

# Dimensions of Development in Nagaland

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(Editors)

*Prof. A. C. Sinha*

# DIMENSIONS OF DEVELOPMENT IN NAGALAND

*Edited By*  
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## Foreword

The Indian Council of Social Science Research, North-Eastern Regional Centre, Shillong organised a two day seminar in the Nagaland capital, Kohima, between 14-15 March 2002 on "Development Constraints in Nagaland." It brought together administrators, university and college faculty members, social activists and researchers to discuss why Nagaland is in the state of development that it is in. The presenters of paper have attempted to ask the question why and some have sought answers as to how the Nagas can get across the hurdles to development. A significant point to be noted is that the larger number of presentations of papers and their incorporation into this book are by Nagas, who speak very candidly of the problems that they face.

The ICSSR-NERC has a mandate to encourage Social Science research in the region. One way to accomplish this obligation is to bring together persons to take up socially relevant issues such as the seminar of which this book is the product. In publishing the proceedings of the seminar so soon after the discussions were held, the ICSSR-NERC, as in many other publication to its credit will have contributed to knowledge. We trust policy and decision-makers will take note of the general tenor of the book and find solutions to the constraints of development in Nagaland.

July 2002

**David R. Syiemlieh**  
Honorary Director  
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## Preface

Nagaland has a special identity among the states of Indian Union. In spite of being located in the furthest north-eastern periphery of the country, it has always been at the center of consciousness of the mainstream political elites. The geo-strategic location of the 'land of the Nagas', their refusal to be incorporated into the Indian Union and consequent long-drawn conflict between the community and the state in Nagaland have significantly shaped the strategic thinking of the managers of the Indian state.

The federalist solution to the question of incorporation as well as Nagas' aspiration for self-determination has, in the process, ultimately made the power elites of Nagaland a prodigal partner. Lack of accountability on the part of the power elites, siphoning of public resources by them for personal gratification, and the resource mobilization in favour of the 'Naga Movement'—all have crippled the economic development of the state. Juxtaposing the issue of development to that of 'Naga Independence' and creating a myth that 'no development can take place without political independence' broadly justify the social indifference towards public welfare, mis-governance, non-performance and under-development.

How can a movement for political independence adopt an attitude of total indifference towards public welfare? Any political struggle devoid of an agenda for socio-economic reconstruction is certain to weaken the collective interest of the society. In contrast to the traditional strategic belief that a weak material base intensifies, the 'patriotic struggle' by way of larger participation of the members of the society, strong and vibrant material base can infuse more content to

the struggle, if there is a consensus among the members about the goals of the movement.

Hence the strategy of Naga movement under the leadership of National Socialist Council of Nagalim (Issac-Muivah) to cripple the economy in order to rope in the under-privileged into the movement calls for serious introspection. There is ample room for debate as to whether the Naga nationalist goals could be pursued at the expense of the Naga people. The logic of "inter-generational benefit", often cited to eulogise the sacrifice of the present generation, cuts no ice as the movement could hardly articulate any alternative socio-economic order where common Naga people would be much happier than what they are now.

This calls for an altogether different perspective. Instead of pitting development against dissent, fresh thoughts need to be given as to how to harmonise them. This book is a preliminary attempt in this regard. It finds its origin in a seminar on "Development Constraints in Nagaland", held on March 14-15, 2002, at Kohima, Nagaland. The seminar was organised by ICSSR-NERC, Shillong.

We take this opportunity to express our appreciation for all the helps and cooperation extended towards this Seminar by Professor G.D. Sharma, Vice-Chancellor, Nagaland University and his colleagues. We are also grateful to Professor Mrinal Miri, Vice-Chancellor, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong and Chairman, NERC-ICSSR, for his encouragement towards the Seminar preparation. Professor D.R. Syiemlieh, Honorary Director and Professor R. Gopalakrishnan and Professor L.S. Gassah—members of the NERC Screening Committee—and colleagues in the Centre Narisha Kharbuli and Rupert Momin deserve special thanks. Lastly we appreciate Arun Kumar Verma, Regency Publications for having agreed to undertake this publication work.

C. Joshua Thomas  
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# Contents

<i>Foreword</i>	v
<i>Preface</i>	vii
<i>Contributors</i>	xi
Key Note Address <i>Alemtemshi Jamir</i>	1
Is Underdevelopment the Cause of Insurgency in Nagaland? <i>Kaka D. Iralu</i>	9
Armed Struggle in Nagaland: Tactics, Strategies and its Ramifications for Economic Development <i>Gurudas Das</i>	22
Political Instability and Development in Nagaland: A Need for a Paradigm Shift <i>R. Gopalakrishnan</i>	36
Constructive Political Agreement and Development: <i>Keviletuo Kiewhuo</i>	59
Structural Change in the Economy of Nagaland <i>B. Kilangla Jamir</i>	66
Development in Nagaland: A Note <i>Natwar Thakar</i>	77
Educated Unemployment in Nagaland: Trend and Magnitude <i>Kedilezo Kikhi</i>	85
Development Constraints in Nagaland <i>Tiarenla Aier</i>	109

