

**CLOTHING, BEAUTY AND CULTURE:
A STUDY OF THE NAGAS**

**A thesis submitted to the University of Hyderabad
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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in

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by

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09SAPH08



DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

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This Thesis is dedicated

To

my parents, Daniel Sangma and Tsensali.

**DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY
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DECLARATION

I, **Mhonyani Sangma**, hereby declare that this thesis entitled '**Clothing, Beauty and Culture: A study of the Nagas**', under submission is a bonafide research work which is also free from plagiarism is supervised by **Dr. George Tharakan C**. I also declare that it has not been submitted previously in part or in full to this University or any other University or Institution for the award of degree or diploma. I hereby agree that my thesis can be deposited in Shodhganga/ INFLIBNET.

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CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION

In all human cultures, the body is identified, at least in some contexts, with the socialized actor or person to which it belongs. This identification involves, in part, a semiotic use of the body, commonly in the form of more or less standardized modifications of the body surface that then serve, in their ensemble, as representations of the identity of the social person. Such modifications typically include treatments of the surface of the body (for example, clothing, painting, or tattooing, adornment, and coiffure). In all such usages, the natural or artificial surfaces of the body (skin and hair, clothing and ornaments) are treated as signs of the cultural boundary between the self or person and its social and natural object world (Turner 1979). The adornment of the social body consists of the construction of the individual as social actor. Encoded on the skin are a wide variety of signs communicating information about such things as a person's rank, authority, ethnicity, group membership, gender, and ritual condition (Steiner 1990: 431). The surface of the body as the common frontier of society, the social self, and the psycho-biological individual, becomes the symbolic stage upon which the drama of socialisation is enacted, and bodily adornment...becomes the language through which it is expressed (Turner 1980: 112).

The body is given meaning and wholly constituted by discourse. The body vanishes as a biological entity and becomes instead a socially constituted product which is infinitely malleable and highly unstable (Foucault 1980). Body decoration is seen as part of a representational formulation of the body. Decorative elements symbolically represent particular ideas, particular subjective meanings, which are materially 'inscribed' on the body in order to convey those ideas and meanings. However, the body itself remains an object, only given meaning through the use of decoration (Boyd 2002: 142).

All cultures dress the body in some form, and clothing and dress are central to the ways bodies are managed and expressed. They are the vestimentary envelope that presents the body in a social setting. As a result there is a constant interplay between the body and dress, with the two operating dialectically: dress works on the body,

imbuing it with social meaning, while the body is a dynamic field that gives life and fullness to dress (Entwistle 2000: 327).

Clothing is closely linked to the body. It forms the vestimentary envelope that contains the body and presents it to the social world. It is the body that makes clothes live. Clothes are cultural artefacts, embedded in current and historical sets of meanings, shaped by social and economic forces, reflecting current social and cultural concerns. Clothes also enable us to address questions of the plasticity of the body and identity. Though clothes need to be seen as cultural artefacts, they operate in conjunction with and in response to the body, so that their materiality needs to reflect the materiality of the body. Clothes have particular significance because of their capacity to stand alone as artefacts, separate from the individual and their body, though at the same time acting as an intermediary between the body and its public presentation. Clothes operate in conjunction with the body, there is an interplay between the two (Twigg 2009: 13-14).

“Cloth covers or clothes not only the body but beds, tables, walls, and altars. Yet its intimate association with the body is especially salient, putting it in a metonymic relationship to the self. Signifying rank, status, sexuality, power, ideals, it individuates the person. But it can also dissolve a person’s social identity, as in uniforms and sackcloth (Schneider and Weiner 1986).” Clothing draws the body so that it can be culturally seen, and articulates it in a meaningful form (Silverman 1986: 145). Through clothes, identities are shaped in all their aspects: economic status, class belonging, taste and personality are all conveyed into, and mediated by, the presentation of the dressed body. Clothes constitute the self, and the individual portrayed in a photograph incorporates that self and makes it permanent (Ruggerone 2006: 356).

