CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology

This chapter is essentially about the procedures by which researchers went about studying the Social work practice among the Sumi tribe of Nagaland. It explicates the rationale of the study, based on which the research was designed and the relevance of research methodology for the problem chosen to study. This chapter also contains a field dairy, which gives a glimpse into the researcher’s experiences of fieldwork.

3.1. Rationale of the study

As mentioned in the previous chapters, there has been a lot of discourse among the scholars on various issues, especially Indigenization and contextualization of social work practice. Many scholars have pointed out that, around the world and in post-colonial minority countries, social work is based upon Western epistemology, which has long been the dominant source for finding social solutions and emphasis on the universality of human behaviour. As a result, for a long period, local practices, drawn from alternative notions of human process and consciousness, have been ignored. Smith (1999) points out: “Indigenous peoples need to analyze critically the colonial past to decolonize their minds, hearts, bodies and spirits” (pp. 19-21). The researcher’s experience of being involved in the community social work activities before getting a Master’s Degree in Social work and her being a professionally qualified social worker motivated her to search for the meaning of social work practice among the Sümi tribe. The review of literature showed that the concept of ‘Social Work’ has several meanings across different cultures. Further, the differences in language and the term used for Social Work pose challenges in arriving at a common understanding of social work. The researcher felt that social work tradition among Sümi tribe is very old and can be traced right from the headhunting days when bachelor dormitories were the seat of socialisation. With the coming of Christian missionaries, bachelor dormitories lost their importance and the church-based social community work gained in prominence. Later the government sponsored activities and programmes became popular. In recent years, donor-funded national and international NGOs have started proliferating. It has been observed that a distinct shift in the nature of
social work has emerged consequently from the social reform, social reconstruction to livelihood and human rights issues. However, to describe a ‘Professional Social work’ and ‘Professional Social worker’ among the Sümi tribe is rather embryonic as the understanding of Social work refers to a myriad of voluntary activities, which has been practiced since time immemorial. In line with Pathak’s (2006) categorization of social work in India, social work is an activity which is carried out with a sense of responsibility and human kindness to do whatever is possible by themselves to individuals, families and the community in need. Thus, the researcher felt it imperative to know what the Sumi community did a hundred years ago (and even today), when there were (are) no trained social work professionals with impressive paper qualifications. What is social work to them? Who is a social worker? How did they develop their own knowledge, skills, and wisdom to solve their basic problems of the community? Considering these questions, the researcher felt the need to explore the historical and the socio-cultural aspect and knowledge of social work practice from the Sümi tribe perspective. Another reason was though many studies have been undertaken on the Sümi tribe, these mainly covered the theological, ethnic and political issues among Sümi’, there was no study yet on the social work practice among the Nagas and the Sümi’ in particular. Hence, a study of this nature was felt necessary.

3.2. Objectives of the study

The broad objective of the study was to understand the Social work practice among the Sümi tribe of Nagaland.

The specific objectives were:

- To acquire knowledge of Sümi tribe’ perception and the concept of Social work
- To study social work activities and the driving factors behind their engagement in social work activities
- To study the changing situation and to look at the components influencing the changes in social work practice among the Sümi tribe
3.3. Designing the study: Qualitative Method

For this study, the researcher used qualitative approach, because, firstly, it was in line with the philosophical position of the researcher and, secondly, because it contains a series of techniques that are well suited for the present study. Qualitative research is termed ‘knowledge constructing’ and understanding of a social reality and cultural meaning, while focusing on interactive processes, or events (Gilgun & Abrams, 2002; Neuman & Kreuger, 2003), and a way to represent authentic experiences (Silverman, 2001). This enabled the researcher to locate the voices of the Sümı people, the meanings they constructed, explore the knowledge construction about Sümı Social work that is very little known and has not been explored. Silverman (1993) terms this style of research the social organization of description. However, the researcher wanted to move beyond description and consider the interdependence of institutions and activities and presents a statement about reality and social life that has to be continually argued and reaffirmed (Layder, 1993; Holliday (2007).

