CHAPTER II

THE NAGAS

(PEOPLE, HISTORY, CULTURE AND CONTEMPORARY PROBLEM)

The general information about Nagas provided in this chapter has been organized under the following sub-heads:

a. The Nagas
b. Linguistic and Anthropological Account of the Nagas
c. Unity in diversity
d. Socio-cultural aspects of Naga life
e. The Clan system
f. Head hunting
g. Religion
h. The Naga family
i. The position of woman in Naga society
j. The Dress and Ornaments
k. Morung or dormitory
l. Festivals, dance and music
m. Competition and awards
n. The Naga problem: The historical antecedents and the contemporary problem

a. THE NAGAS

The Nagas are among the most prominent and distinctive tribal communities living in North Eastern part of India. The word Naga is a generic term for a cluster of 32 tribes. Five of them live in Burma while the remaining ones are scattered within Nagaland, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and Assam.

The origin of the term ‘Naga’ is not clear. There have been several attempts made by the historians and anthropologists to trace the origin of this word. But the problem remains unresolved. It is however generally believed that the word ‘Naga’ was first used by Aryans to designate a particular group of tribals whom they perceived as “naked hill people”.

It was probably Ptolemy (200 AD), the famous geographer who for the first time mentioned the word ‘Nanga logae’ to describe people living in Novascium in
Eastern India. Nanga logae means in Sanskrit 'Naked People' (Crindle, 1885; Gerini, 1909 Barua, 1933).

In the Middle Ages, the Chronicles of the Ahom kings of Assam especially “Ahom Baranji” referred to the Nagas, who fought against them. The Muslim writers including Shahabuddin Talish the chronicler who accompanied Mir Jumla, the great Mughal general of Aurangzeb in his invasion of Assam in the middle of the seventeenth century also mentioned about the Nagas (Qadri, 1990).

Another view is that the word ‘Nagas’ originated from the word ‘Nag’, which means a ‘snake’. This view conceives the Nagas as descendents of a specific community who were traditionally snake worshippers. But this view does not seem to have relevance for the Nagas of the Northeast India, because Nagas were never worshippers of snakes. Rather some of these tribals kill and eat snakes (Horam, 1992).

Robinson (1841) believes that the word Naga most probably is derived from the Sanskrit word ‘Nanga’ which means people who wear very little clothes. But one contradiction arises that why this term has not been applied to either Khasi tribe or the Garos who are more thinly clad than even the Nagas.

Gait (1963) derives the word ‘Naga’ from ‘Nok ’ which means ‘folk’ or ‘people’. In some tribal communities when two unknown parties meet, they use the expression Nok or Noke, meaning, “what folk are you?

Hutton (1969) believes that the word ‘Naga’ originally was a corruption of the Assamese word ‘Noga’ (pronounced Naga) which means ‘mountaineer’.

A few Naga scholars believe that the word Naga was derived from the Kachari word ‘Nok’ or ‘Nokhar’ meaning warrior or fighter as the Kacharis were in violent conflict with the Naga tribes like the Zeliangrong and Angami. Shimray (1985) another Naga scholar feels that the word ‘Naga is derived from the Burmese word ‘Na Ka’ meaning pierced ears. As is known the Nagas, both men and women, traditionally pierce their ears.

Verghese (1996) while providing a summary of the various viewpoints regarding the origin of the term ‘Naga’ believes that the term was coined by the
non-Naga outsiders to describe Naga people living in the Naga Hills and essentially means ‘people’ or ‘warrior’.

b. LINGUISTIC AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL ACCOUNT OF THE NAGAS

The Nagas comprise various tribes of Mongoloid stock having distinct culture, history, and customs. According to some linguists and anthropologists, the Nagas belong to the Tibeto-Burman family and sub-families of the Tibeto-Chinese race. Evidence from comparative philology suggests that the Nagas were among those tribes who came through Tibet to the Brahmaputra valley and the valleys of Chindwin, Irrawady, Salwin, Mekong etc. They were later forced out of these places by successive Tibeto-Chinese invaders and driven into the mountains where they eventually got settled down (Grierson, 1847). The Burmese Census report (1911) suggests the migration of Nagas from the region in Western China between the sources of the Yangtze Kiang and Hwang Ho rivers. Grierson (1847) in a careful analysis established the linguistic family of the Nagas as Tibeto-Burman. He also divided the groups into the Naga family and Naga Bodo family.

According to Horam (1992) most of the Naga tribes can be traced back to the Mon-Khmer and Bodo-races, the Thai races and a fourth race of the Southern origin akin to some of the inhabitants of the Philippines and Borneo and other parts of Indonesia. The Nagas have a similar kind of culture as the natives of Borneo, who also have a traditional way of head hunting. The Naga culture also resemble the culture of people of Philippine and Formosa who have a system of terrace cultivation and who use lion loom for weaving the embroidery just like the Nagas.

c. UNITY IN DIVERSITY

As mentioned above the Nagas are divided into number of sub tribes (around 32). These tribes have some unique cultural and linguistic features which make them distinct. At the same time there are many communalities, which bind them together. Smith (1925) has given 13 characteristics, which are common to the Naga tribes. They are (I) head hunting (ii) common sleeping houses for unmarried men which are taboo to women (iii) dwelling houses built on posts or
piles (iv) disposal of the dead on raised platforms (v) a sort of trial marriage; or greater freedom of interaction between the sexes before marriage (vi) betel-chewing (vii) aversion to milk as an article of diet (viii) tattooing by pricking (ix) absence of any powerful political organization (x) double-cylinder vertical forge (xi) the simple loom for weaving clothes (xii) a large quadrangular or hexagonal shield and (xiii) residence in hilly regions and a crude form of agriculture.