Clothing is one of the fundamental needs of the human being. It serves various and diverse purposes. Clothing selection is based on the needs and desires of the people. It may be to satisfy some aesthetic needs or to fulfil any particular demand of human being. People’s selection of clothing depends upon their perception and feeling about the clothing. In some cases it is recommended to wear certain clothing and selection is not possible, for example dress of a fire-fighter, military uniform etc. However, it is very common that there is a dynamic and fundamental changes in the preferences of

people with the change in the context; season, climate, age, type of activity, etc. It is highly linked with the core requirement why a person is wearing any particular clothing. Moreover, clothing requirements are rather different depending upon the type of activities of any person. However, comfort is a basic and introductory prerequisite of the people in all situations and is considered a threshold in selecting the clothing (Muhammad Mangat 2010).

In the olden times, clothing served as a shield to protect us from adverse climatic conditions but as humans evolved his needs also changed. Clothing is no longer seen as a basic need. We use clothing and accessories as a means to enhance our appeal and it also serves a lot of different purposes. Clothes serve as a non-verbal language and can communicate the personality of the wearer. Through the clothes we wear we can portray an image of ourselves and how we want others to perceive us. It is an indicator of who we are and what we represent in the society. The first thing we notice when meeting someone new is their outward appearance. We form impressions about people based on their appearance. A person is instantly being judged by what they look like and what he/ she wear. The way they dress acts as a non-verbal message and sends out a strong signal to the people around them. The way they dress has a huge impact on the way others perceive them. Dress speaks volumes about the personality of the person. What a person wears can give an insight on who they are. Through our appearance, we reveal as well as we conceal. Many people try to express their individuality through the clothing's they wear and view their sense of style as a part of who they are. A person who dresses well is considered more attractive and gets treated better and gains respect from others than those who do not. A well-dressed man or woman is considered more appealing. As Lee (2000:114) noted, "Dress functions as a primary means of non-verbal communication" emitting "constant, complex social messages that would have been intended by the wearer and understandable by the viewer." Clothes are so eminently malleable; we shape them to construct our appearance. There is an experiential dimension to the power of clothing, both in its wearing and viewing (O'Connor 2005). Woodward (2005) notes, " Our lived experience clothes, how we feel about them, hinges on how others evaluate our crafted appearances, and this experience in turn is influenced by the situation and the structure of the wider context. According to Lurie (1992:5), 'Clothes are the equivalent of words and may be combined into 'sentences'. Lurie suggests that a

sharecropper, for example having very few clothes, will be able to create only very few “sentences”....expressing only the most basic concepts’, whereas as ‘fashion-leader....may have several hundred words at his or her disposal’ and will be able to ‘express a wide range of meanings’ (Lurie 1992: 5). Dress is a coded sensory system of non-verbal communication that aids human interaction in space and time. The codes of dress include visual as well as other sensory modifications (taste, smell, sound, and feel) and supplements (garments, jewelry, and accessories) to the body which set off either or both cognitive and affective processes that result in recognition or lack of recognition by the view. As a system, dressing the body by modifications and supplements often does facilitate or hinder consequent verbal or other communication. The body modifications and supplements that mark the ethnic identity of an individual are ethnic dress (Eicher 1995).

Clothing and ornaments as a form of bodily adornment serves a variety of functions. It protects you from the weather and in sports like football, from injury. It helps you conceal parts of your body and thus serves modesty function. People make inferences about who you are in part by the way you dress. Whether that these inferences prove to be accurate or inaccurate, they will nevertheless influence what people think of you and how they react to you. Your social class, your seriousness, your attitudes (for example, whether you are conservative or liberal), your concern for convention, and your sense of style and perhaps even your creativity will all be judged partly from the way you dress. Your jewelry likewise communicates messages about you. Wedding and engagement rings are obvious examples of jewelry that communicates very specific messages, college rings and political buttons also send specific messages. If you wear a Rolex watch or large precious stones, others are likely to infer that you are rich. Men with earrings will be judged differently from men without earrings. The way you wear your hair says something about who you are. Your hair may communicate a concern for being up to date, a desire to shock, or perhaps a lack of concern for appearances. Men with long hair will generally be judged as less conservative than will men with shorter hair (Devito Joseph 1994). According to Seeger (1975: 212) “Body ornaments should be treated as symbols with a variety of referents. They should be examined as a system in any given society rather than in lucid, but misleading, isolation as has usually been done in the past.”