- **The Ethnographic Approach**

  Though not always recognised, ethnography and social work advocates a surprisingly similar goal: to understand the human experience as it is lived, felt, and known by its participants (Goldstein, 1994). The researcher, as a professionally qualified Social Work student and from the experience of working with the community, felt the need to get involved in searching for the meaning of events and behaviour with regard to Social Work Practice. The researcher felt that in some important respects, this work is similar to that of the ethnographer who seeks to understand the culture of another society and critically examines the frames of reference internalized from his or her own culture (Scott, 1989). The usefulness of ethnographic methods to cross-cultural practice in the human services has been a primary theme in the work of Green (1995) and his associate Leigh (1998). Their primary emphasis, however, has been on the way practitioners can use informants, cultural guides, translators, and field observations to ‘build a knowledge base’ about a particular ethnic group with an emphasis akin to the cultural literacy approach. Therefore, this research converges significantly from the work of these authors by suggesting that ethnographic concepts and principles could help cast light on social
Social Work Practices: Tradition and Changes among the Sümi Tribe

work practice, by understanding the participant’s distinctive frame of reference. The application of ethnography helped in providing information about settings and situations essential for this study. As mentioned by Sherman and Reid (1994), it helped the researcher in increasing her understanding of the whole culture, particularly that is relevant to Social Work Practice of the Sümi tribe and in constructing the reality.

- **Constructivist Stance**
  Constructivist stance in this study is the way it promotes the acceptance of the experiences and knowledge of individuals and groups. Scholars like Babbie (1990) and Bruner (1986), believe that constructivist research requires a high level of respect for the participants and their knowledge. The knowledge, while being individually constructed, is also being developed within community groups, the workplace, and within families. From this point of view, it was not the researcher’s role to question the validity of the experience of the Sümi tribe and their practice of social work. Instead, the researcher documented their experiences as the community constructed.

Keeping in mind the essence of constructivism, the researcher considered the culture and context when interpreting what occurred in society based on the participants’ creation of knowledge. Shannon & Young (2004) isolate two constructivist themes that were found useful for discussing Sümi social work practice. The first theme is an Active “Human Agency”, which views people as creative. People set and strive to reach goals, thus demonstrating agency. The second theme is a criterion of useful “knowledge”, where skills, knowledge and creativity are used in order to achieve one’s goals. This aspect of constructivism fits in practice with a holistic view of the participant. Thus, the participants validated and interpreted their knowledge in relation to the wider community. The common ultimate goal for taking a constructivist stance was to use the knowledge of the community for the benefit of the participant’s community.

- **Adopting the stance of learner**
  As stated earlier, the researcher, as a qualified Social Work student, was sceptical about the Sümi tribe’s Social Work Practice, but since a critical feature of ethnography is the positioning of the professional or researchers, not as experts, the researcher had to unlearn and adopt the stance of a learner. According to Spradley (1979), ethnographers
ask, ‘What do my participants know that I can discover?’ as opposed to, ‘what expert knowledge do I possess which will help me explain this?’ It may be noted that it was not easy to unlearn the classroom orientation on professional social work that had already been engraved in the mind of the researcher. However, the learner’s stance encouraged the expressions of multiple ideas and subjugated knowledge. This study agrees with Scott and Borodovsky (1990) on eliciting idiographic cultural content directly from participants, rather than from nomothetic accounts in secondary sources, which is an ethical responsibility of the culturally competent researcher.

- **Listening for meaning**

According to Green (1995), ethnographers listen for the underlying cultural ‘meanings,’ by particularly focusing on ‘language’ as a pathway to the discovery of meaning. For the study, it was felt important to listen and understand the language used by the participants and attempt to see the underlying meanings of particular words which the participants used for explaining their stance on the concept of Social Work and the activities. Silverman (2001) points out that the process of understanding concepts through interpreting stories’ can be enhanced by analysing how the stories are told and one can develop an impression of how the storytellers understand their story through their use of language.

While interacting with the participants, especially the elderly people, the researcher had to be extra careful because the participants kept on narrating stories even beyond the questions that were asked. They were keen to tell the researcher about their lived experiences of life, their struggle for survival, their encounter with the British and Indian army, and the time spent by them during grouping/labour camp and their participation in World War II. The researcher agrees with Spradley (1979) that “language is more than a means of communicating about reality: it is a tool for constructing reality” (p.17). Therefore, the ‘language’ in this study was not simply a tool for transmitting information, but it established the meanings speakers assign to their experiences. In this regard, a key ethnographic concept is the ‘use principle’ (Spradley, 1979), that is, rather than directly asking respondents, ‘What do you mean?’ the researcher attempted to discover tacit meanings by attending to the way that phrases and terms were used in ordinary language.
As Sells, Smith, & Newfield (1997) stated, the researcher attempted to elicit ‘un-translated’ speech and meaning by repeatedly encouraging the interviewees to tell their stories ‘in their own words’ (e.g., family crisis and how people helped, etc). The researcher used strategies, such as restating and incorporating key phrases and terms used by the participants, as a way of prioritizing the participant’s voice. The important contribution of ethnography for this study was the use of the ‘conversation’ metaphor to underscore the mutual, dialogical nature of ethnographic knowing. According to Geertz (1973), the goal of ethnographic inquiry is to create ‘a mutually comprehensible dialogue’ and ‘a ground for further conversation’.