Constraints of Agricultural and Livestock Development in Nagaland <i>V.B. Sharma, V.K. Vidyarthi, Pauline Alila, P.L. Singh and P. Narola</i>	123
Reflections on Development in Nagaland: <i>A. Lanunungsang Ao</i>	137
Naga Identity: Formation, Construction and Expansion: <i>Sajal Nag</i>	141
Peace and the Limits of Democracy: Some Reflections on the Naga Peace Process <i>Samir Kumar Das</i>	156
✓ Students and Developmental Process in Nagaland <i>A.C. Sinha</i>	175
The Space Between: Women's Negotiations with Democracy <i>Paula Banerjee</i>	187
Women's Status and Constraints in the Development of Nagaland <i>Walter Fernandes</i>	200
Customary Laws and the Women's Development in Nagaland <i>Kekhrieseno Christina</i>	237
Tribal learning in Nagaland: A Perspective <i>Hector D'Souza</i>	247
The Role of Church in Naga Politics <i>Chance Romanao</i>	259

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# Keynote Address

*Alemtemshi Jamir*

I feel greatly honoured to have this privilege of delivering the keynote address at this Seminar. I am grateful that a body like the Indian Council of Social Science Research is taking interest in the economic processes of Nagaland. Such an exercise has been a long felt need and at the outset, I congratulate the Council for having organised this Seminar. I am also deeply impressed by the distinguished list of intellectuals and academicians who are going to participate in the seminar and present papers on many important subjects. This exercise of involving the academic community in deliberating upon economic issues pertaining to Nagaland is indeed another very welcome initiative. In fact we have only recently been discussing this important issue in the Government. We have noticed that there is very little interface between the government and the academic community in Nagaland with regard to our economic planning and development. In the country, as also all over the world, we all know that the economic processes are led and determined through inputs from the academic community. I am confident that this Seminar will be the beginning of such processes in the State.

The subject of the Seminar is indeed vast as can be seen from the list of papers for presentation. It needs to be looked at from numerous angles and parameters covering geographical, historical, political, organisational and socio-cultural issues apart from the economic perspectives. Given the limitations of my knowledge and the time constraints, I will not be able to do justice to the entire theme of the seminar in this

keynote address. I will therefore only touch upon some issues which have been in my mind in the recent past as we have been trying to give some shape to the planning process in Nagaland. The issues related to the need for structural changes in our society along with the reforms in government being envisaged today. It is my sincere wish that the issues raised will receive the attention of the academicians in Nagaland and that they will apply their minds to find ways to resolve them in the near future.

If we look back at the thirty eight years of statehood, beginning from a scratch we have made commendable achievements in the area of infrastructure as can be seen from the table given below indicating some major areas of development since Statehood.

**Select Indicators of Development in Nagaland: 1962-63 and 2001-02**

Sl. No.	Particulars	Unit	1962-63	2001-02
1.	Total length of road	kms	837	9860
2.	No. of villages covered	Nos	NA	1092
3.	Water supply provided	No. of Villages	Nil	1010
4.	Generation of electric power	MW	0.20	29.00
5.	Villages electrified	Nos	6	1212
6.	Schools	Nos	603	1691
7.	Literacy	%	17.91	67.11
8.	Enrolment in primary schools	%	NA	100
9.	Hospitals & dispensaries	Nos	11	449
10.	Area under irrigation	000 Ha	1.51	65.63
11.	Food grain production	000 tones	61.82	292.50

The figures are impressive but despite this we remain under-developed and still a long way to go even to catch up with the rest of the country not to talk of the rest of the world. The Shukla Commission has estimated the infrastructural gap for North-East India as Rs. 97,000 crores. For Nagaland it is estimated at Rs. 11,000 crores. This is a lot of money even for India to be provided within the required time frame. We are therefore today talking about looking beyond the scheme of Plan funding and to evolve our own economic models of development which will require the involvement of all—both the Government as well as the people. Here arise some historical problems peculiar to Nagaland.

The transition of a primitive tribal society into a modern one compressed within a short span of just a little over a century, can be very confusing. While development has to take place at a scale and rate determined by modern day imperatives, the confusion prevalent within the tribal society trying to adapt to a new circumstance is bound to have effects on such processes. The impact of such a social transition on the development process needs to be studied more deeply. In the case of Nagaland this has been compounded by the manner and circumstance under which the State of Nagaland has come into being. The State was created under very abnormal conditions. Its formation was preceded by unprecedented violence and misery associated with the mass-based political movement. Being, therefore, created out of a political necessity, it was a well known fact that Nagaland would not be economically viable for a long time. The effect of such a manner of creation of the State is being felt very acutely today in the management of the finances of the State. Side by side, the situation as prevalent at the time of the creation of the State necessitated the provision of certain constitutional protection to allay other apprehensions of the people regarding the protection and preservation of their identity. This resulted in Article 317(A) of the Constitution of India. The provisions and the manner in which it is being interpreted today is however creating confusions, greatly affecting the development process. Above all, the political movement still continues which of late had become increasingly violent disrupting the social processes. All these have had very adverse effects on the entire growth and development process of the people and the land. They need to be discussed freely and frankly and above all studied intensely so that we can find remedial measures so that the growth and progress of the society continued unabated.