Appearances parade before us in often pre-formulated arrays, providing us with (more or less) instantly navigable social worlds. The social order is a dressed order: occupation, class, age group, sexuality, gender, region, religious affiliation, activity, sub-group membership and so forth are all announceable and readable through appearance (Peter Corrigan 2008). According to Peter Corrigan (2008) ‘everything is indicated by clothing’: by a mere inspection of dress, everything socially important about a person may be determined. In his book *Fashion as communication* (1996), Malcolm Barnard notes that we make decisions about the social status and role of the people we meet based on what they are wearing: we treat their clothes as ‘social hieroglyphics’, which conceal, even as they communicate, the social position of the wearer (1996:7).

According to Twigg Julia (2013: 3), “Clothes are central to how we present ourselves at the individual and social levels. We recognize who people are through the medium of their dress. We are indeed so accustomed to reading a category like gender from dress that we forget the degree to which it rests on conventional dress codes, rather than direct information about the sexed bodies that lie beneath. Dress then acts to naturalize social divisions. In a similar way we read socioeconomic status from styles of dress, not just the material expense or condition of clothing, but also the subtle differences of presentation and style.” The appearance and clothes of others influence our perceptions of them prior to anything they say. In making a decision to initiate any kind of contact, we evaluate the person’s external appearance. Paradoxically, to find out what there is beneath appearance, we must base ourselves first on appearance (Goffman 1959: 249).

Clothing matters differently across the world’s major regions and globalization have brought about changes in dress practice. Dress readily becomes a flash point of conflicting values, fueling contests in historical encounters, in interactions across class, between genders and generations, and in recent global cultural and economic exchanges (Hansen 2004). In modern class societies, clothes were closed texts, with fixed meanings”, in fragmented postmodern societies, clothes are “open texts”, that represent different social groups in different ways. A clothing item, which offers us a key to interpret the modern age is the hat, a closed, obligatory text, which clearly reveals the social status of the person wearing it. The emblematic item of post modern

fashion is instead the T-shirt, a never-ending text that everybody can write, which by itself does not have any precise identity connotations regarding gender or status, or any evident geographic origin, “but expresses social identities in many different ways, ranging from identity politics to lifestyles. (Crane 2000: 243). Bourdieu (1984) through his study analysed the role of clothing as a marker of class distinction in which dress is an aspect of cultural capital, part of how elites establish, maintain and reproduce positions of power, reinforcing relation of dominance and subordination.

Clothing as a form of material culture is especially suitable for studying the relationship between personal values and values attributed to material goods because of its close association with perceptions of the self. Clothes both affect and express our perceptions of ourselves. Ruggerone suggests that clothing has a special character as a material object because of its location on our bodies, thereby “acting as a filter between the person and the surrounding social world.” Consumption of material goods can be seen as an expression of certain types of symbolic values (Dolfsma 2004: 356), as opposed to economic values. Material goods express values; consumption of these goods is a means for the consumer to communicate messages about the values she holds.

What a person chooses to wear can reflect that person’s personality or likes. When people who have cultural status start to wear new or different clothes a fashion trend may start. Fashion is a term commonly used to describe a style of clothing worn by most people of a country. It can also be used to express oneself, to serve as an extension of our personality. Fashion statement can be made with clothes, accessories, shoes, hair, make-up etc (Cynthia Nellis). Acceptance or rejection of a style is a reaction to the society we live in. It can also be seen as a language which tells a story about the person who wears it. “Clothes create a wordless means of communication that we all understand,” according to Katherine Hamnett, a top British fashion designer. Fashion has the power to transform an image and make a social statement. The concept of fashion is often used to refer to the manner in which specific forms of culture disseminate (Simmel 1957). It is most frequently used to connote highly visible styles of clothing and, less often, other types of material or immaterial culture that are highly valued at a particular moment in time. The term is also applied to

systems that produce new styles of clothing and attempt to make them desirable to the public.