- **Engaging in Self-reflexivity**

Ethnography stresses on the concept of ‘reflexivity.’ Vigilant and ongoing reflexivity is considered foundational to a recognition of the ways in which the autobiographies, cultures, and historical contexts of inquirers determine what they see and do not see (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1989). For this study, the researcher practiced reflexivity through the writing of reflexive journals, field notes, and memos (Sells, et al., 1997; Wax, 1971). These writings contained the introspective record of the researcher’s ideas, fears, mistakes, confusion, breakdowns and problems that arose in the course of inquiry. Overall, the ethnographic perspective offered several key concepts and processes that were used as building blocks in understanding the social work practice of the Sümi tribe. In simple words, ethnography enabled the researcher to know in a more profound way.
3.4. Selection and description of the field site

Map 1: District Map of Nagaland State

Source: http://www.mapsofindia.com/maps/nagaland/nagaland.htm

The study was carried out in the predominant area of the Sümi tribe, that is, Zunheboto district of Nagaland. The researcher selected two urban pockets of Zunheboto town - New colony and Amiphoto - and two villages, namely, Ghuvishe and Asukhomi village. For the present study, these four places were selected based on the year of establishment, location of the place and representation of Sümi tribe from different villages.

The reason for taking both urban pockets in town and villages was to enable the selection of participants from both urban and rural areas. Most of the cultural practices are still visible in villages. On the other hand, in urban areas, with the development, there has been a change in social life, life standard and so on. Another reason for selecting this district was that the researcher being a Sümi tribal herself and belonging to two of the field sites (Asukhomi village- her native village and New colony in Zunheboto town as her home town) chosen for the study made sense.

Zunheboto District is situated in the heart of Nagaland State. The present Zunheboto District covers an area 1,255sq. Km and is bounded by Mokokchung district in the East
and Wokha district in the West. The Sümi are not confined to the central part of Nagaland, but are also settled in Myanmar and different parts of India such as Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.

Map No. 2: Zunheboto District Subdivisions

Zunheboto town is home to the Sümi Naga tribe. Zunheboto came into existence in 1942 and since then, many changes have been taking place. In an interview with different community leaders, it emerged that prior to establishing Zunheboto town, the present Zunheboto district was once a part of Mokokchung district.

Before 1941, there was no inter-village road, except jungle footpaths. During and after World War II, there was a great awakening and growing enthusiasm for education among the Sümi people (Ghosh, 1997) with the opening of the Christian Centre for the Sümi tribe at Aizuto. In 1938, a Mission School was started. It was told that Sümi students, who were studying at Impur and Kohima Mission Schools up to IV Standard, were transferred to Aizuto Mission School. In spite of their desire to acquire Christian
education, the newly converted Christians residing at Tizu valley were not able to go to the Mission School due to bad road and non-availability of transportation. Understanding the difficulties faced by the people, Mr. Hezukhu of Sheyepu village, who was the then Head Dobashi, surveyed the possibility of constructing a short cut route and thereafter, the new road was constructed from Awochakili point bridle path via Asukhomi, and linked with the other bridle path at Sheyepu village. The road construction was completed in 1941. It was during this period, Hezukhu discovered a place, which, later on, came to be known as Zunheboto (an extract from Zunheboto Town Golden Jubilee Souvenir, 1992). Shotomi village donated large portion of the village land for establishing Zunheboto.

