on the question of script is essential for further development.

In this context the Dimasa autonomy movement deserve further review. First of all, it has to guarantee the identity question of all and respect the human rights question in the territory. Second, a mechanism needs to be developed which would recognise the constitutional rights, fundamental rights of the ethnic groups without jeopardising the identity question of the Dimasa people in their own homeland. Also, the basic socio-economic issues have to be reviewed properly with an aim to improve the condition of the down-trodden irrespective of their social status and ethnic background. Here the role of the state machinery is very important. Till now the state has adopted the policy of satisfying the intelligentsia of any agitation groups by giving a share of the power cake. The experiences of various movements of North East reveal that the state of India granted statehood or autonomy by concluding agreements or delimiting some powers through local self governments like panchayats, municipalities etc. It adopted policies for encouraging indigenous culture through television programmes in Hindi language so as to display a
favourable ideological integration with the Indian mainstream, on one hand; it also uses its apparatus to suppress any resistance. Even if a section of the intelligentsia accepted such state policy and played into the hands of power politics, another section would pick the dormant issues of nationality and gave them new dimensions. This see-saw confused the masses, which got frustrated and often offered support to movements that followed extra-constitutional means to achieve their declared goal. The Naga question and the Assamese question have proved the futility of state policies. The Dimasa nationality question is a classic example of this trend. This is clearly evident in the various stages of their movements. Therefore the state itself needs to formulate a concrete policy where the issues of the nationality can be reviewed properly. It should further attempt to resolve the issue by the adoption of rectifying measures on democratic principles of co-existence and equality of rights. The socio-economic development process has to be accelerated to meet the aspirations of not only the intelligentsia but also the masses.

In the final analysis, it may be stated that the genesis of the Dimasa nationality question is rooted deep in its history. The Dimasa people recognize themselves as more than a mere ethnic group; they see themselves as a nationality. Several factors like the shared values of traditional customs, historical continuity though the ages of state formation has contributed towards the formation of Dimasa nationality. They thus, recognize their nationality status on the basis of their socio-cultural, historical background, within a specific geographical territory. Geography played a significant role in the formation of the Dimasa nationality question and it is this geographical entity which formed the basis of their unity and integrity. The
The historical continuity of Dimasa culture is also associated with these territories. Thus this geographical territory not only provided the historical continuity of Dimasa culture but also provided the genesis for the formation of Dimasa nationality. The delineation of geographical space in the map of the north-eastern region of India was one of the main props for the justification of their nationality status. Their history and the state formation process have become important sources of inspiration for their nationality struggle.

The Dimasa intelligentsia, a product of colonial education and economy, played a hegemonic role in the Dimasa nationality question. The World War II and the Indian freedom movement had increased the importance of the Dimasa intelligentsia. Constitutional provisions like Sixth Schedule of Indian Constitution also contributed towards the political development of the intelligentsia. They offered leadership to the Dimasa nationality question through various stages of autonomy movements. Subsequently, as a consequence of their experience of participation in the autonomy movements of the Khasis and Garos, and the Karbis as well, they started their own movement for Dimaraji. In the Dimaraji movements they adopted both constitutional and extra-constitutional methods.

However there were some fundamental weaknesses of the Dimasa intelligentsia. The socio-economic foundation of the intelligentsia was so weak that it could not compete with the market forces. Therefore while exercising its hegemony on its own people; they also nourished a sense of deprivation. Moreover their cultural approach towards the identity question could not fulfill the economic aspiration of the people. As a result such limitations in the process of its formation, the autonomy movements suffered
several setbacks. During the various stages of the autonomy movements, the Dimasa intelligentsia could mobilize the mass people, but due to their strategic shortcomings, they could not exercise necessary pressure on the Government. Even, the aspirations of the common people were not fulfilled as a section of the intelligentsia played into the hands of the Government for their own interests. The Government also did not pay due attention to resolve the Dimasa nationality question. Moreover their demand for Dimaraji had faced serious challenges from other co-inhabitants, mainly the indigenous people. The Hmar-Dimasa and Karbi-Dimasa clashes were bitter experiences of the Dimaraji movement. As a result, the entire Dimasa nationality question, despite its strong manifestation and influence on the socio-political scenario of Assam, could not reach its declared goal.