Another trait which characterizes the Mongolian race and most of the tribal groups and which is shared by the Nagas is a happy disposition (Alemchiba, 1970).

d. SOCIO-CULTURAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL ASPECTS OF NAGA LIFE

The Nagas live in villages, mostly located on the hilltops, which provide a commanding view of the surrounding areas. The choice of the hilltops is strategic, as they have to keep constant vigil over the invading enemies. “Each village is an independent unit in the tribe.... in the days when villages were constantly at war, each village was ruled by a chief assisted by an informal council of elders.” (Mills, 1973).

The village administration varies from tribe to tribe. Each tribe has a unique political system ranging from the pure democracy of the Angami tribe, to the autocracy of the Konyak tribes, from the gerontocracy (tatar) of the Ao tribe to the semi-republic of the Zeliangrong tribe (Kabui, 1991). Inspite of the different political systems, the administration of the Nagas stands for a corporate form of government. The village-state is like a big family. Joys and sorrows, happiness and misfortunes are shared alike by every one (Shimray, 1985). Naga society, as found in its village is a compact and well-knit society where rigid customs and disciplines are observed. The most colourful ingredients of the Naga village is its “community life”. The philosophy of individual does not have much importance in Naga community life and the individual has no existence apart from the community.

e. THE CLAN SYSTEM

A clan means a large family. Its origin is traced back to a single family, which has multiplied into numerous families and in turn has managed to stay
connected. Two or more such clans form a village. Thus a clan belonging to the same tribe may spread over hundred of villages. The clan members also have many duties toward each other at the time of marriage, death, harvest etc. The members of the clan are bound by rigid rules. Clan also acts as an agent of social control. Marriage within the clan is a taboo. An individual in Naga society finds it difficult to exist without the security of belonging with whom he shares his joys and sorrows. The clan makes demands on individual’s time, but in return gives him protection and guardianship (Horam, 1992).

f. HEAD HUNTING

The Nagas from time immemorial have practiced ‘Head hunting’. It was believed that a man who could sprinkle the blood of his enemy over his field ensures a good harvest. Head hunting is also usually associated with bravery, and social recognition. A man who can take the heads of his enemy is highly regarded, and has a better chance of acquiring a better bride and also a seat in the village council. According to Shakespeare (1914), ‘Nagas are head-hunters’ and their women are the chief incentive for this pursuit, as girls will not look on a man with favour who has not taken heads or who has not participated in raids. Whatever may be the possible reasons for the Nagas, head hunting has been a necessity mechanism of defense, offence and for the establishment of justice and sovereignty of tribal village-state. With the advent of British rule, Christianity and modern education, the practice of head hunting has been abolished. However, the ethos and spirit of head hunting of the past still influence the Nagas way of life (Vashum, 2000).

g. RELIGION

The religion of the Nagas is animism, which dominates the social, economic, political and cultural life of the Nagas. For Nagas animism means faith in the existence of an invisible benevolent God who creates everything including the evil spirits. These evil spirits are fond of harming and killing men intentionally. In order to propitiate and exorcise them, the Naga usually offer efficacious things like eggs, fowl, pig, cattle, mithun, clothe, pieces of iron etc. In case of sickness, mania, ill luck, and other calamities more such measures are taken. There are
ritual ceremonies, like, prayers, incantations, taboos, gennas that are performed by the Nagas to have a religious, moral and long life, to ward off evil, to obtain children and to destroy or harass enemies. The Nagas don't construct temples and images the way it is done in other religions.

Nagas also believe in good or bad omens. An oracle (medicine-man) is called in to ascertain before any important undertaking, say, starting a war, commencing a journey, the first sowing or harvesting. In the case of illness the oracle ascertains the particular demon who is causing the illness and offer the efficacious things, like, eggs, fowl etc. to pacify him.

Another custom prevalent among the Nagas is 'genna' or 'taboo'. Genna plays a very significant role in the social and religious life of the Nagas. Genna literally means “forbidding” people to undertake normal mode of work or eating or touching any of the forbidden things on a particular day or days. In a strict sense genna is prohibiting the use of anything, which can produce evil effects. The persons who are effected under genna are supposed to remain indoor and abstain from eating and sexual congress as long as it lasts. During the genna strict rules and regulations are observed. At times persons from other villages are excluded to assert the social unity and integrity of the village or clan. Most of the common genna observed are construction of village gate, preparation of expedition like head-hunting or animal hunting, seeds sowing, harvesting, birth of a child etc. The strict adherence of genna therefore is necessary to escape the effects of evil spirits upon human life (Yonuo, 1974). Ever since their conversion to Christianity, the Nagas, however have tended to discard the ceremonies associated with the traditional religion.

h. THE NAGA FAMILY

A Naga family generally consists of a husband, a wife and their unmarried children. The joint family system is not favoured and it is rarely practiced. As soon as a son is married he sets up a house of his own where he becomes the head of the family (Horam, 1992). The family is strictly patriarchal. The head of the family has certain duties and rights. He is also the family priest and performs the religious duties during festivals and other ceremonies. The rules regarding
inheritance of family property differs from tribe to tribe. Among the Zeliangrong and Angami tribes the practice of ultimogeniture is common (i.e. the youngest son inherits the property), whereas in the Tangkhul Nagas, the practice of primogeniture (i.e. the eldest son inherits the family property) is prevalent.

i. POSITION OF WOMAN IN NAGA SOCIETY

The position of a woman in Naga societies is equal to that of a man in every respect. Haimendorf (1962) writing about the Naga women said, "many in most civilized part of India may well envy the women of Naga Hills, their high status and their free and happy life; and if you measure the cultural level of the people by the social position and personal freedom of its women, you will think twice before looking down on the Nagas as savage". The girls are free to choose their life partners and rarely is any pressure brought upon them in this matter (Horam, 1992). There is no dowry associated with marriage. Instead the bride price is paid in terms of money spent on her upbringing and socialization, particularly on her education. Some items in the form of a shawl, spear, daos etc. are given to the relatives of the bride by the bridegroom in order to strengthen the network of kinship relationships. Even today this practice is prevalent among the Zeliangrong Nagas.