On 10 February 1942, an Upper Primary School in Zunheboto town was started and Mr. Xuvishe of Asukhomi village was appointed as the Head Pandit of the school. Subsequently, M.E School was started with the money collected from the people, which were later on taken over by the government and a private High School was opened in 1949 (source: Zunheboto Town Golden Jubilee Souvenir, 1992). It was told that the M.E. School compound was the centre of the administrative headquarters and in 1973, Zunheboto became a district; with it headquarter at Zunheboto town (interview with Yetovi Yeputho on 4 April, 2010). It is said that after a long deliberation, the name ‘Zunheboto’ was accepted. The word Zunheboto is derived from two sets of the Sümi word ‘Zunhebo’ and ‘To’. 'Zunhebo' is a kind of flowering plant with its green leaf on the obverse, and whitish hairy on the reverse. The flower contains sweet juice in the pore and the word ‘To’ means top of the hill. Hence, the name 'Zunhebo-to' or Zunheboto, as it is known today (Ghosh, 1997, Zunheboto Town Golden Jubilee Souvenir, 1992). Currently the Deputy Commissioner heads the district. With the rapid expansion of the town, at present Zunheboto town is divided into ten wards, namely, Laghilato (earlier it was part of New Colony) New Colony, Old Town, Khuwaboto, North Point, Alahuto (earlier it was a part of Old Town) Project Colony, DC Hill, South Point, Amiphoto (it was a part of South Point Colony). However, for the present study, the researcher selected two urban pockets, i.e., New Colony, which is located on the eastern part, which came into existence 1959, and Amiphoto Colony, which was established in 1990 and is located on the southern part of Zunheboto Town. The researcher selected two villages, i.e.,
Asukhomi Village, which is 10 km away from Zunheboto Town and has a semi-urban characteristics and Ghuvishhe Village, which is 50 km away from Zunheboto town and has rural characteristics.

Photo No. 1: Zunheboto town (District Headquarter of Sümi Tribe)


3.5. Sampling method and the process

Qualitative research employs non-probability samplings (Burns, 2000) and the most common technique is judgmental, or purposive, sampling (Fretterman, 1989). According to Devers & Frankel (2000), purposive sampling strategies are designed to enhance the understanding of selected individuals or groups’ experiences or for developing theories and concepts. As mentioned by Marshall, (1996), the researcher actively selected the most productive sample to answer the research question and the participants were selected by the researcher subjectively (Babbie, 1990; Groenewald, 2004). Lofland & Lofland (1995) stated that qualitative sampling tends to be purposive, because the universe is more limited and partly because social processes have a logic and a coherence. For this study, the researcher selected a sample which she felt was representative of the population of interest based on the purpose of the research. A
section of the Sümi people from both rural and urban population was selected. Altogether, 34-community leaders and 36 families were selected for in-depth interviews and 18-group discussions were conducted with various groups. Each group discussion consisted of 4-8 members. The criteria for selection of participants were as follows:

- **Elders in the community** - Elderly men and women who could tell the history and had been involved in community activities at one point or the other were included for the focus group discussions. There were very few written documents and since the community practice oral tradition, passing the knowledge from generation to generation, it was important to have FGD with elderly people to know about the traditional practices and their views on the changes that are taking place. FGD was also conducted with SHGs, Aloji and youth members.

- **Community leaders** - both urban and rural, past and present, women and men, who had either rendered their service voluntarily or were elected by the people were selected to know about their involvement and role in organizing social work activities. This includes, Clan heads, Hoho members, STH members, Studen’t Union leaders, GBs

- **Church leaders** - Head Pastors, Youth Pastors, Women Pastors. Among the Sümi tribe, since the arrival of Christianity, the Church has become the centre of community life. The Church plays an important role in the life of individuals, families and the community. Different departments of the church organize several social work activities for the benefit of the community. The Church Committee members of different departments were interviewed so that the researcher could gain more knowledge by comparing what the leaders had said in the individual interviews. Therefore, it was important to select the church leaders.

- **Family** - The researcher felt it necessary to study family because the family, as a social unit, plays a crucial role in community participation and community development.

- **Self-help groups and Aloji (cultivator’s gang)** – These were selected, as these are two important groups. The Aloji has been functioning in the community since
time immemorial, as the Sümis were agrarian. On the other hand, SHGs are of origin that is more recent.

3.6. Methods and tools of data collection and the procedure

For secondary data, the researcher collected data from the library sources, government’s official records, and church records, records of NGOs, journals, magazines, newspapers, and National reports. For primary data, semi-structured interview guide was prepared and used for individual interviews and focus group discussions. Photographs, telephonic interview, field notes, observations, and informal conversation were used as additional tools of documentation.