Malcolm Barnard (1996) states 'Fashion and clothing can be seen as a form of non-verbal communication. A garment, an item of fashion or clothing, would be the medium or channel in which one person would 'say' something to another person. For Bogatyrev (1971 [1937]:83), 'In order to grasp the social function of costumes we must learn to read them as signs in the same way we learn to read and understand different languages.' Clothing and fashion are cultural phenomena in that culture may itself be understood as a signifying system, as the ways in which a society's belief, values, ideas and experiences are communicated through practices, artefacts and institutions. In this case, fashion, clothing and dress are the artefacts, practices and institutions that constitute a society's beliefs, values, ideas and experiences. According to this view, fashion, dress and clothing are ways in which people communicate, not only things like feeling and mood but also the values, hopes and beliefs of the social groups of which they are members. They are, then, the ways in which society is produced and reproduced (Malcolm Barnard 1996).

Fashion may also vary considerably within a society according to age, social class, generation, occupation and geography as well as over time. One certain thing in fashion world is change. We are constantly being bombarded with new fashion ideas from music, videos, books and television. Movies also have a big impact on what people wear. Musicians and other cultural icons have always influenced what we are wearing but so have the political figures and royalty. People look at each other differently just by the clothing they wear. What we wear speaks for itself, it determines who we are and what we represent in this society. According to historical theory, dress is a visual symbol of a society's identity (Payne, Winakor, and Farrell-Beck, 1992). Fashion, Wilson (1988: 12) argues, "is essential to the world of modernity... it is a kind of connective tissue of our cultural organism". "Fashion became part of the popular consciousness, and the mass manufacture of clothing enabled it to become part of the popular culture (1988: 157)." Fashion is revealing. Clothes reveal what group's people are in. Clothing can also be seen as a reflection of one's status. Fashion is what makes the world these days. It is what some people's life is focussed around and it's so important to them.

Body is used as a medium of self-expression and a powerful form of speech. Human beings from the beginning of civilization went incredible lengths spending a lot of time and money to achieve certain standards of beauty since being attractive is a socially desirable quality.

People in virtually all societies have standards of attractiveness and criteria of bodily perfection that vary widely from one society to another. Bodies are manipulated in various ways, usually by temporary modifications such as body painting or other ornamentation, but frequently through more invasive and permanent alterations. Some changes are designed to render the individual more ritually acceptable, some to bestow a mark of social affiliation, and many to enhance sexual attractiveness or beauty, as it is defined in the culture. We can think of dozens of examples: tattooing, scarification, piercing of earlobes, lips or nostrils, or even nipples in the leather bar culture of urban America. There is tooth filing or excision, enlargement of lips or earlobes, flattening of heads, and stretching of necks. And there are those other more draconian measures such as foot binding, subincision, circumcision, or infibulations (Polhemus 1978).

The cultural obsession with beauty is found everywhere right from the most primitive to the most advanced cultures. It is an attribute which everyone wants to embody. Humans focus a great deal of their attention on bettering themselves to enhance their appearance. Attainment of beauty has been a quest of humans and attempts are made to achieve certain standards of beauty through bodily improvement. The concept and the ideals of beauty differ from one culture to another. What is considered beautiful in one culture might be unacceptable in others. Cultural norms do have an influence on the way we perceive beauty. In pursuit and attainment of beauty individuals or communities may take radical means of self-modification. The Padaung natives of Kayah state in Myanmar have attracted a great deal of interest due to their practice of neck-stretching. The number and the value of the rings confer status and respect on the wearer's family and these are worn only by women. These severe decorations express the Padaung women's concept of beauty and also designate their social ranking in the society. Among the Mursi tribe of Southern Ethiopia, lip plates are inserted to enhance their beauty. This is practiced by the Mursi women. Women with lip plates are considered more beautiful than those without them. In African countries,

ritual scarification is practiced. The skin is edged to create patterns and designs. Each tribe has its own distinct designs. People are willing to undergo the pain to show their strength and gain social acceptance. Scarification is believed to enhance beauty among them and the beauty of a woman is measured in terms of her designs on the body. Foot binding, a custom practiced in ancient China was considered a symbol of beauty. Girls underwent excruciating pain for years and some even faced death from infection. Men in ancient China would not marry a girl unless her foot was bound as this was considered a symbol of power, beauty, and wealth. As Benamou (2006) states, that bounded feet were not only a symbol of the ideal feminine beauty but also deemed as “a source of extreme sexual gratification to the Chinese male.” The Chinese may have been the first to develop the concept that the female body can and should be altered from its natural state. The practice of foot binding clearly illustrates the objectification of parts of the female body as well as the demands placed on women to conform to beauty ideals (Saltzberg and Chrisler 1997: 35). In western societies thin is considered a standard of beauty and a culturally approved object of desire. There is constant pressure to look thin in order to fit into the notion of acceptable body. And some try to achieve this by subjecting themselves to strict diet regimes, surgeries, exercises etc. Looking presentable to others is what motivates most people to spend a considerable amount of time, money, energy on grooming oneself.

