CHAPTER FIVE:

CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

This Chapter summarizes the findings of the study and draws conclusion, followed by criticisms, and suggestions and policy recommendations.

Becoming old is a biological process and it occurs naturally to all living organisms. Man is not an exception to it. The process of ageing is a biological phenomenon which is very much conditional to or associated with various social factors, cultural values, norms, and regulations to a great extent. The concept of old age is based on chronological age but its social definition varies from region to region and from country to country, based on political ideologies, the rate of development, and the population explosion. Traditionally in India, old age began at sixty, a tradition prevailing since the Vedic period. In modern Industrial societies, the problem of what to do with the elderly has assumed critical importance. Because of recent advances in public health and medicine, life expectancy has greatly increased. Never before has any human society had so many aged people, because never before have so many people lived so long.

Social exclusion on the other hand is a social phenomenon of alienation and distance from society. Exclusion is the fact of perverting, even temporarily, someone from participating in social relationships and the construction of the society. Social exclusion is a multi-dimensional process, in which various forms of exclusion are combined: participation in decision making and political processes, access to
employment and material resources, and integration into common cultural processes. The term ‘social exclusion’ is of relative recent origin. The concept’s advantage is that it focuses attention on central aspects of deprivation, equally relevant to analysis and policies.

Voluntary work in India, as elsewhere, can be traced back to social service with its antecedents in charity. Individuals are surrounded by organisations from the day they are born to the day that they die. In fact in modern society it has become impossible to escape from the influence of organisations of one type or another. A unique feature of voluntary organisation is that it stimulates voluntary action among the served community and progressively involves enlightened individuals belonging to the served community in the higher echelons of its decision-making machinery.

For the data collection both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. Along with that primary and secondary sources were implemented. Primary sources included interviews and observation. Articles, documents, pamphlets, websites, newspaper clippings, and journals published in relation to the topic constituted the secondary data. The stratified random sampling technique was used for selecting the respondents. Also a field study was undertaken, where eight case studies were conducted in which four each from both those in Old Age Home and from those who stays in a normal home, for illustration of issues that were spelt out during the interview.
The collection of data shows that out of the total number of respondents (50 persons) 54% (27 persons) are males and 46% (23 persons) are females. In which, 96% (48 persons) profess Christianity and 4% (2 persons) profess Hinduism. Out of the male respondents, 25 persons (92.5%) are married, 1 person is unmarried, and 1 person is widowed constituting 3.7% of the male respondents respectively. Where as, among females 14 persons are married, 7 are widowed, and 2 are divorced constituting 60.8%, 30.4%, and 8.7% respectively. There are a greater number of female widows due to predominance of widows over the widower is partly to greater longevity of women than men.

The study shows in the traditional Naga society, there are so many folklores and folktales associated with the aged. Respect for the aged is the central values of the society. The aged were treated not as liabilities but as assets of the family and the society. They were the advisors, sources of wisdom, and sources of knowledge and well wishers of the family as well as the society. In the traditional Naga society, growing older or getting in to the category of an elder person was considered as an achievement. It is in such a situation that the status increases day by day as a person grows older and older with the time. In a Naga traditional society, the parents expect from their children support, care and comfort in their old age. Every male child believes that it is his moral obligation to look after his parents in their old age, perform the death rituals and to give feast on their death. Elder’s blessings are always sought as they are supposed to have super natural powers. It is the older people who know and pass on the younger generation the ways of the society to which they are expected to conform. It is because of this reason that ‘Age’ among the Nagas has both prestige and power.
The present study shows that out of the 50 respondents, 3 persons visit their native place once in a month and the same number of respondents did not visit their native place since they migrated into Kohima. Once in six months 4 respondents visit their native place and 12 of them pay an annual visit. There are primarily two reasons- to attend meetings and to visit the relatives. The status of visiting the native villages or previous residence shows that there has been a change in the society, the role of the aged in this case shows a very low outcome. The segregation from the last place of residence shows less participation of the aged and their longing for it.