As mentioned earlier, ethnography employs multiple methods of data collection, and ethnographers typically observe, conduct interviews, and analyze relevant archives and artifacts during a single research effort. For this study, data collection tools was tailored to meet the information needed and the researcher determined the information required, to address the research questions, and designed a mix of techniques to extract information.

- **Participant observation**

For this study, the researcher used participant observation as a research strategy, as acknowledged by Denzin and Lincoln (1994). Ellen (1984) observes that methodology means different to different people and there has been no homogenous view of participant observation (Savage, 2000). However, the dominant view shows that participant observation is a method, instrument, or a technique for data collection (Baillie, 1995; Spardley, 1980). In all the four field sites, the researcher, as a participant observer, took part in whatever was going on, in order to understand and have emic experience (Emerson, et, al., 2001; Savage. 2000). The researcher grew up participating in community work but never looked at such work from researcher’s perspective. During the course of data collection, the researcher participated in all the cultural, church and community activities especially the social work activities. This enabled the researcher to observe activities of the people, physical situation, and social situation of the community
in a more critical way (Burns, 2000; Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995). The researcher gathered information by watching people come together for community work. The researcher got valuable information through casual interaction with people, and by reading available reports and records.

Photo No.2: The researcher as participant observer in Ghuvishe village

Source: Fieldwork photo taken in the month of June 2010 by the researcher

• **In-depth interview**

According to Fetterman (1998), Ethnographers use interviews to help classify and organize an individual’s perception of reality. Ethnographic interviews are less formal and less interviewer-driven than traditional interview formats. As anthropologist Agar (1996) wrote, in an informal interview, “Everything is negotiable. The informants can criticize a question, correct it, point out that it is sensitive, or answer in any way they want to” (p. 90). For this study, the researcher took in-depth interviews with 19 community leaders such as Sector Town Council Member, Sector Gaon Burah (GB), Youth leaders, Church leaders, PA to DC and NGO leaders in urban areas. In rural areas, 15 leaders such as Village chief (Akükau), VDB secretaries, Pastors, Student union leader, STH leader, Club member were selected.
The researcher felt the need to take in-depth interviews with the family, as family is central to community life. Based on the size of the family, the participants were chosen. 9 families were chosen purposefully from each of the four field sites. The families were categorized into three sub categories: Small family consisting of 1-4 members, medium family consisting of 5-9 and big family consisting of 10 or more members. For each category, 3 families were selected purposefully with the help of community leaders who had proper knowledge of the families in the community. Altogether, 36 families were interviewed. The interviews were conducted with the adult family members available at the time of visit.

The process of interview did not necessarily followed a preset format, or linear line of questioning, as mentioned by Ellen (1984), but it was guided instead by the talk itself, by what was said, and what was left unsaid. Since an ethnographic interview is more like a conversation than a traditional interview, the researcher had conversations with people who, in turn, made the participants to express their views and narrate their stories and experiences. The researcher regarded the interview as a lengthy conversation, which lasted for 1 to one and 2 hours, depending on the purpose of the topic of inquiry. This informality does not mean that the researcher did not prepare for interviews. The researcher planned questions and developed interview protocols. The participants cooperated and were so enthusiastic that they wanted to share everything. Being one of the few PhD scholars from the community in the field of social work, participants were inclined to share their problems faced by them and the community. Most of the time the researcher was advised to bring a change in the society and to help people especially those who did not benefit from the grants and schemes of the government. In spite of these problems, the researcher ensured that the interview flow and questions were not forgotten.

- **Focus group discussion**

Although most writers acknowledge that the group interaction is an important feature of focus groups, in practice, it is the most frequently used tool for collecting individual-level data, albeit in a group setting (Morgan, 1988; Ward, Bertrand, and Brown 1991). For some participants, an open, supportive group context may be more comfortable than one-
on-one interviews. Others focus not on participant withholding of information, but on the possibility that their contributions may not represent their “true” underlying beliefs (Albrecht, Johnson, & Walther 1993; Morgan, 1988; Stewart & Shamdasani 1990). For this study, group discussions were conducted with small groups of people with particular characteristics convened for discussion of a particular topic (Hollander, 1994). Generally, a focus group includes 4 to 12 participants (Krueger & Casey 2000) but for this study, the group consisted of 4 to 8 members facilitated by the researcher. The focus group discussion went on for 1 to 2 hours or more, depending on the availability of the group members and their willingness to discuss.