As already mentioned, humans constantly strive to transform our bodies and the way it looks. Tattooing and body piercings are viewed as a form of body decoration. It is seen as a way of beautifying the body. According to Reischer and Koo (2004), Bodies are modified for many reasons- to register participation in a social group, to claim an identity in opposition to a social group, to signal a significant change in social status. However, the overarching theme and primary end of most body work is the pursuit and attainment of beauty. Cultural meanings and values reside in and on the material body; the body not only reflects these constructions but also has the capacity to challenge them. The body thus serves as a vehicle for social action even as it signifies social realities: Bodily (re) form both reflects and motivates processes of social reform. Responsive to the highly coded nature of beauty, women have learned to appropriate the body's symbolism to achieve their own ends. Women's bodies, and the social constructions of the ideal female form, do more than reflect women's

position in society: They offer a powerful means for negotiating, redefining, and reconceptualising that position. However, these forms of resistance occur within overarching social structures that ultimately index existing power relations.

Review of literature

According to the study carried out by Zorn (1998), she says that dress remains a major creative focus for many Andeans, in which people invest substantial resources of time, materials, money and labor. As people create and wear cloth, they also make statements about themselves. Cloth remains a principal medium through which identity is expressed and symbolised worldwide. Textiles are not a fixed semiotic code, but these codes do communicate. Sakaka fashion their dress using diverse materials from varied sources, into many styles that help them construct not one “essential” but rather multiple, and modern, Sakaka identities. Zorn further describes the following role played by clothes and says, Sakaka cloth functions as: (1) a paramount sign in the representation-and construction-of identity in its manifold forms; (2) a communicative system, with meanings and values that textiles, taken as a whole, evoke, express and constitute for their wearers; and (3) the most important Andean expressive visual medium (“art”); (4) cloth also functions poetically, that is, in ways in which the textile refers to itself. (5) Cloth has a significant economic function, including (the embodiment of) wealth, whether displayed in public, stored in homes, or inherited; (6) cloth has a profoundly religious function, which actually permeates the process of creation of certain kinds of cloth; (7) cloth retains limited military functions; (8) the international handicraft industry, including local tourism, has provided another function for cloth in the Andes, though not necessarily for Andean cloth; this industry requires products that frequently bear little resemblance to locally-made cloth; (9) cloth plays an important role in the international market for ethnic art and antiquities,, which all but the dealers themselves would agree is to the great detriment of Andean society; (10) finally, the international fine arts market provides a potential outlet for high-quality, expensive merchandise. It remains to be seen whether Andean textiles may return income to their producers similar to the gains that other ethnic artists (for example, North American Navajo weavers) sometimes are able to earn.

Huisman and Hondagneu-Sotelo (2005: 45-46), in their study, examined the ways in which Bosnian Muslim refugee women use agency to negotiate meanings of dress within specific temporal and structural-historical contexts. They argue that dress communicates identity and that dress practices reflect agentic processes that are situated within the flow of time. Dress is simultaneously informed by past dress habits and oriented toward both the future and the present. According to them, dress holds different meanings for different groups. When people from one particular national or regional context migrate as a group, the audience changes, and they often encounter radically different gendered forms of clothing used for self and group presentation. They further noted that body adornment and dress serve as a discursive daily practice of gender. In this regard, dress acts as a nonverbal language. The meanings of this language change over time and space, and sometimes the language of dress does not translate easily from one site to the next. Individuals and groups who travel or migrate to another site may initially interpret the new forms of dress they encounter there through the lens-or dress language- of their homeland and the recent past. Overtime, however, immigrants often adopt some new gendered dress practices in response to the changing context. Through their repeated interactions with new, competing audiences, dress norms from the past may be challenged or modified.