The mother plays the main role in running the house. The domestic affairs are in her hands. Her husband also consults the wife in all domestic and family affairs. She helps him perform domestic duties and shares household responsibilities with him.

j. THE DRESS AND ORNAMENTS

The male and female dress and their patterns among the different tribes are more or less the same although there are trivial variations in the mode of wearing the dress. The male dress consists of the kilt and the wrapper and that of the female of a skirt, shawl, bodice and apron. The female skirt consists of a piece of cloth about one and a half metre long and about half a metre in width, wrapped around the waist. A bodice covers the breast. An apron is worn by fastening either on both the sides of the collarbone or one end is fastened along
one side and the other is suspended below an armpit. Each tribe has their own tastes of embroidery, zigzag, horizontal and geometrical patterns.

The Nagas are very fond of wearing ornaments. The ornaments, which men wear, are derived from metals, bones, cowries, shells, cane, leather, orchids and wood. And women’s ornaments are earrings, wristlets and bracelets made of brass or copper, but sometimes of copper, lead or silver.

Dancing dress is more colourful. Man’s headdress is a coronet of hornbill feathers, circular in shape, and the feather positioning a convex canopy frame. Ceremonial male body garments differ from tribe to tribe and from place to place.

k. MORUNG OR DORMITORY

One unique feature of Naga village-state is Morung or the dormitory system built separately for both boys and girls. For the Nagas, a morung was the pivot round which the social, religious, cultural and educational activities were organized. It is in the morung that the Naga boys and girls get all the useful lessons of community living. The morung gymnasium turns out skillful sportsmen, wrestlers and warriors. The youth in the morung also get acquainted with history, culture, folklore, songs and dances of their villages. Here also the youth receive invaluable lessons in leadership. The curriculum of the morung is work, play, singing and dancing but it is the school where the training for life and living are imparted. (Horam, 1992), a Naga scholar while writing on the importance of Morung in Naga life wrote “in the absence of schools, especially in the olden days the morung was a training ground for all lessons that youth must learn before starting to live independently. Here they were taught also the important, invaluable lessons of disciplines, hard work and the spirit of service.”

I. FESTIVALS, DANCE AND MUSIC

The Nagas are known for their festivals, songs and dance. The Nagas celebrate festivals like, festival of cultivation, harvest and feast of merit. The festival of merit is one of the most prominent of these and is organized by a rich and an acclaimed person of the community. They display picturesque dresses consisting of gimcrack bands of tawdry cowrie shells, feathers, goat’s hair dyed red, necklaces of beads, shells, brass earrings, ivory, armlets and petrified wood,
dyed cane leggings in order to embellish themselves (Yonou, 1974). During the feast the old men recite their traditional lores and the young men and women sing and dance in gay abundance.

There is another feast called ‘diplomatic feast’ which is rarely held. In this feast the two feuding or warring villages come together to sheathe the sword and maintain friendly relations. On this occasion all the able men of a village go to other village to have feast lasting for two or three days. Which is also reciprocated in the similar manner. During the feast they discuss their mutual problems and settle them in a spirit of warm friendliness. Besides there are other important festivals like Chakan Gang-Ngai, Tun-Ngai, Lui Ngaini etc., which are celebrated.

 Generally, the Nagas are very fond of songs and dance. There are different types of dances such as spear dance, imitative dance, harvest dance, bee dance, craft dance etc. all of which are associated with festivals. There are some dances in which men and women dance together. Men displaying their splendid physique and rippling muscles perform war dance. Holding spears and javelins and shields they act out all the circumstances of a battle – the advance, the retreat, the wielding of weapons and the defense accompanied by terrific howls and war-whoops or cries.

m. COMPETITION AND AWARDS

The Naga society is highly competitive. Virtually in every sphere of social activity, there exists a strong sense of competition. Be it in the paddy fields, in the jhum, in the feast of merit or in war, Naga life is full of valour and competition, each trying to surpass the other and attain social recognition, which is a prize in its own right. The Naga competition is simple and largely based on physical strength. All the competitions for the Nagas occur in public. Generally in Naga competition the winner get no cup or shield or prize. But the public admiration he gets is more than a prize. The winner in fact has to present a few pots of rice beer or a number of new kits to the judges.
THE NAGA PROBLEM
THE HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS AND THE CONTEMPORARY SCENE

Historical information about the Naga problem has been presented under the following sub-heads:

(i) The Beginnings
(ii) The Naga Club
(iii) The Naga National Council
(iv) The Naga Plebicite
(v) Naga Insurgent Movement
(vi) Peace initiative and creation of independent state of Nagaland
(vii) Peace Mission and Peace Talks
(viii) Peace-Talks
(ix) Prime Ministerial Talks
(x) Emergence and split of National Socialist Council of Nagaland, and
(xi) Cease Fire and Peace Talks

(i) The Beginnings

The genesis of contemporary Naga problem can be traced back to the First World War. During the war, the British recruited nearly 2000 strong Nagas to serve as labour corps on French front in 1917. For the first time in the Naga history, the Nagas got an opportunity to intermingle with outside world (Sumi, 1996). From the unique experiences they gained in the war and from their contact with the civilized men they came to realize their own ethnic, linguistic, social and cultural uniqueness. This sense of differentiation of Nagas themselves from others led to the formation of the Naga Club.