The study further shows that majority of the male and female respondents spend their leisure in prayer and meditation. Where males hardly gossip and females hardly read. Apart from prayer both male and female spend their leisure watching television. The other areas of interest include kitchen chores, farming handicraft and sleeping, which engages 8 respondents in all. In the traditional societies, it was in the leisure times they spent time in sharing and teaching the younger folks the traditional ways of life, customs, mores and norms of the society. But this shows that the traditional trend has changed in that the aged are more or less engaged either in watching television or meditating and prayers showing the impact of Christian religion and modern means of communication.

The present study further shows, out of the 50 interviewed 42 (84%) respondents’ spouses are still alive. 37 persons out of the 42 respondents argue that their children and grand children visit them. 20 persons out of 42 respondents were occasionally visited and 15 respondents were regularly visited by their children, where as 5
respondents do not have any visits from the family. Whereas, seven are widowed which constitutes 14% and there is one bachelor. On the other hand 50% of the 42 respondents visit their children’s place on a regular basis and 23 respondents occasionally. Whereas 5 of the respondents never pay a visit their children or family. On the whole the familial ties are bound only by visits from the family to the respondents or vice versa. The study shows that there has been a gape between the parents and their children, in that the visit form both the sides are low. Which on the other hand shows that the traditional lifestyle has changed in that the younger are to visit the elders and take care of their needs but, the occasional visit are seem to be higher.

Major respondents 44 (88%) still have active role in their family as their decision is given importance. There are equal number of respondents, 3(6%) whose decision is not paid attention and equal number who can’t respond to the question. The study shows that the traditional status of the aged still has its hold in the decision making process.

In the past, the Nagas were more or less self-sufficient. Villages had their own land for cultivation, livestock for meat and wide range of forest areas providing building materials, fire woods, etc. the forest also serves as grounds for hunting wild animals and for food gathering. The Naga villages in the past were totally dependent on agriculture and the villages were more or less self-sufficient. Educational status to a very large extent determines the social status of a person. The study shows that, 11 male respondents have passed the higher secondary school (40.7%) where as, 11
female respondents constituting 47.8% are illiterate. Apart from illiterates in both male and female cases, majority of respondents have passed high school education, the male are however higher. 6 males are graduates compared to only one female respondent. The low profile of the aged women shows that the literacy rate among the aged women is less showing the rigid features of a matriarchal family system where women finds their place mostly managing the house.

Most male respondents i.e. 10(37%) are government employees and female respondents are dependent on random sources (house-wives and dependent). The second highest percentage of males is dependent on random sources (clergies and dependent) and there are only two teachers among the respondents, one male and one female. Only nine people, 5 males (18.5%) and 4(17.4%) females are engaged in agriculture even though agriculture is the main economic activity of the state.

Out of the 50 respondents, 46 persons are self sufficient from their earnings and the assistance from their children. 15 persons of the 46 respondents are completely dependent on their children. The remaining 31 happen to be working and 4 of them depend on borrowings and daily wages. Male respondents receive more assistance compared to females from their children.

The study shows that out of the 50 respondents, 47 respondents believe that the diet which they follow is nutritious and 3 oppose the notion. These people further argue that the intake is only for survival.
The study on the other hand shows that there has not been a common disease among the Aged persons interviewed. The basis for arriving at these trends was based on inquiring about any prolonged illness. Majority of them—both male and female—appeared healthy. 20 out of 27 males did not have any health issues requiring prolonged medication in the past five years and so was the case with the women, 15 out of the 23 respondents said no.

The study shows, in the context of the past, Naga Individuals know no other life except that of ‘Community life’. A Naga’s obligation and loyalty was to his family and village and this required a total submission to the village community. The village community looked after the individual needs which were common to the entire community and for the satisfaction of such needs, the entire village was responsible. Every individual was given equal opportunities and rights and there was absolutely no room for discrimination of any kind based on birth, wealth, or rank. There was no difference between the rich and poor and, no caste and class system. All things are done in groups and in the full presence of the entire community. They work in groups, eats in groups and sleep in groups. There is no individual cultivation or harvest, no individual house-building, no ‘feast of merit’ by individuals alone and no wooing of girls individually. In every work, there was competition between men and men, women and women. The weak and the strong worked together in a line, the weaker ones in the corner, and the stronger ones in the middle so that the stronger ones may cover the portions of the weaker ones. Every one tried to show his or her best in each field everyday till the cultivation and harvest were over. The sense of pride and charm of belonging and devotion to one’s group is note worthy’. In Naga society, customary laws reign supreme in all aspects of life. Any violation of these laws brought forth the
punishment of exile into distant hills where all one could do was wailing and counting the days of remission.