One fallout of such historical processes has been an apparent lack of sense of belonging in the government by the people. Whether this was because the State Government is viewed to be a temporary arrangement, pending a final political settlement or whether the tribal mind is yet to reconcile to a new form of governance, is a matter of debate. However, from the development angle the effect has been

very debilitating. Without the People-Government interface being clear, the point where government responsibility ends and where the people's responsibility starts, remain unclear. This is not conducive to development particularly in the present context of liberalisation and shift of responsibilities from the public sector.

On the other hand the Government behaviour and response to such a situation was also unclear in the sense that it took upon itself to provide everything, including employment. It has resulted in the creation of a huge overloaded governmental structure, the sustenance of which, occupies almost all the energies and resources of the Government. It leaves very little resource for other activities including development as can be seen from the categorisation of Government expenditure in three broad areas of expenditure.

Expenditure Pattern of the State during 2001-02 (Rupees in crores)			
1.	Expenditure on Government overheads (salary, pension, etc.)	980	53.55%
2.	Debt servicing	301	16.45%
3.	Others	549	31.00%
Total		1830	100.00%

These are the constraints that we are trying to change through the Planning process. Apart from stimulating productivity and generation of employment in the private sector, the core issues are streamlining and rightsizing of Government, and reducing its overheads and at the same time inducing structural changes to transfer more responsibilities to the people and the private sector. The present "Communitisation" programme is one such step in this direction. The people-government interface therefore, assumes added importance.

While on the issue of resources and finances, another peculiar fallout of the history of the creation of the State is the exemption from taxation, particularly income tax. This is another area where the academicians of Nagaland will have to start paying urgent attention and induce social discussion. It is actually very difficult to imagine any society that can exist or survive without taxation. In the case of Nagaland there have been three noticeable effects of the lack of

taxation. Firstly it has added to the sense of alienation of the people from the government and with it a lack of balanced sense of rights and duties. The second is the lack of accounting of wealth, inappropriate to income giving scope for corruption etc. The third is the helplessness of the State Government to generate revenue out of the economic activities of its people for the development of the State. It is interesting to note that the State's own resources is estimated at about Rs. 70 crores only as against the total budgeted expenditure of Rs. 1,830 crores. Without our own revenues to fund our own programmes the development activities become confined to the parameters set by the funding agency which, in our case, is the Government of India. Of late the central policy is to adopt a projectised approach to their funding and the scheme of Plan funding has a very large component of earmarked schemes. In the current year's plan of Rs. 424 crores the earmarked component is as high as Rs. 199 crores. It leaves very little flexibility for the State to devise its own programmes suitable to the ground realities. The answer to this also lies in looking beyond the scheme of Plan funding such as institutional finance. Here, once again, the story behind the State throws up some more problems.

Article 371(A) has its positive aspect of protecting the rights of a small group of minority people and preventing them from losing their identity through assimilation in the vastness of India. Its interpretation or rather, misinterpretation relating to land ownership, on the other hand, has been another big constraint on the development process of the State. Firstly, land which is required for any development activity is not freely available. The process of its acquisition, the delays involved and the concessions to be made to the land owners greatly escalate the cost of project. The Doyang Hydro Project is one such example where ultimately on completion the per unit generation cost is Rs. 6.00 which no one can afford to buy.

The other bigger impediment to development related to land ownership is the issue of mortgage which is prerequisite for any investment. The inability to transfer land to non-inhabitants of Nagaland, is one of the main deterrent to attracting investment in the State. The credit: deposit ratio in

Nagaland stands at a paltry 17 per cent as against the national average of 58 per cent. We, therefore, have a situation where the State Government is unable to find resource for development and on the other hand we are unable to attract other finance for investment in the State. This is a serious development constraint to which we have to find answers. The Government is recently in the process of enacting a law to relax the transfer of land in the industrial zones. This is hoped to mitigate some of the problems of industrialisation. It will however, still fall far short of the real development needs which cannot be confined only to the industrial zones. The issue goes deeper in the sense that even within a tribe inter village transfer of ownership of land is not possible today. This I think has to do with the socio-culture structure of the Nagas which has been reinforced by the special legal provisions. I feel that this can be rectified only with changes in the tribal mindset. Sometimes I also wonder whether the issues of women empowerment, such as the inheritance of immovable assets, will be able to change the rigid tribal structures. The academicians will be best able to study these aspects and suggest appropriate solutions for the betterment of the land and the people.