(ii) THE NAGA CLUB

The formation of this exclusive ethnic Naga Club by the Naga tribes was a significant landmark, which brought unity and oneness among the various Naga tribes. Thus, the Naga association with the First World War produced a new spirit among the Nagas and it ultimately became the basis for the Naga national movement (Yonuo, 1974). The Naga national movement entered into a crucial
INSIDE THE ORBIDDEN CAMP
phase during World War II. The war helped in bringing about a greater degree of unity and solidarity among the various Naga tribes. The circumstances in the war created situations for the British administrators to lend credence to the growth of Naga national movement. The British administrators established an organization called the Naga Hills District Tribal Council as a token of gratitude for their magnificent work in helping them during the war. The major objectives of the Council were to bring together and unite all the Naga tribes, to help in repairing the damages done during the World War II. In February 1946 the council got transformed into potent organization known as the Naga National Council (NNC).

(iii). THE NAGA NATIONAL COUNCIL

Initially the NNC was confined to catering to the welfare and social aspiration of the Nagas. Later it became the main political organ of the Nagas. The formation of the NNC initiated a major step towards the consolidation of desperate nationalistic forces. The NNC also enjoyed the patronage of the British administrators, educated Nagas and the salariates. Under the auspices of the NNC, the leadership brought out a regular monthly journal called the Naga Nation, which was published from Kohima. The Naga Nation as the propaganda organ of the NNC, created immense political consciousness and a sense of identity. And it also played a vital role by educating the Naga tribes about their socio-economic problems as well as about their culture and rich traditions. The first political move taken by the NNC was to restrict the entry of members of any political party into the Naga Hills without the consent of the NNC (Rammuny, 1988). The most drastic step was to give a call for Naga self-determination. On the issue of Naga self-determination the NNC was divided into three groups. The extremist group led by A. Z. Phizo demanded complete independence. The moderate group largely consisting of government officials favoured the continuance of relations with the government of India till the Nagas are in a position to run a modern state. The third group came with the idea of Nagaland as a mandatory state under the direct control of the British Government for a specific period of time (Alemchiba, 1970). The majority of NNC however opposed the proposal, as they feared that the Britishers would continue to colonizing their
The different opinions were accommodated within the NNC. Finally four points resolutions was passed in 1946. This resolution was submitted to the Cabinet Mission. The following clauses were contained in this resolution:

1. This Naga National Council stands for the solidarity of Naga tribes including those in unadministered areas.
2. This Council strongly protests against the grouping of Assam with Bengal.
3. The Naga Hill should be included in an autonomous Assam, in a free India, with local autonomy and due safeguards for the interest of the Nagas, and
4. The Naga tribes should have a separate electorate (Yonou, 1974).

The Nagas' demand for the inclusion of the Naga Hills in an autonomous Assam province in a free India indicates that the Nagas did not want to separate their Hills district from India. It is thus obvious that the Nagas in the beginning did not wish to form an independent sovereign state of their own. This attitude however, changed soon due to the Labour Government's pledge to withdraw from India as soon as possible and to transfer the sovereignty either to India or to divided India. The Nagas working much more seriously with an open eye for unity among themselves started clamouring for an independent Naga Hills. They rejected the earlier memorandum submitted to the British government. The NNC again submitted a memorandum to the British government on February 20, 1947. In this memorandum they made it clear that the people who had no knowledge of the Naga Hills and the constitution drawn by them will not be acceptable to the Nagas. They also expressed strong fear that in this process of integration the unique mode of life and culture, which the Nagas have, will be completely destroyed. The NNC made an appeal to the British government and the Government of India to set up an Interim government for the Naga people for a period of ten years at the end of which the Nagas should be free to choose the form of government they like. The Nagas were determined not to allow themselves to be involved in a divided and chaotic India and got prepared to declare their own independence.

The proposal regarding ten-year interim government included the following clauses:
1. The Interim Government of the Naga people can be a government by the Naga people over all the people of Nagaland, having full power in respect of legislative, executive and judiciary;

2. Nagaland belongs to the Naga people and will be inalienable.

3. The Interim Government of the Naga people will have full power in the matter of raising and expenditure to revenue and annual subvention to cover the deficit being given by the Guardian Power.

4. For defense and for aiding civil power in case of emergency a force considered necessary by the NNC will be maintained in Nagaland by the Guardian Power. That force will be responsible to the NNC who will in turn be responsible to the Guardian Power (Alemchiba, 1970).

However, the British India government could not respond to the appeal, asked the Nagas to discuss the problem with the Advisory Committee on the Aboriginal Tribes, which would visit Kohima. The Advisory Committee could not favour any constitutional arrangements and wanted the Naga Hills to be included within the Indian union. This led to another statement of uncertainty for the vexed Naga national question.

After the Advisory Committee the Constituent Assembly failed to reach any agreement with the Nagas on the future constitutional set up, Sir Akbar Hydari was sent to break the impasse. A series of discussion with NNC in the presence of Sir Charles Pawsay ended up in a nine-point agreement known as the Hydari Agreement. The preamble of the agreement recommended that, the right of the Nagas to develop themselves according to their free expressed wishes be recognized (Horam, 1992). But clause 9 of the agreement, “the government of Assam as the agent of the government of Indian Union will have special responsibilities for a period of ten years to ensure the due observance of this agreement; and at the end of this period the Naga National Council will be asked whether they require the above agreement to be extended for a further period, or an agreement regarding the future of the Naga people would be arrived at” was interpreted differently. The Nagas interpreted that after the expiry
of ten years, they would have their sovereign state, whereas the Government of India asserted that it would mean Nagaland remaining a protected state of India even after the expiry of ten years.