The study shows that, there have been cases where the older folk are ignored as they no longer remain productive. With the growth of modern education and institutions in the contemporary society, the modern values have dominated the traditional status, rights and duties. But, the impact of the changes that brought about in the Naga society replacing the social systems like the morung and the traditional beliefs have been replaced by the church which shows both positive as well as negative impact upon the citizens of the state.

To examine the changes that affect the status of the aged the role of the church is portrayed. The study shows out of 50 respondents, 56% (28 persons) responded negatively saying that there is no role or assistance from the church, while 40% (20 persons) said the church is of some assistance. The following are a few instances where the church has been of assistance to the respondents rendering moral support to 3 respondents, occasional gifts to 5 persons, remuneration to 2 persons, rice and food to one, and help to 3 persons when sick. The support of prayer was sought by 6 persons in all. One of the most important factors responsible for the changes from traditional to modernity has a least role in helping the aged materially.

Out of the 50 respondents, 32 persons believe that the church does not play any role in taking care of the aged, while 16 respondents disagree. They site several occasions where they were provided with monetary, material gifts, prayer etc. The study shows
that the church has no regular programmes for helping the aged. The study further shows that the help or supports are more in terms of non-monetary.

In the past, it was the community in the absence of a natural heir that takes care for the aged in their old age and when they are no longer productive. There was the trend where, the eldest or the youngest son in the family is supposed to look after the parents. But in the present scenario, Old parents are neglected as the son become irresponsible due to use of intoxicative substances or poverty. Also, some parents are left on their own when their sons die or they don’t have children. An individual obligation and loyalty was to his family and village and this required a total submission to the village community.

In August 2005, Neithonuo Liegise opened the Old Age Home for the destitute and needy elderly people to provide shelter, nutrition, health care, spiritual support and to help the residents to retire in dignity and peace. The Old Age Home in Kohima was established on 1st August 2005 under the aegis of Good Samaritan Women Society, registered under Society Registration Act, 1860.

The authorities of the Home travel across different villages and districts to identify the needs of the elderly and provide awareness about Old Age Home and elderly issues with the help of the community leaders and church pastors. The genuine needy and destitute elder persons are brought to the Home at their own will after proper investigation and recommendation by the community leaders. Necessary agreement
and bond is signed between the relatives and authorities at the time of admission. In case where there are no families, the resident is fully dependent on the authority.

The study shows out of the 13 respondents interviewed where 7 were males and 6 were females, all the inmates were above sixty years of age professing Christianity. 5 respondents each are married and unmarried. 2 are widowed and one separated from his wife. All the female happened to be illiterate, while 3 male respondents had meager education and 4 illiterate.

Further it shows that, all the inmates were farmers before they join the Old Age Home except a woman, who was a maid servant from house to house. And none of the inmates have income as all of them were daily bread earners (farmers). Out of the 13 respondents, 9 persons came to know about the Old Age Home through their Family and 4 of them through relatives and community leaders.

The study shows one of the respondents before joining the Old Age Home stays with his son’s family, where as the remaining twelve stayed alone. The main reason for joining the Home, for 10 of the respondents is to get better health care (poverty), whereas the remaining 3 expects to get help from the Home.

Out of the 13 respondents, majority (10 persons) of the respondents in the Home are blissful. It shows that during their leisure times the women folk are engage in gardening, whereas the males are into handicraft in which, one of them is into poultry
and piggery. Almost all of the respondents watch television and chat, while sunbathing. All the males and females agreed that the provisions of the home are satisfactory, while one of the male respondents was not sure about it. A male and a female each found it difficult to adjust to the food provided in the home. While the others are satisfied with the quality of the food provided in the Home. Out of the 13 respondents, 3 male and female found the services at the home are excellent and 5 respondents are satisfied with the services rendered to them. One was not sure and one rated it average.