The third question related to land ownership pertains to the exploitation of our rich mineral resources. In political theory "People" is understood to mean society in the collective and generic term. In Nagaland it has been understood to mean the individual land owner. Oil which is found, at great cost, a few kilometers deep down under the earth is claimed by individual land owners who farm the land on the surface above it. The natural resources of Nagaland by this definition cannot be shared, benefiting all the people of Nagaland. The money required for its exploitation will also not be forthcoming easily under the existing circumstance. This narrow perspective of ownership of land and its resources needs to be redefined urgently and this cannot be done solely by the Government. Right thinking people will have to take the initiatives to change the perceptions in our society.

The fourth issue related to land is the continuing customary and traditional land tenure and ownership system. In this the main casualty has been agriculture. Land ownership

remains confined to a very few percentage of the population of any given village. Even in an apparently democratic tribal society like the Aos hardly 30 per cent of the people own land and the other 70 per cent are in reality landless. This is one of the leading factor that stands in the way of bringing about dramatic and revolutionary changes in agriculture. Permanent cultivation and agricultural production at economic scale cannot be induced because on the one hand the people with land do not have the labour or capital, while those with labour cannot start any permanent cultivation because they do not have land. Outside capital cannot further come in because land cannot be transferred to outsiders beyond the village. Since, however, everybody in the village has to survive, there is no other option but to continue with the Jhum practice. Through this subsistence agricultural practice we all know that in the present day situation the people cannot really survive. Unless changes in land tenure takes place, whatever concepts for agricultural development that we may, cannot be implemented. On the other hand, agriculture will remain the main economic activity for a long time to come, since the necessary environment for industrialisation such as infrastructure, capital and manpower will take some more time to develop in the state. It therefore appears that we have no other choice but to start thinking seriously in terms of land reforms in Nagaland which has to be quickly put in place.

There are two more issues which I would like to request the attention of the economists and academicians in the state. The geographical constraints of remoteness from the mainstream Indian economy, the hilly terrain and the transport and communication bottlenecks are issues that are well known to all. There is also the issue of locational disadvantage of being situated on one of the youngest fold mountain ranges along with being one of the wettest region of the world. All these factors greatly add to the cost of development. The unstable soil condition and erosion also makes the issue of maintenance of assets a major issue. Combined with this is the limited working season amounting to hardly five months in a year. The rest of the year the development process has to wait for the rains to stop and the roads to open. So far, apart from transportation subsidy, no compensatory index have been



considered or arrived at to make up for such additional cost of development in states like Nagaland due to geographical reasons. There is also the need to evolve special development strategies to circumvent such constraints. A lot of collective thinking to work out effective models will need to be done. I feel that this issue should be given special attention by the academicians so that planning and development process can be more realistic and practical.

The other issue concerns data which is essential for any planning and development process. This is turning out to be a nightmare in Nagaland today. Apart from the lack of reliable data, the recent population explosion of Nagaland as per the 2001 census I feel is in no way related to the ground truth. It is my suspicion that it had more to do with the delimitation of the constituencies that was slated for 2001. Similar is the data pertaining to literacy. Before the 2001 census it was being estimated at 84 per cent through the National Sample Survey. It now stands reduced to 67 per cent. It would be appropriate for the academic community to seriously apply their minds as to how this deliberate carelessness can be corrected. The government can be sometimes helpless when it is an act of connivance of all the people. We could at least start educating the youth so that the corrective measures for the future can be initiated. The Government is trying to take advantage of the technology available to circumvent this such as the GIS. But even here since computers are integral the old adage of 'garbage in, garbage out' will apply. Social change still remains primary. I hope the thinkers of our society will become involved in correcting this lacunae also.

# Is Underdevelopment the Cause of Insurgency in Nagaland?

*Kaka D. Iralu*

## **Introductory Remarks**

Of late many politicians of Nagaland, Indian policy makers and leaders have been stating that underdevelopment is the cause of insurgency in Nagaland. Some of them would even have us believe that once the North-East Council funds are doubled or even tripled, the insurgency problem will disappear from the face of Nagaland and North-East. The present paper is an attempt to examine whether this statement and assertion is correct. However, since a proper understanding of the historical and economic background of the Nagas is necessary to understand the Indo-Naga political conflict, the writer will first give a bird's eye view of both backgrounds before addressing the question as to whether underdevelopment is the cause of insurgency in Nagaland or not.