The researcher tried to get the conversations audio, or videotaped for later transcription and analysis, but due to technical problems and also some distractions, this technique was not used throughout the discussions. Except for the initial group, the conversations were noted. Focus groups were used for exploring the interactional processes, which took place among group members, used as a site for observing the collaborative processes of meaning construction (Kitzinger, 1994a, 1994b; Lunt & Livingstone 1996) and for exploring taken-for granted cultural assumptions (Montell, 1999).

*Photo No. 3. Focus group discussion with women in Asukhomi village*

*Source: Fieldwork photo taken on 1st week of December 2009 by the researcher*
It was observed that focus group benefited not only the researcher, but also the participants. They enjoyed the whole discussion session. Elderly group of participants would reminisce about their growing up years, their youth days, and their activities. There were times when they would become emotional when recollecting the hardships they faced and at times, they would pull each other’s leg and laugh. Occasionally, they would thank the researcher for bringing them together, and their memories of those days, which they had long forgotten. Focus group discussion allowed them to share their thoughts and validate their feelings and opinions (Madriz, 1998; Frith, 2000) and brought out valuable information as the group members encouraged and reminded each other of the details in case the other member forgot.

3.7. Process of data analysis

Miles & Huberman (1994) describe qualitative analysis as including three concurrent flows of activity: data reduction, data display and data conclusion drawing/verification. They state that these three characteristics operate in a cyclical manner. All the characteristics influence and affect the data collection process. Miles & Huberman, (1994a) provide guidelines for beginning the data analysis: “Start intuitively- Think of the focus or heart and build outward. Think of what you will not be studying as a way to firm up boundaries. Admit that the boundary is never quite as solid as a rationalist might hope” (p.27). The researcher followed this advice and the analysis began with this approach.

- Preliminary Data Analysis

The interview undertaken was in the form of a focus group discussion with elderly people and leaders in all the four field sites. A preliminary data analysis was made immediately after the discussion with elderly people in the community, in order to identify the emerging issues. Some of these early findings fell into two broad categories. First, they had their own knowledge and skills of social work activities. Secondly, the concepts of social work practice of the Sümi tribe. This initial focus group immediately demonstrated the importance of approaching a wide range of individuals who were leaders of different groups at different levels, both in rural and urban areas. As further
data was collected through one-on-one and groups, the preliminary data analysis technique was repeated until sufficient information had been gathered. The general process was adopted. Notes were also made concerning which particular issues needed to be followed up either with the present participants, or with new participants (Grbich, 2007).

**Segmenting the Data**
This analysis involved examination of the data, noting specific items, and the creation of names for chunks’ of data (Ely, et. al., 1997). Topics were listed and grouped, while exceptions were noted. At this point, specific key words were analysed and, as mentioned above, this led to identifying and approaching different people whom the researcher felt would be able to fit into this study. Grbich (2007) suggests representing part of the data at this stage in the form of a poem or a vignette. However, the researcher opted to keep the data together as much as possible, which is also characteristic of narrative approaches (Engel & Schutt, 2009). Keeping with narrative analysis, the segmentation did not approach the degree of separation that typically occurs in thematic analysis. Instead, the researcher chose to organise the data using techniques from traditional coding systems.

**Coding During Data Analysis**
The coding for narrative analysis is typically of the narrative as a whole, rather than of the different elements within them (Engel & Schutt, 2009). As Lofland and Lofland (1995) wrote, it is particularly useful when open-ended questions are asked: ‘What do I see going on here?’ or ‘How do I categorize the information?’ Lofland & Lofland identified two steps in the process of coding. In the first, called initial coding, the researcher read the responses and generated numerous categories (Lofland, 2006). At this point, the aim was to identify related data without undue concern for the variety, or the quantity, of categories. Some of the example of preliminary codes, drawn from this study, included the following ideas and phrases: Traditional foundation of social work- the family, etc. The quantitative method of counting how many times a word was spoken was not used. Rather, the researcher employed the narrative technique of copying the entire relevant section and transferring it to the relevant file (Grbich, 2007; Miles & Huberman,
1994a). Thus, each participant’s response was minimally edited and presented in its wider context.

The second of Lofland & Lofland’s steps is focused coding. The codes were reviewed and those that were less useful, or infrequently occur, were either removed, or combined with codes of a similar nature. Similarly, if a particular code had a large number of responses, the data was subdivided, e.g., under the category of family the researcher subdivided into (i) The provider, and (ii), The caretaker, etc. At this stage, the researcher attempted to fit the smaller codes within a wider frame.