It is found that, 6 males seemed to be receiving outside assistance in times of help while only one female receives such assistance. They are all entitled with old age pension scheme from the State Government of Nagaland. Out of the 13 respondents, 8 of the respondents agreed in that, they are taken for site seeing half yearly. But five of them said that they are not, as it was occasional.

Only two respondents said their relative visit them when called. On the other hand, 11 of them said that it is the Strangers and well wishers who visit them now and them, giving them company in that they can interact with people. Majority of the male respondents do not have any family visiting them, while half of the female respondents say their children visit at least once a year.

Out of the 13 respondents, 5 of the respondents are satisfied with what is provided and as such don’t expect anything. 4 of the respondents expect better health care and security measures. 2 of the respondents expect for quality care and good food. One of the respondents expect that his eye problem be examine properly. And one of the
respondents argues that he want to fight for his rights from the State Government which provides provisions for Aged persons in the society.

RESEARCH FINDINGS:

1) Exclusion from decision making process
2) Lack of Respect
3) Decline in status
4) Large number of siblings in the family, leading to negligence of health as a result of financial instability
5) Absence of primary health care facilities in rural areas
6) Absence of attendants to look after the elderly
7) Being in the Old Age Home can be considered as an inclusion for them in the mainstream society

THE EMERGENCE OF OLD AGE HOME IN NAGALAND IS MAINLY DUE TO THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

1) Illiteracy and poverty
2) Unmarried individuals
3) Poor families can hardly maintain their own families and the aged becomes a burden or an extra mouth to feed and take care of
CRITICISM

The constitution of India ensures that every person in independent India has the right to live, providing meaningful duties to the state governments, to safeguard the basic interests of the senior citizens of our nation. The duties of the state governments spelt out in the Directive Principles of State Policies. The government further assures responsibilities for providing relief to the disabled/ unemployment aged persons, as explained in the State List of the ‘Seventh Schedule’ of the Constitution (Government of India, 1993 census) and the subjects like social security and social insurance, employment and unemployment have been mentioned in the concurrent list of the ‘Seventh Schedule’ with a view to providing necessary assistance to the aged and other persons. Both the State Government and Union Government formulate various welfare measures for the well-being of the aged people, where such welfare schemes/programmes are mainly run by the voluntary organizations with formal financial assistance from the respective governments.

Apart from the scheme of the Union Government, many states have their own welfare for the betterment of the marginalized people. These welfare schemes of the Union Government are in operation for the well-being of the aged people in India. National Social Assistance Programme, Foster care/adoption services for the aged, Mobile Medicare services for the aged, Day-care centres for the aged and Old-age homes (Maintenance and Services of Old-Age Homes). According to Government of India (1993 census: 9-12), financial assistance is provided to the NGO sectors for maintenance of ‘Day-Care Centres’ for the aged belonging to urban, urban slums, rural and tribal pockets of the State.
On the other hand, an ‘Integrated Programme for Older Persons’ has been formulated by revising the earlier scheme of assistance to Voluntary Organisations for Programmes relating to the welfare of the aged. Under this Scheme, financial assistance up to 90% of the project cost is provided to NGOs for establishing and maintaining old age homes, day care centers, and mobile medicare units and to provide non-institutional services to older persons. Schemes of Assistance to Panchayati Raj Institutions/Voluntary Organisations/Self Help Groups for construction of old age homes/multi service centers for older persons have been revised to enhance the one time construction grant for old age homes/multi service centers. But according to sources (Chapter 2), out of the total number of 391 old age homes 116 have been set up in Andhra Pradesh whereas only one each in Bihar and Nagaland and two each in Kerala and Rajasthan and none have been set up in Himachal Pradesh, Delhi and Chandigarh. The Scheme ensures that at least one integrated Old Age Home is to be established in each district.