## **Naga Political History: A Brief Review**

The Nagas are an ancient people whose forefathers migrated into their present habitat somewhere before the Christian era of A.D. 1. Their forefathers belonged to the Sino-Mongoloid race that came in waves from South East Asia during the great migratory upheavals that took place all over Asia and

other continents during the transition period between B.C. 1 and A.D. 1. Their entry points to their present lands were through the Himalayan region and the Burmese corridor. Whether in historical records or oral traditions passed from one generation to other through word of mouth, there is no mention whatsoever of the Nagas driving away some inhabitants of the land to make the lands of their own. The fact is one where their forefathers, like any other nations in the world, at some specific time in history (around A.D. 1) migrated from more populated regions of the Asian continent and settled down in their present lands and made it their land. Their continuity as a people inhabiting their present land is an established historical fact. In historical records, the first mention of the Nagas as a people inhabiting their present land was made by Claudius Ptolemy, the Greek philosopher and historian in A.D. 150. In his records Ptolemy mentions the Nagas as "Nagaloi" (Claudius Ptolemy, *Geographia*, Vol. VII (ii), p. 18.). They were again mentioned by Huang Tsang, the Chinese traveler who spent 15 years in India between A.D. 629-645. Besides these records, the Nagas are also mentioned in the Royal chronicles of the Manipur kingdom in records like Chietharol Kumbabu and Ningthourol Kumbaba (A.D. 663-763 and A.D. 906-996). They are also mentioned in the chronicles of the Ahom kings who came from Thailand and settled and ruled in Assam for 600 years beginning from the 13th century. Naga resistance against intrusions and raids from these two neighbouring kingdoms and others like the Burmese, Tripuris, Dimashas and the Cachar kingdoms from the 13th century to the 18th centuries are all there in recorded history. As for their encounter with the British in the 19th century and their resistance against British rule for 104 years (1832-1936), numerous accounts are found in the colonial British records.

Lastly, as far as the 54 year Indo-Naga conflict is concerned, prior to 1947, not to talk of Naga territory being part of Indian territory, no Indian King or prince had ever even set one foot into Naga territory. The Indo-Naga political conflict therefore is over the issue as to how one lakh twenty thousand square kilometres of ancient and historical Naga

lands can simply disappear into Indian Territory when India was born in late 1947.

### **The Naga Economic and Cultural Scenario—Past and Present**

While talking about the past economic scenario, I will be dealing with the Naga economic system prior to the advent of the British. With reference to the present scenario, I will be dealing with the British and Indo-Naga era.

#### *Ancient Naga Economic System (A.D. 150–1832)*

While the rest of the world was busy setting up monarchic and aristocratic societies and systems of government, the forefathers of the Nagas were busy tilling the land and evolving a pure democratic and classless society. As they tilled the land, the culture, traditions and customs that they evolved were all deeply rooted in the soil. Theirs was a kingdom of sovereign independent villages with no kings ruling over them or any village ruling over any other village. From the sovereignty of the individual, their concept of sovereignty spread in wider and wider circles to the clan, khel and tribal level. The lands that belonged to a village community was equally shared between the major khels and clans. In one sentence, it was a land without landlords. Every individual member of a village was, by virtue of his membership in the village, entitled to a private plot of land where he could build his house to shelter his family. He was also entitled to a plot of field where he could till the soil to produce various crops for the sustenance of his family. Beyond this immediate private property, the individual was also entitled to clan, khel and village lands where he could hunt, cut timber or practice jhum cultivation and gardening of any sort for greater production of food to achieve wealth and prosperity.

The people were also deeply religious, paying great reverence to God in whom the forces and elements of nature were endowed. Taboos and gennas were all part of their agricultural lives where they abstained from work during deaths in the village or any oddity in the weather or natural world such as earthquakes, storms, eclipses, etc.

In times of sowing and harvesting, strict religious rituals would be performed by the elders or priests. Joyous festivals would also proceed or follow such important event when the whole village would celebrate with gaiety and feasts. In all the agricultural activities of ploughing and sowing, weeding and harvesting, various age-groups would form themselves into different work-groups and help one another by working in one another's field in turns. In times of leisure, these age-groups would compete with one another in sports and hunting activities as well as construction of rest houses on the paths of their fields. All these training in their social activities would be conducted in the various clan and khel morungs where the elders of the village would instruct them.

The wealth procured as a result of all the hard work in the fields was measured not in terms of money but in terms of the grain and cattle that an individual family had been able to produce. Such wealth was however not hoarded or kept for future generations but generously shared by the individual with the whole village community in feasts of merit. A person who had been able to feast the whole village thus would then earn the position of a titled person in the village. The titled person could then decorate his house with a horned roof and carved walls symbolical of his earned title. The title-earner also became entitled to wear a special shawl indicative of his titled status. On such occasions, the entire village would also drag monoliths and erect them at the entrance of the village to commemorate the event. Songs would be composed in praise of their achievements. These achievements and the accompanying titles were however not hereditary. Every individual had to earn one's title through sheer hard labour and sacrifice.

When a whole clan or village had prospered materially, they would extend invitations to collective feasts of merit to other clans in other villages or even to entire neighbouring villages.