The dress forms part of an ongoing dynamic between objective social forms and subjective experience. The dress is simultaneously a static icon of cultural identity and also a dynamic enactment of so-called transnational cultural flows. It is a physical impediment and restricts social movement; it is also a practical medium through which mobility and social connectedness are experienced, it is a representative of dirtiness and backwardness and also of strength and growth. The dress is a burdensome constraint and also a sensible source of agentive autonomy (Simmel 1971:14-15). According to Fox-Genovese (1987:12), “Dressing established vertical links in the society, articulated ties of dependency as the ligaments of the social order. A noble’s servant...embodied and displayed his power. Display thus became one of the principal political obligations of service. The point was to demonstrate not merely that you belonged to someone else....but that he was powerful.... Fashion in this sense also demonstrated the political and personal advantages of being in some man’s service.”

Tarlo (1996: 9) offers rich insights into clothing choices over the past 100 years in India. According to her, dress became a public issue in the 1920s when Gandhi promoted the use of handmade cloth in an effort to restore both individual spirituality and public patriotism but achieved little success especially from the Indian elite and village women. Tarlo describes how members of different castes dealt with dress issues, including “untouchables” who had the least to lose by changing dress.

In the early nineteenth century in Bechuanaland, a frontier region between colonial Botswana and South Africa clothing was viewed as central to missionary conversion. The struggle for souls entailed dressing African bodies in European clothes to cover their nudity and managing these bodies through new hygiene regimes. European clothes were a popular prestige good preceding the arrival of missionaries. The converts accepted the clothes eagerly and wore them as they saw fit, expressing their personal desires in a new culture of consumption that the missionaries could not fully control (Comaroff & Comaroff 1997). In Vanuatu, the formal properties of the women’s dress introduced by missionaries inspired novel and sometimes island-specific clothing styles that are inseparable from traditional imagery, marking out new contexts for religious practices (Bolton 2003). Similarly, Indonesian dress is a product of the changing relationship between indigenous, Muslim and Western influences (Schulte Nordholt 1997).

In post- Mao’s China, as elsewhere in the region, urban residents wear suits and dresses, polos and T-shirts, jeans and skirts, and high heels and sneakers. Gender, age, and class position probably serve as the main differentiating factors. Although anthropological studies of consumption have noted the widespread localization of Western dress, few have substantially addressed the significance of Western dress styles in Asia (Hansen Karen Tranberg 2004: 11).

As Nandita Haksar (2011) puts it, “[O]ne of the most important aspects of culture is the clothes that people wear. Communities preserve their identities by promoting traditional dress; states define national identities by designating certain clothes as “the national dress” of the country; fundamentalist try to impose their ideas by pressing dress codes. In almost every case there are double standards-one for men and another for women.”

Symbolic values are attributed in the process of communication of material culture, as well as in the process of production. In contemporary fashion, images in the media that attribute symbolic values to clothing styles have become as important as the clothes themselves. Through advertisements for their products, clothing brands transmit sets of values that imply an ideology and specific life styles. Editorial pages in fashion magazines, advertisements, catalogues, and programs on television and cable disseminate images of clothing more widely than the products they depict. The communication process in fashion magazines and fashion advertisements relies on specific and sophisticated techniques to redefine the symbolic values attached to styles of clothing, including the use of very young, very thin models, often presented in demeaning positions (Goffman 1976).

The types of symbolic values that are attributed to clothing vary at different times in the same society and in different societies at the same time. Fashionable clothes as consumer goods become important when societies industrialize and levels of disposable income increase in the middle and working classes. The nature of the symbolic values attached to fashionable clothing depends on the cultural and political history of the country and the characteristics and variety of the ethnic groups of which it is composed. Fashion systems have distinctive characteristics in different countries, depending on the organization of the fashion industry, the nature of the clientele, and the relative influence of marginal subcultures as well as on the role of the arts and other forms of culture in the country's heritage (Crane, Bovone 2006: 324). According to Weiner and Schneider (1984:4), "Capitalist production and its associated values reordered the symbolic potential of cloth...by encouraging the growth of fashion- a consumption system of high velocity turnover and endless, everchanging variation- capitalist entrepreneurs vastly inflated dress and adornment as a domain for expression through cloth." Constant style changes have turned tailoring into an entrepreneurial niche for women as haute couture designers and small scale tailors. Incorporating influences from magazines, music videos, and street scenes, their custom-made clothes blend cultures from within Africa and beyond, with both new and secondhand clothing serving as resources (Grabski 2002).