Clause 9 of the agreement also implanted seeds of discord within the NNC, resulting in their division into the extremists and moderates. In order to resolve their differences Sir Charles Pawsay persuaded them to put the issue on vote. The moderates won by a slight majority to accept the agreement. But the extremist group led by A. Z. Phizo strongly protested against the agreement and declared it null and void (Wati, 1993). An extremist’s Naga delegation consisting of nine members and led by A. Z. Phizo and Kughato Sukhai went to Delhi. The Naga delegates met Mahatma Gandhi at Bhagi Colony on July 19, 1947 to ask for his intervention to save the Naga Hills from India’s occupation. Then Mahatma Gandhi told the Naga delegates, “Naga have every right to be independent. We did not want to live under the domination of the British and they are now leaving us. I want you to feel that India is yours. I feel that Naga Hills are mine; the matter must stop there. I believe in the brotherhood of man, but I do not believe in force union. If you do not wish to join the union of India, nobody forces you to do that.”

The Naga delegates pointed out that Sir Akbar Hydari was threatening them with the use of force in the event of their refusal to join the Indian Union. Gandhiji exclaimed, “Sir Akbar is wrong; He cannot do that I will come to the Naga Hills, I will ask them to shoot me first before one Naga is shot.”

The Naga delegates returned with great hope given by Gandhiji. They hoisted the sovereign Naga Flag on August 14, 1947 and declared Nagaland as an independent country. A telegram regarding the declaration of independence was sent to the Government of India, Foreign Diplomatic Missions in Delhi and to the United Nations Secretary General. But the Government of India did not recognize the Naga independence. In the meantime the assassination of Gandhiji proved a great loss to the Nagas. At the same time the Hydari-Agreement remained in abeyance for nearly a year, as the Government of India was not taking the agreement seriously. With the sudden death of Akbar Hydari on December 28, 1948, the nine-point agreement became a discarded paper.
Meanwhile the then Governor General of India, Shri G. Rajagopalcharia visited Shillong on November 28, 1949. The Naga delegates apprised him of their demand for independence. He realized the ethnic difference of Nagas from the other tribal people and assured the delegates that the Nagas were free to do whatever they like either to become part of India or to be separated from it, (Maxwell, 1980). Similar opinion by Shri. Jai Prakash also acknowledged that the Nagas were at full liberty to remain outside the Indian Union (Wati, 1993).

(iv). NAGAS PLEBICITE

To explore the views and to ascertain the conviction of the people for an independent sovereign Nagaland a plebiscite was conducted on May 16, 1951 throughout Nagaland on two basic issues: (1) whether they wanted to remain in India or to have separate independent state, and (2) to repudiate the charge of the Indian Government that the NNC was supported by only a minority of the people (Alemchiba, 1970). The result of the plebiscite, with 99 percent opting for independence was sent to the President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad. He considered the demand for independence as absurd (Baboo, 1979).

When Jawaharlal Nehru visited Assam in December 1951, a five-men delegation of NNC led by A. Z. Phizo put forward their desire for liberation and presented the result of the plebiscite (Yonuo, 1974). Nehru replied on the following lines: “I consider freedom very precious. I am sure that the Nagas are free as I am, in fact more free in a number of ways. For, while I am bound down by all sorts of laws, the Nagas are not to some extent bound by such laws and they are governed by their customary laws and usages. In the present context of affairs both in India and in the world it is impossible to consider for a moment, such an absurd demand for independence as of the Nagas. It is doubtful whether the Naga realize the consequence of what they are asking for. For their present demand would lead them to ruin.”

The Nagas were not willing for any adjustment short of independence while Nehru was favouring to workout the issues within the Constitution of India. Thereafter the Government of India, without consulting the Nagas formulated a policy, affecting the transfer of power to the Government of Assam (Baboo,
In retaliation, the Nagas boycotted the first general election of India in 1952, which was a successful demonstration of unity by the Nagas (Yonuo, 1974).

The three Naga delegates led by A. Z. Phizo met the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru on March 11, 1952 in New Delhi to put forward their demand. It turned out to be a stormy meeting. Nehru, who was irritated with the demand, while hammering his table with clenched fist said, “whether heaven falls or India goes to pieces and blood run red in the country, whether I am here or anyone else comes the Nagas will not be allowed to be independent” (Maxwell, 1980). The Naga delegates were shocked and depressed by Nehru’s attitude. They returned and immediately sought for foreign intervention to settle the Naga issue with India.

Jawahar Lal Nehru, speaking in the Lok Sabha on 11 July 1952 dismissed the Nagas demand as completely unwise, impracticable and nonacceptable and rejected any suggestion to visit the Naga Hills and see the reality for himself (Parliamentary Debates, 9 July-11 August, Vol.II, Part I, 1952). Later on however, Jawaharlal Nehru and the Burmese Prime Minister U Nu jointly visited Kohima accompanied by Mrs. Indira Gandhi, T. N. Kaul and B. N. Mullik on March 30, 1953. But it happened to be an unfortunate incident for both Nehru and U Nu and the Nagas. The then Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills, Barkataki turned down the NNC request to personally talk to Nehru and submit a memorandum. The Naga leaders protested against the Deputy Commissioner and said, “if the Prime Minister could not hear us, then we would not hear him either” (Wati, 1993). Thousand of Nagas who came staged a walkout from the public meeting when Nehru was about to make his address, except for a few Government servants mostly non-Nagas (Mullik, 1972). The Prime Minister was shocked and so was U Nu. Nehru later accused that the demand for independence was the handiwork of British administrators and the American Baptist Missionaries. Eventually the government of India ordered the foreign missionaries to leave the Naga Hills. They also banned the monthly newspaper ‘Naga Nation’ as an anti-Indian propaganda paper and ordered the arrest of the Naga leaders.
As soon as the foreigners left, the situation became tense and rumours widely spread that the police made a list of suspected NNC leaders to be arrested for the maintenance of law and order (Bower, 1967). Thereafter police raided the house of T. Sakhrie, the then Secretary of the NNC. The raid in the villages followed it and a number of innocent people were arrested. Due to these happenings many important Naga leaders went underground in order to escape arrest. This sowed the seeds of insurgency in Nagaland.