On such occasions, all the male members of the village being hosted would walk to the host village attired in their best ornaments and garments, singing, ululating and firing guns into the air. On arrival every family in the host village would invite another head of a family from the other village

and host him for the entire duration of the feast. Both the guest and the host then became permanent guests of one another in the sense that a special relationship developed between them. On business trips across villages, the traveller could stay in his guest's house. This was how the problem of lodging, in a period when there were no hotels, was solved. Alliances between clans and villages were also formed through these inter-village feasts where permanent commitments to help one another in times of war or natural calamities were forged. On such occasions elders from both villages pledged their allegiance to one another with pledges like:

"As long as the sun continues to shine over our villages; as long as the moon and stars continue to adorn our night skies; as long as our maidens continue to draw water from our wells and as long as smoke continues to curl into the skies from our hearths; so long may our friendship continue and prosper".

In this period the barter system was the only mode of transaction and with the exception of Manipur and Assam, trade beyond the borders of the land was unknown.

Thus, we find that Naga economy was tightly knit into the social customs, traditions and culture of the Nagas. The prosperity of the economy resulted in the social prosperity of the individual, clan, khel and even between neighbouring villages. Also though the Nagas were not economically affluent, they were nevertheless economically self-sufficient and were never dependent on any foreign countries for their economic survival.

The fact of Naga economy, whether past or present, is one where every Naga family has a private house to shelter their family and a private plot of land from which to procure the families basic economic requirements. In this sense Naga economy is much better than even present Indian economy because in spite of the fact that a small section of India's population possess a lot wealth and economic affluence; millions of pathetic homeless and landless Indians still roams the length and breadth of India.

## *Present Naga Economic Scenario*

### *Economic Scenario During the British Era (1881–1947)*

The British did not do any substantial work for the economic upliftment of the Nagas during their rule. Their main concern was for the political control of the Nagas in order to prevent them from continuing their raids for plunder into the neighbouring British subject kingdoms of Manipur, Cachar and Assam. However, the extension of their political rule to the Nagas brought many benefits in the form of roads, communication and a general abandonment of inter-village wars. This led to an increase in inter-village trade as well as cross border trade into Burma besides Manipur and Assam.

Towards the end of their rule a few schools had also been established by the American missionaries sometimes with financial assistance from the British Government. This ultimately led to the emergence of the first educated Nagas who became doctors as well as teachers, clerks and various Government servants. All these activities led to the emergence of the money-based economy as the salaries of these Government servants were paid in cash. The Nagas' adventure with the British Army as well as their earnings from the construction of roads, which were all paid in cash, led to a firm entrenchment of a money-based economy in the Naga Hills. A slow but a steady intrusion of modern economy was thus finding its way into the agro-based Naga economic society. These unwelcome, yet inevitable, changes would have serious repercussions on Naga polity and culture in the subsequent Indo-Naga era.

### *Economic Scenario During the Indo-Naga Era 1947–2002*

As stated earlier, refusing to acknowledge or recognise the inalienable historical and political rights of the Nagas and in total disregard of all the memoranda and pleas for a non-violent solution to the issue, and in spite of the NNC declaration of Independence on 14th August 1947, and the plebiscite of 1951; by the beginning of 1954 the Assam Armed Police had gone on a mad rampage of arrests, torture, rape and burning of Naga villages. By October 1956, the Divisions

of the Indian Army and an additional 35 battalions of the Assam Rifles and other armed Police battalions had moved into Nagaland. As a result of these military operations between 1956–1957, out of 861 Naga villages existing in those days, 645 were burned to ashes along with their granaries.

By the end of 1957, the agro-based Naga economy lay in ashes and over one lakh Nagas died from starvation, disease and indiscriminate murder. At this stage of Indo-Naga history above 95 percent of Nagas fought back in spite of starvation and terrible deprivations and the horrors of the village groupings.

B.N. Mullick, Nehru's personal secretary at that time wrote thus:

Yet it must be admitted that although the grouping of a large number of villages from which the rebels had been deprived of their supplies and the raiding of the Militia had an unnerving effect, and though there were nearly one security troop for every adult male Naga in the Naga Hills Tuensang area, there never was a time when it could be claimed that the Naga Guerrillas had been broken into submission. The Naga rebels till then had little training. They had a few arms of odd varieties often taken from the dumped stock of the Second World War. Often their sniping was done with the help of muzzle-loaders. Their leader Kaito had no experience of troop manoeuvres. And yet, the Naga guerrillas carried on the fight relentlessly. They suffered terrible deprivations and casualties but did not give in (B.N. Mullick, *My Years with Nehru*, p. 313).

To cut a long story short, by 1961, a Naga People's convention was set up engineered by the Indian Intelligence Bureau and the Home Ministry. By 1963, a state was granted to Nagas, elections were held at gunpoint, and money was poured into Nagaland in an attempt to buy peace with money where the attempt to militarily suppress the Nagas had failed. Yet in spite of all these efforts and even after 39 years of statehood the war and the conflict goes on. Presently the third ceasefire and peace talks have been going on since 1947. The first two ceasefires were in 1964 and 1975.