- **Presentation of Data**

The data was left predominantly untouched by the researcher as the narrative method is presented in a way that keeps it intact. Through a narrative approach, it is acknowledged that the participant shared stories about themselves from their point of view and the information that they choose to tell reveals how the researcher perceives the information (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998). Therefore, the researcher presents the findings in as pure a manner as possible. In practical terms, this means minimizing editing and not artificially retooling the participant’s argument or mode of speaking. The answers and their meanings remain intact and remain with the participants. The narrative analysis method welcomed and encouraged the participant’s involvement in the research process and in the use of data. The participants controlled the interview process. Their responses were conveyed in their own words - and in an unchanged format.

### 3.8. Ethical consideration

This study was conducted among the Sümi tribes, which is the researcher’s own tribe. Hence, it was not helpful to use pseudonyms, as it would have been evident while describing the roles. However, in some instances, the researcher exercised judgment and decided to use the pseudonyms to disguise the identity of the individuals in some of the sensitive issues in order not to expose the individuals who gave the information (Fetterman, 1998; Alvesson & Karreman, 2011).
3.9. Limitation of the study

Ethnographic research in one’s own culture does not require as much time undertaking a research in others cultural setting since the language and customs are familiar and the researcher is already an insider in many respects. However, one of the limitations is that being too familiar made the researcher take events for granted - leaving the important data unnoticed and unrecorded. The study left out the government agencies, which could have given the government perspective on social work practice, activities, their role, and involvement. The study could have focused on the Nagas as a whole rather than limiting itself to one tribe alone.

3.10. Field Dairy: A glimpse into a Researcher’s Experience

As professionally qualified Social work student felt the need to do a research in the field of social work, which I believed nobody in Nagaland had ever done. From the time of preparing a research proposal, my research guide continued to support and motivated me to take the challenge of doing something different but to a novice researcher it was a like plunging into tranquil waters to be caught in a whirlpool.

After presenting my research proposal in November 2009, I went to my hometown in and thought of starting my fieldwork immediately but due to Christmas and New Year season, it was difficult to meet leaders in the community. Most of them were engaged in organizing community programmes.

In the month of December 2009, Asukhomi being my village, I went to attend Christmas programme from 23rd to 25th December 2009. During this time, I was able to observe and participate in community social work, have informal conversation with the community and conduct the first focus group discussion but it was discontinued for few weeks. My fieldwork restarted in the month of February 2010 by visiting Aghunato village and completed 3 months of my data collection.

In the month of May 2010, my Research Guide visited my field and suggested to explore another village in the vicinity, which was far away from township area. My guide and I visiting Ghuvishe village and spoke to the Akükau. On the first day of my field visit, I
noticed that the road, which connects the village from the Aghunato sub-division, was rough, bumpy, and fair weathered road. While traveling down the winding road, I could see a beautiful sight that astounded me. A small village surrounded by green hills with azure sky. On reaching the village, my research guide and I met the village chief and discussed about the purpose of our visit. He accorded permission to collect data for my research. With grateful heart, we travelled back to Zunheboto only to return after a week for the second and longer period. While conversing with the headman we were informed that during rainy season, no conveyance could make its way. Villagers have to climb the entire hill to reach a small town (Aghunato town) for various day-to-day activities and basic needs. I panicked at the thought that with limited time, if I could not complete my data collection I would have to wait for another two-three months to get back to village until the end of monsoon season.

Weeks later as I prepared to go to the village alone, I tried getting as much information in order to fit myself among the villagers who were unknown to me. Though I belong to the same tribe, I had this feeling of apprehension as to how villagers would reciprocate to my query. I was fortunate enough to be welcomed to the village without any problem. During my data collection, the village headman and his family allowed me to stay with them and treated me as their own family member. I did not face any problem for fooding and lodging. The villagers were hospitable and co-operative despite of their busy schedule. As it was sowing season, a busy time for the villagers, it was difficult to get them in their house except on Sundays. The villagers would leave their house at dawn and return at dusk. For the first few days, I struggled to get accustomed to their work schedule and requested few families to spare me their time, which they did. However, seeing their struggle and remembering the instruction from my research guide, I decided to accompany them to their terrace cultivation and jhum land in order to interview and observe the cultivators group and people’s participation in giving free labor to the village Akükau, which is practiced even today. As a participant observer, I could observe a few things but after participating with them in various activities, I started to get the feeling of people and could understand from their point of view. More than the interaction with people at their homes, I got a better insight and got to meet different groups such as women’s group, youth groups as a participant. One of the problem that I faced in my field
visit was at some point the villagers mistook me as a government representative and they had some reservations. Few families were cynical to share their source of income fearing that they would not get any subsidy if they disclosed the actual source. Another problem was to get the exact age of the people, as most of the villagers are illiterate or early school dropouts who barely knew how to read and write. It was difficult for them to keep count of their own and their children’s age.