(v). NAGA INSURGENCY MOVEMENT

The Naga National movement, which followed peaceful and non-violent methods to achieve the Naga independence, got distorted by Nehru’s visit to Kohima in 1953. After Nehru’s visit, the Assam Government resorted to crackdown on the Nagas. This further ignited the insurgency movement in Nagaland. Despite the political turmoil, the Nationalist Nagas never submitted themselves to the authority. The Naga leaders championed a non-cooperation movement which resulted in non-payment of taxes, withdrawal of teachers and students from school and the resignation of Dobashis, Gaonburas and a wide scale boycott of the government functionaries (Misra, 1988). The radical philosophy of A. Z. Phizo, which mooted the idea of right of ‘Nations to Self-Determination’ was intensified by the Naga National Movement to become more forceful, particularly in the light of the people’s verdict favouring home rule (Sarin, 1980). The Naga Nationalists firmly stood for nothing shorter of independent Nagaland and pledged to fight till the last drop of blood to liberate their fatherland (IWGIA, 1968).

Within a short period of time the Naga underground activities extended to Tuensang Frontier Areas, the unadministered territory during the British rule in India. The first Hongking* was formed in September 1954 with the support of Thungti Chang (Yunuo, 1974). Then the Naga underground organized the youth wing, women wing and armed wing to confront any eventuality.

* People Sovereign Republic of Nagaland.
Thereafter, Assam launched a large-scale armed operation in Tuensang Frontier Areas and burn down villages, churches, granaries and standing crops to bring the Naga to submission (NSCN Publication, 1993). By the beginning of 1955, lawlessness and violence flared up in Tuensang Frontier Areas (Yonou, 1974). The joint forces of Assam Rifles and Armed Forces went on rampant operation to subdue the Nagas (Maxwell, 1980). In retaliation, the Naga Home Guard under the Hongking Government took up arms, started confronting and attacking police out-post, looting of arms, and kidnapping the Assam Rifles to defend their country. This led to full-scale armed conflict and is continuing till today ever since.

In order to suppress the Naga insurgence movement the Assam Government introduced two acts: (i) The Assam Maintenance of Public order (Autonomous District Act, 1953) and; (ii) Assam Disturb Area Act, 1955. But this could not bring any desired changes. Instead the situation went bad to worse. The innocent civilians were unable to live peacefully. Meanwhile, a rift developed between the Naga Nationalists Leaders. The Moderates leaders like Sakhrie, Jasoki and others came out openly protesting against violence in the Naga Hills and attempted to reorganize the NNC to work out the Naga problem in peaceful way. The rift within the NNC led to the killing of Sakhrie, the moderate leader who attempted to work out the Naga problem in peaceful way. This led to the division of Naga National Leaders into moderates and extremists. At that time Phizo was charged with treason by the government of India (Baboo, 1970). In the midst of the armed confrontation the NNC also set up the Federal Government of Nagaland on March 22, 1956 at Phensinyu village in the Rengma area. The Federal Government of Nagaland also hoisted the Naga national flag and formulated a yehzabo **.

During the intermittent war the Naga Home Guards were swift and effective. In retaliation the armies and armed forces indulged in rape, torture and murder. The atrocities committed by the armed forces were debated in the Lok

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** Constitution of federal government of Nagaland.
Sabha on August 23, 1956 (Yonuo, 1974). However, the Government did not look in favour of Naga independence. The NNC meanwhile resolved to send Phizo to London to internationalize the Naga issue.

In the midst of this turbulent atmosphere, S.M. Dutt, one intelligent Civil Officer conceived an idea to separate the Naga Hills District from Assam to form a separate unit. He also encouraged the moderates to form the Naga Peace Organizing committee to settle the Naga issues within the Government of India (Sarin, 1980). In the meantime, the church leaders also openly came forward and condemned violence and appealed to the Christian Nagas to work for peace (Alemchiba, 1970). As a result of this effort, the Naga People Convention (NPC) was formed in August 1957.

(vi). PEACE INITIATIVE AND CREATION OF INDEPENDENT STATE OF NAGALAND

People of Nagaland were getting wary of the undeclared war between the underground Nagas and the Indian army and yearned for peace and order in the Naga Hills. The Naga People Convention in its first convention at Kohima decided to resolve to settle the Naga issues through negotiation and to constitute the Naga Hills District of Assam and Tuensang Frontier Area into single administrative unit under the External Affairs Ministry (Alemchiba, 1970). The NPC instead of working as a mediator betrayed the Naga Federal Government. Later, the NPC leaders pressurized the Government of India and finally conceded statehood for Nagaland within the Indian Union (Paterson, 1963). On July 30, 1960, Phizo, the President of NNC denounced the New Delhi- NPC Pact from London saying that, "the Naga struggle was for complete independent Naga state having international recognition and which at best could have treaty relations with India on the basis of equality and reciprocity. He added that the leaders of the NPC who signed on behalf of the Naga state were a puppet assembly and no agreement could be recognized regarding the future of the Nagaland except involving those people who were fighting and were the true representative of the Naga Nation" (Yonou, 1974).
Henceforth, the Naga guerillas were re-organized into stronger and more efficient forces both in the armies and the civil wings. They raised funds and began to seek arms aid and support from the neighbouring countries (Rammuny, 1988). This marked the beginning of the Naga political movement going international alignment. The activities of Naga Federal Government got extended to the Naga inhabited areas of Assam, Manipur and Burma. On August 26, 1961, the underground Nagas who rejected the New Delhi-NPC Pact assassinated the main architect of the NPC, Dr. Imkongliba Ao and termed the other NPC members involved in the pact as traitors.