Yet in spite of all these facts, many of the North-Eastern Chief Ministers, MPs, Politicians and Bureaucrats, including some Central Ministers and Policy Makers keep on reiterating that underdevelopment is the cause of insurgency in the North-East. Some of them even seem to think that once the NEC funds are doubled or even tripled, insurgency will disappear from the face of the North-East—especially Nagaland.

On the other hand, the Indian Army keeps on insisting that there can be no development as long as there are insurgency problems in Nagaland. What emerges is a complementary argument where politicians diagnose Nagaland's insurgency problem as caused by underdevelopment, while the Indian Army insists that there cannot be development because of the same.

But is this really true? Speaking from the Naga context, did A.Z. Phizo sacrifice all his life and comforts, almost half of it in a foreign land because there were underdevelopment problems in Nagaland? Has Muivah fought all his life because he could not get employment due to underdevelopment in Nagaland? Did all those Naga soldiers trek to Pakistan and China to seek development assistance? Did they indeed go to China to ask for bulldozers to build their roads in Nagaland?

Can an analysis and diagnosis of a political problem that has cost so much lives be further from the truth than to say that insurgency problems in Nagaland is due to underdevelopment? Would anybody believe me if I were to say that the freedom struggle in India from the British yoke was due to underdevelopment in the Indian subcontinent.

Let us call a spade a spade. Let us not waste our time, our energy and even our lives arguing that a spade is a dao. Over silly arguments like this, India has wasted a lot of money and human lives in their 54 years war with Nagaland.

In line with this diagnosis, ever since the ceasefire and peace talks came into existence there have been talks of massive financial assistance from the Central Government with one Prime Minister promising this amount of crores and other Prime Minister promising even more than that amount ! But will this really solve the insurgency problem? Has any one

ever heard of an economic tablet curing a political cancer in history?

And about all these promises of crores upon crores, whose money are we talking about? Are the politicians and bureaucrats who had amassed their wealth through their clever arguments going to sell their mansions and cars to finance this grandiose project? Are the Indian Army Officers and its jawans ready to donate 25 percent of their life-risking, hard-earned salaries towards this Good Samaritan work? And does it mean the beneficiaries can sit back and enjoy life without having to work for it? Yes, just where are the funds going to come from?

We may also ask; where has all the money that the Indian Government has poured into the North-East for all these years for its development come from? *Is it not the Indian taxpayer's money?* Can the North-East continue to enjoy the Indian tax payers' hard earned money using this excuse and that excuse for all time to come? Assam at least gave something back to India in the form of its oil. But what have the other six states given back to India in these so many years of enjoying statehood under Indian sponsorship? In the context of Nagaland can the Indian taxpayer go on giving his money for development works in Nagaland without receiving back anything in return?

The Indian State of Nagaland was created through dubious means by the Indian Home Ministry with the assistance of a few Nagas. It is a clear historical and political fact that against the wishes of the Nagas, India forcefully annexed Nagaland into Indian Union. (Details of this plan and execution can be found in books like *My Years with Nehru*, by B.N. Mullick or *Nagaland and India, the Blood and the Tears*, by Kaka D. Iralu, pp. 18-27). Having forcefully annexed us, or to use another word "*forcefully adopted us*", India had to face the obligation of having to develop and even feed us. After all an adopter has certain obligations to the one he has adopted.

This forced relationship and its implications in financial and development terms have been going on for more than 38 years. Anyone who tries to point out truth about this unholy relationship is either brutally suppressed or wiped out. Amidst this horror, one victim of this relationship who has remained silent for all these years is *the Indian taxpayer*. It is high time

that he is allowed to express his opinion. He has the right to say, *my money will not be allowed to be used in this manner*. The tragedy of the Indo-Naga war with regard to India is this:

- (i) The Indian politician is, against clear political, historical and cultural facts, insisting that Nagas are Indians and Nagaland is Indian territory.
- (ii) The Indian soldier is dying in Nagaland for this insistence.
- (iii) Does the Indian taxpayer realise that he is indirectly financing the death of those soldiers?

And of course, some Nagas have also gotten very rich at the expense of the Indian taxpayer through this relationship. This is why I insist that the 54-year Indo-Naga war is a war that should never have been fought in the first place. Without having to fight we could have mutually helped one another and have been the best of Asian neighbours. Unfortunately, Indian leaders rather chose to insist on their unfounded position and used military force to impose that stand.