The second village was Asukhomi village. Being a part of the village, there was no need to take permission from the village authority to collect the data but my classroom learning prompted me to follow the procedure as a researcher. I went and took permission from the village authorities and assured that they would extend necessary help.

Asukhomi village is close to my heart as I belong to this village. I never lived permanently in the village as my parents settled at Zunheboto town but my paternal grandparents lived there until they died. The rustic life attracted me and as kid, I always looked forward to holidays to visit my grandparents and to accompany them to field (in true sense a troublemaker rather than a helper), and in season the smell of fresh vegetables and midday meal cooked by my aunty and grandma always enticed me. To a great disapproval from my grandparents and my aunty, I would occasionally accompany my friends in village to collect firewood from the forest, go to river to for fishing (always mistaken tadpoles for small fishes) and picnics. In village, the villagers would go to Jhum or terrace cultivation land and return at dusk. At the quite hours late at night, it was customary for a village Akükau to announce about the community work that was to be done collectively the next day. He would also announce that the families who do not pay heed to the order were to pay the fine. Each family had at least one-member representatives to the community work but most of the time almost all adult male members took part. Few females, mostly widows and women whose sons or husbands were not in station would participate. They were the ones who would help in preparing meals, snacks, tea for the men folks. From my childhood visits until today, what fascinated me was to see the whole community coming together in solidarity to contribute towards the welfare of the village community. It is not about monetary contribution, but free labours and raw materials required of several purposes. One of the
significant things that I observed even before I delve into this research is the process of people’s participation during festivals and other special programmes organized by the village, students union, and the church.

Though I belong to this village, my experience as a researcher gave me a reason to look at the entire village from a different lens. The activities, which I used to consider as the daily affair of life, became very meaningful. My experience and my stay in the village for months gave me an insight to probe and learn more about their way of life, their participation. Even though my focus should be on my research, yet those thoughts did not deter me from exploring other dimensions. Talking and interacting with old and aged people made me realize how little I knew of my own village. There were pearls of wisdom, which remained undisclosed until I tried unveiling it. To my great delight, all the participants were co-operative.

For the urban setting, I chose two urban pockets from Zunheboto town, which is also the district, headquarter of the Sumi tribe. I did not face any problem to interact and participate in community activities. As a citizen, I always thought that I had great knowledge and understanding of people living in town until I did this study. I realized that not every family living in town was struggle free. In fact, some families were living in worst condition than people living in villages. I also realized that social work activities in both village and town were same but the defining a social worker was different because in villages people did not have any idea about social worker. They looked upon their Aqo- Aho sakiphemi (community leaders) for all issues pertaining to individual, family, and community life.

I spent more than a year in the field because after 3 months (February to April 2010) of collecting data in Aghunato village I had to change the field site. The first phase of primary data collection was from May to October 2010 (6 months) and the second phase started from December 2010 to June 2011. The official primary data collection got over in 2011 but the researcher did try to find new data, which was felt important for the study.
Problems faced during Fieldwork

As stated earlier, I did not face any problem to get permission from the village authorities nor did I face a problem in interacting with individuals and groups for taking interviews and for participation in community activities. However, the study was not totally problem-free either. Being too familiar, posed a challenge to overlook certain aspects because I knew those things, even before getting into research. The second problem I encountered was that some villagers mistook me as a government official and initially they did not discuss freely about their source of income thinking that it would affect them getting subsidies. The third problem was the usage of electronic equipments, I tried to use both audio and video recorders, but the interaction became too formal which made participants cautious about what they spoke and their body language changed. Therefore, I started taking notes at regular intervals. The fourth problem was road and transportation. During monsoon, it was difficult to go to Ghuvishe village due to bad road and this resulted in the fieldwork getting prolonged.