Further, the Government enacted the ‘Senior Citizen Act in 2007’ as an answer to the insecurities faced by older persons of the country, an initiative of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. This Act accords prime responsibility for the maintenance of parents on their children, grand children, or even relatives who may possibly inherit the property of a Senior Citizen. It also calls upon the State to provide facilities for poor and destitute older persons.
The role of Non-Governmental Organisations for the welfare of the Elderly in India started with India’s participation in the World Assembly Conference in Vienna in 1982, when it adopted the United Nations (UN) International Plan for Action on Ageing. The UN plan focused on the governmental role in adopting programs for the care and protection of the elderly, synchronizing these with the changing socio-economic conditions of each society.

While the Government has continued its efforts to introduce programs for the welfare of the elderly, NGOs have played a key role in bringing to the forefront the problems of India’s older people in the society at large, and they have also provided some solutions. Through various activities and services, NGOs have established a forum whereby the voices and concerns of the elderly can be addressed.

In the context of the past, Naga Individuals know no other life except that of ‘Community life’. An individual’s obligation and loyalty was to his family and village which required a total submission to the village community. The village community looked after the individual needs which were common to the entire community and for the satisfaction of such needs, the entire village was responsible. Every individual was given equal opportunities and rights and there was absolutely no room for discrimination of any kind based on birth, wealth, or rank. All things are done in groups and in the full presence of the entire community. It is in this context that R.R Shimray (2009) puts forth ‘The philosophy of individualism did not have much importance in Naga society. The individual has no existence apart from the community’. In Naga society, customary laws that reign supreme in all aspects of life.
Any violation of these laws brought forth the punishment of exile into distant hills where all one could do was wailing and counting the days of remission.

However, though the constitution of India ensures that every person in independent India has the right to live providing meaningful duties to the state governments to safeguard the basic interests of the senior citizens of our nation, many of the lower status group or sectoral groups are left out while the policies are implemented. Even the roles of the NGOs are found lacking as many states in India have no assistance from them. Financial assistance up to 90% of the project cost are provided to the NGOs for establishing and maintaining old age homes, day care centers, and mobile medicare units and to provide non-institutional services to older persons but, there has been unequal Programmes/Schemes implemented in the different States of India, as according to sources (Chapter 2), out of the total number of 391 old age homes 116 have been set up in Andhra Pradesh whereas only one each in Bihar and Nagaland and two each in Kerala and Rajasthan and none have been set up in Himachal Pradesh, Delhi and Chandigarh even as the Scheme ensures that at least one integrated Old Age Home is to be established in each district.
SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The problems of the aged reveal that their families are under stresses and strains. The elderly try to alleviate the miseries of the families by their hard work and in return they are respected. It has to be realized that the status of the elderly are likely to decline. There is need to enthuse the elderly with self-confidence, that love and care for the elderly is not natural as love and care for the children.

1) Social security measures to be adopted to ensure a minimum level of subsistence and comforts to the family.

2) Activities which are meaningful and ensure adequate incentives be planned for the aged so that they can keep themselves busy and avoid loneliness.

3) The families should be supported monetarily when they have to spend on the health needs of elderly persons.

4) The Centre in collaboration with the state government should provide financial assistance to the NGOs to meet the needs of the aged persons.

5) Day care centre, old age home, recreational centre, mobile medicare service, elderly educational institute etc. should be set up for the elderly persons.

6) The existing traditional institutions like family system, neighborhood, community interactions and inter-generational bonds, should be strengthened as it will not only be helpful to the elderly but also for the younger generations.

7) Provide adequate and regular pension scheme or old age homes to those who are working in unorganized and agricultural sectors, where there is no social and financial security for old aged people.
8) Free medical facilities should be provided at their doorsteps through mobile medical units particularly in rural areas where the problem of health care centres as well as transport facilities are almost nil.

**BENEFIT OF THE STUDY:**

The study will benefit all the scholars who are interested in studying about the ‘aged people’ in the Naga society. The study will act as a guideline to those scholars who are interested in doing research on the area of social exclusion. Further it will highlight the odd features why the tribals are different from those of the other communities of India. This study will highlight the unique features of the Nagas from the traditional stage to the present era. It will also benefit researchers and people interested in studying the changes in the traditional Naga societies.