*In conclusion, underdevelopment is not the cause of insurgency in Nagaland. Insurgency in Nagaland was created by India when it tried to grab Naga's land to make India bigger than what it politically and geographically was in history.*

Let me quote here two recent incidents to show what I mean. On September 13, 2001, the 27 Assam Rifles D Company, while frisking travellers, found 10 kgs of contraband Ganja, from an NST Bus No. 0457 bound for Dimapur from Kohima. All the passengers of the bus were ruthlessly interrogated by the jawans and the officer in charge. Though the passengers through a seat count among themselves had discovered one passenger missing, who was most probably the culprit, the Assam Rifles Jawans kept them under "bus arrest" for three hours where none of them were allowed to go out. Next, they were taken to the Medziphema Brigade Headquarters for further interrogation and kept there until 6:30 p.m. All these, because 10 kgs of Ganja were found in a state public bus where the actual culprit had escaped. Mind you, this public harassment was not over some seized

explosives but 10 kgs of Ganja which as far as I know has never been known to explode.

Again, on the morning of September 19, 2001, hundreds of the same 27 Assam Rifles, under the command of Major A.K. Srivastava, raided Zhuikhu village, near Medziphema. The jawans beat the Chairman of the village and two other persons black and blue. The whole village, including women and children, were detained for the whole day, disrupting even the school examination that was going on. Further, the 90 year old GB, Yezuyi, along with the Chairman, were taken to the Assam Rifles camp and detained the whole day without food. (*The Nagaland Post*, dated September 23 and 25, 2001).

Again on March 16, 2002, in spite of the present ceasefire and peace talks going on between the Indian Government and the NSCN-IM were mercilessly gunned down at Pallel market in Chandel district of Manipur State. These cadres were gunned down by the 2nd IRB as they were on their way to celebrate the Naga Republic Day.

This kind of harassment, torture and detention of innocent passengers and villagers and also massacres of Naga soldiers by arrogant jawans of the Indian Army and paramilitary forces are all part of the causes of insurgency in Nagaland. These incidents took place at least while the ceasefire and peace talks are going on. What they had done in the past 54 years of war and what they can do in the future is not hard to imagine.

Tell me; is there any connection between this kind of public harassment and underdevelopment being the cause of insurgency in Nagaland? As far as the Naga public are concerned, the Army bulldozers ploughing our village football grounds today will not fool us into thinking that in the next week or month, Army rifle butts and boots will not be ploughing our heads and bodies.

Yes, we are underdeveloped but underdevelopment is not the cause of insurgency in Nagaland. We also want development, but we want development in an environment of freedom and liberty and not under political and military oppression. This dream can only be possible when a political solution finally dawns upon the battle scarred lands of Nagaland.

## Concluding Remarks

Today Nagaland's annual budget is around 1800 crores. Out of this, only 30 percent come under the planned budget, which is earmarked for development works. The rest 70 percent or so goes to the payment of Government servant salaries and administrative works. Besides this allocated budget, one is told that many additional centrally sponsored schemes are financed from the centre.

When one considers the fact that out of Nagaland's 20 lakh population only 1 lakh are Government servants, it is not difficult to imagine who the main beneficiaries of the state's budget are. (There, of course, may be another 1 lakh who are dependent on these Government servants as Contractors, Suppliers, etc.). As for the rural population of Nagaland which even today stands at around 80 percent the only benefits that have reached them are in the form of roads constructed to their villages, power and water supply (to some extent) and the benefits from the educational schools that had been established in many villages. As far as their economic status is concerned even in spite of 39 years of statehood, most of them are still living in the same thatch houses and subsisting on their agro-based economy without any remarkable economic progress.

Over the years, thousands of crores of rupees have been poured into Nagaland for so-called development works most of which have disappeared into the pockets of many corrupted state politicians and bureaucrats. Over and above these thousands of crores, other thousands of crores have been expended by the Indian Army for the maintenance of so-called law and order in Nagaland. In this connection, the total amount expended in 1956 for this law and order problem amounted to Rs. 85,855,266 (Statesman, Calcutta, April 20, 1956). If such amounts are multiplied into 47 years or so, one will get some figures of the stupendous amount of money the Indian Government has spent for maintaining law and order in their tiny puppet State of Nagaland.

Can the Indian Government (Indian taxpayer) continue to spend so much for Nagaland's sake in spite of the fact that Nagaland has not given back India anything in return? Can

the Indian Government continue to sacrifice the lives of her armed forces for the lie that Nagas are Indians and Nagaland is Indian territory? Won't it be much better if we solve the political problem and live as friendly neighbours with our own distinct national and geographical identities in acknowledgement and acceptance of historical and political facts? If the political issue is amicably settled, we can then sit down together to discuss development works in cooperation with one another or even common defence strategies. To do otherwise, is to waste our time and energy trying to solve political problems with economic band aids and analgin tablets.

As far as the Nagas are concerned, we are aware of our mineral wealth and the tremendous potential of our land and its resources. We are also grateful to India for the economic assistance given to us (Though we did not ask for it in the first place). Now with the availability of both personnel and the basic infrastructure at our disposal, we are eager to launch out on our own initiative with the assistance of our Asian neighbours including India. However nothing can be launched as long as the 54 years Indo-Naga imbroglio remains unresolved. *After all, true economic development can never take place in an environment of political conflict and war.*