The NPC however achieved its goal when Dr. Radhakrishnan, the President of India officially inaugurated the state of Nagaland as the sixteenth state of the Indian Union. The Government of India had succeeded in applying the policy of divide and rule to the Nagas by leaving out the major portion of Naga inhabited areas outside the newly created state.

(vii). PEACE MISSION AND PEACE TALKS

The creation of Nagaland State could not bring any solution to the Naga problem. The continuation of hostility between the Indian Security forces and Naga Federal Army created more doubts and suffering among the innocent people. At this juncture, Rev. Scott met Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru twice to workout any possibility of cease fire to bring peace to the Naga problem (Maxwell, 1980). At the same time, the Nagaland Baptist Church, which was concern with the turbulent situation in Nagaland, held a convention at Wokha. The convention unanimously resolved to request the Government of India and Naga Federal Government to form a peace mission. As a result peace mission was formed, comprising Shri. B. P. Chaliha (the Chief Minister of Assam), Jaya Prakash Narayan (the noted Sarvodaya leader), Shankerrao Deo (Sarvodaya leader) who could not join the mission on health grounds and the Rev. Michael Scott (a British national). The first talk of the Peace Mission was to bring about the cessation of hostility and then to negotiate for political settlement. However, after two months of formidable negotiation by the peace mission a cease-fire was signed on May 24, 1964 (Scott, 1967). The cease-fire agreements made on the
understanding that the security forces of the Government of India would suspend jungle operation, search of villages, aerial action, arrests and imposition of fines and forced labour. On the other hand the Federal Government of Nagaland also undertook to suspend snipping and ambushing, imposition of fines, kidnapping, recruitment, sabotage, raid and firing security posts. The Naga Federal armies were also restricted to move in town and administrative centres with arms or in uniform in towns, villages and thousands yards away from the security posts. This led to the opening of the political dialogue to resolve the Indo-Naga armed conflict.

(viii). PEACE-TALKS

The first ever an Indo-Naga peace talk was held on September 23, 1964 at Chedema Peace Camp near Kohima. The talks were held in two phases: the Governmental and a Prime Ministerial level. At the Governmental level, Y. Gundevia, the Foreign Secretary led the official delegation, and Zashi Huire, the underground leader led the Naga Federal Government. The talk became a deadlocked on the issue that any political settlement of the Naga problem should be within the framework of the Indian Constitution. Even after the five round of talks there was no concrete understanding to work out a peaceful solution to the Naga problem (IWGIA Publication, 1986).

To overcome the deadlock of the peace talk, the Peace Mission came out with a new proposal that the FGN could on their own volition decide to be a part in the union of India and mutually settle the terms and conditions for that purpose. On the other hand, the Government of India could consider to what extent the pattern and structure of the relationship between Nagaland and the Government of India should be adopted and recast so as to satisfy the political aspiration of all sections of Naga people (Yonuo, 1974).

Again the proposal ended up in a dilemma. The Government of India welcomed the proposal. But it was rejected again by the NFG. Instead they demanded other ‘plebiscite’ under the neutral body supervision (IWGIA, 1986). The Peace Mission as well as the Government of India did not accept the demand of NFG. The NFG considered the proposal of Peace mission as a basis.
for future negotiations and referred the proposal of Peace Mission to the Tatar Hoho*. However, there was no proper response from the Tatar Hoho. Instead, they demanded the negotiation to be upgraded to the higher level. Consequently, the Peace Mission urged both the Government to discuss at the Prime Ministerial level to find a solution to the problem.

(ix). PRIME MINISTERIAL TALKS

The first round of Prime Ministerial talks between Smt. Indira Gandhi and Khugato Sema, Ato Kilonser (Prime Minister) was held in New Delhi on February 18, 1966 in the presence of Peace Mission. There were six round of talks. They exchanged their views and discussed the grave situation created by violation of cease-fire agreement by both the parties in Assam and Ukhrul district of Manipur. Again they agreed to continue to talk at the same level. But at this critical juncture, the peace mission was dissolved. J.P. Narayan had resigned on February 1966, on the ground that the federal Naga leaders had no confidence in him (Scott, 1967). After two months, Reverend Michael Scott, who was relentlessly working for the peace mission was ordered to leave India, on the ground that he was “soft and partisan” with the Nagas. On May 3, 1966, the Indian government ordered his deportation from the country, seized his entire recording and papers (Scott, 1967). B. P. Chaliha, then the lone member of the peace Mission, was forced to quit from the mission on May 4, 1966 after the sabotage of train in Lumding by the Naga Army (Rammuny, 1988).

However the peace talks were not totally abandoned. Still there was hope for some peaceful solution. At the fourth round of talks, Smt. Indira Gandhi stated that solution need not be found within the “framework of the Indian constitution” but within the ‘Indian Union’, meaning constitution could be amended as a way to obtain the solution of the Naga problem (Varghese, 1996). This was regarded as a compromising formula from the government of India to give ‘autonomous status’ to Nagaland. To consider the proposal of Government of India, the NFG sought to consult its President, A. Z. Phizo, who has been in London. But Phizo

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Emergence of NSCN

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was adamant stating that, “as long as the Indian talk and think in term of ‘special’ status’ for Nagaland within the union of India we do not expect any good thing to come out. What we needed is third party to help both the countries” (Varghese, 1996). The next two round of talks were futile meetings, as both sides remained too rigid as to their demands. This led to the deadlock of the peace talks. On the eve of departure from Delhi, Z. Ramyo, Naga Federal Leader said to the pressmen at Delhi airport that, it is for India to treat us – either as friend or throw us out to the other side”. The Vice-President of NNC, Mr. Imkongmeren Ao, also issued a statement after returning to Nagaland that so far as the talks are concerned they are finished, and that India was responsible for the failure. Now we have to act according to circumstances” (Horam, 1992).

As a consequence of the failure of the peace talks then occurred a crack within the NFG. The Angami and Tangkhul Nagas overthrew the hegemony of Sema leadership. Hence, General Kaito broke away from NFG and formed the Revolutionary Government of Nagaland on June 1967. This caused a major set back to the Naga national movement.

In the middle of 1973, the situation in Nagaland deteriorated again. The Indian Armed Forces launched an extensive operation against the underground Naga and caused a lot of suffering to the innocent civilians. The prevailing situation led the Church leaders to appoint a Liaison Committee to persuade the Naga underground leaders as well as the government of India to find the solution to the problem. After a series of discussions the two parties formally entered into agreement on the November 11, 1975 known as the Shillong Accord. The agreement of the Accord were:

1. The representative of the underground organization conveyed their decision of their own volition to accept without condition to the constitution of India.
2. It was agreed that the arms of the underground would bring out and deposited at pointed places. Detail for giving effect to this agreement will be worked out between them and the representative of the Government, the Security Forces and the members of the Liaison Committees.
3. It was agreed that the representative of the underground organization should have reasonable time to formulate the issues for discussion on final settlement.

Although the Shillong Accord of 1975 was considered by the Government of India a breakthrough to the final settlement and the end of Naga insurgency movement (Rammuny, 1988), it created more complications, disunity, misunderstanding and differences of opinions within the Nagas in general and within the underground leaders in particular. After hearing the news of the Accord Isak and Muivah who were on goodwill mission to China denounced the Accord as treason and signatories were declared as traitors.

(X). EMERGENCE AND SPLIT OF NATIONAL SOCIALIST COUNCIL OF NAGALAND

The NSCN was formed on February 2, 1980 (Wati, 1993). Their manifesto was based on the principal of socialism for economic solution and a spiritual outlook, 'Nagaland for Christ'. Then they proclaimed the new government of the "People Republic of Nagaland" with Isak Swu as Chairman, S.S. Khaplang as Vice-Chairman and Th. Muivah as General secretary. This new group has brought in a revival of the Naga National Movement in the form of socialism. The main objective of the NSCN was to build up a sovereign Christian socialist state of Nagaland by declaring that they are "revolutionary patriots". But after its formation rift developed within the NSCN and virtually the NSCN was vertically split into two factions. One led by Isaac Swu and Th. Muivah called the NSCN (I-M) and the other led by S.S. Khaplang called NSCN (K). These groups are operating from different international arenas. The NSCN (K) is successfully operating from Myanmar (Burma) while the NSCN (I-M), which is the strongest among the Naga underground groups are successfully operating from Thailand. Further, the NSCN (I-M) became more exposed by getting admission to the Unrepresented Nations of People Organization (UNPO) which is based at Hague (Ao, 1993). The United Committee for Indigenous People and Human Rights also accepted the rights of the Nagas for self-determination. Subsequently, the offices of the Naga political movement have been opened in several countries like,
Bangkok, Geneva, New York and Manila. This not only boosts the morals of the Nagas but also adding much needed support for the Naga cause.

(XI). CEASE FIRE AND PEACE TALKS

The government of India had thought that they had solved the Indo-Naga issue with the signing of Shillong Accord of 1975. However, they could not ignore the emerging power of the NSCN which did not subscribe to this accord and which has organized itself radically at the national and international levels (Vashum, 2000). Ever since this awareness, the government has been sending feelers to the NSCN for peaceful talks. In the early 1990s, the then Prime Minister of India, Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao initiated a dialogue without any precondition. It was finally, Shri I.K. Gujral, the then Prime Minister of India who signed the cease-fire agreement with the NSCN on August 1, 1997. Initially the cease-fire agreement was signed for a year to create a conducive atmosphere for the peace talks. But the cease-fire agreement was extended year by year by the successive governments without any breakthrough as to the solution of five decades old Naga problem. The NSCN, who had been demanding that the cease-fire should be extended to all Naga inhabited areas (these areas are located in Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh) achieved a break through when the BJP led government extended the cease-fire to all the Naga inhabited areas in June 14, 2001. But the extension of cease-fire to all Naga inhabited areas was short lived. Inhabitants of Manipur known as Meiteis felt insecure that the extension of cease-fire to Naga inhabited will amount to inclusion of these areas in the Greater Nagaland as demanded by the Naga rebels. This apprehension ultimately led to eruption of unprecedented violence in Manipur. Despite the repeated assurance by the Govt. of India and the Nagas’ leaders, Th. Muivah and Issac Swu that “cease fire is cease fire” and “at the moment it has nothing to do with territories” (Gokhale, 2001), the violence could not be controlled. This forced the BJP led government to roll back its decision on July 28, 2001 under the political pressure from Manipur. This has once again created doubts in the minds of the Naga people about the intentions of the government and produced uncertainty about their future destiny. Even though, the declaration of cease-fire
and the evolution of mechanism for holding peaceful negotiations between the Nagas and the Indian Govt. is a welcome gesture on the part of both the conflicting parties, the Nagaland and the people of Nagaland continue to show signs of disturbance... The problem of Nagaland and its people therefore continues...