A culture organized around mass consumption encourages narcissism-which we can define for the moment as a disposition to see the world as a mirror, more particularly

as a projection of one's own fears and desires. The use of symbol as a mirror would ideally be a preliminary stage in a sequence of events that develops successively into more sophisticated channels for relating the inner self to outer reality. The mass promotion of commodities, however, has a regressive effect on the individual who becomes ever more dependent on external judgements of what is necessary for his/her well being and produces an inner state of chronic anxiety (Lasch 1984: 33, 28).

With their power to frame, define, and neglect aspects of the social world, the mass media are a principal social and cultural institution. The central position of media in everyday life ensures that symbols distributed through the media become points of focus and interaction in the population. Imagery is contested and criticized, however, by groups and individuals. Ethnic, religious, age and gender groups struggle to influence society's values, myths, symbols and information through the media (Gans 1972).

The expansion of advertising contributes to the processes of social and cultural change that have accompanied the accelerated globalisation of the economy since the 1990s. Advertising contributes to cultural change through the introduction of new values (individualism, definitions of beauty), the intensification of other values such as materialism and consumerism and by diminishing and displacing other key values in society (Lynne Ciochetto 2010). As social groups and classes live, if not in their productive then in their 'social' relations, increasingly fragmented and sectionally differentiated lives, the mass media are more and more responsible (a) for providing the basis on which groups and classes construct an image of the lives, meanings, practices, and values of other groups and classes; (b) for providing the images, representations and ideas around which the social totality composed of all these separate and fragmented pieces can be coherently grasped (Hall 1977).

The images of women in advertising play an important role in defining contemporary ideals of beauty and a Eurasian westernised ideal of beauty is promoted in the media throughout Asia by multinationals largely through the use of standardised advertising (Goon and Craven, 2003). Advertising studies have revealed support that exposure to advertising with attractive models can temporarily raise comparison standards for physical attractiveness (Richins 1991). The ability of magazine copy or pictures to influence readers' self-perceptions of their own shape and attractiveness is mediated

by the degree to which they have absorbed the surrounding culture's ideals about body shape and by whatever the cultural ideal may be (Cusumano and Thompson: 1997). Orbach (1978) noted the tendency for the media to produce a picture of ideal femininity as 'thin, free of unwanted hair, deodorised, perfumed and clothed... They produce a picture that is far removed from the reality of everyday lives' (1978: 20-21). Orbach (1978: 20-21) said "She attempts to make herself in the image of womanhood presented by billboards, newspapers, magazines and television... She is brought up to marry by catching man with her good looks. To do this she must look appealing, earthy, sensual, virginal, innocent, reliable, caring, mysterious, coquettish, and thin... In the background a ten billion dollar industry waits to remodel bodies to the latest fashion." Weedon (1987: 174) noted "A glance at women's magazines, for example, reveals a range of often competing subject positions offered to women readers, from career woman to romantic heroine, from successful wife and mother to irresistible sexual object." Hollows (2000) suggested the theories of those who see women's buying of beautifying goods and processes not as exploitation but as about the celebratory, pleasurable and empowering potential of fashion, make-up and the consumption of all manner of body-altering products.

The idealized media images of attractive people can be regarded as prototypes that are used by audiences to evaluate their own looks. Recent evidence supports the assertion that attractive people portrayed in advertising affect consumers global perceptions of their own facial attractiveness (Richins 1991). Fashion models and celebrities are often presented as, and thus often seen as, role models for beauty, attractiveness, and success, and therefore provide likely targets for upward appearance comparisons. However, as the appearances of models and celebrities in media images are often not representative or biologically achievable in reality (Spitzer, Henderson, Zivian et al, 1999). According to Grabe, Ward and Hyde (et al. 2008), exposure to media images depicting thin, idealized women is associated with greater body image concerns among women. Body image disturbances can occur in males just as much as in females. While the cultural ideal body shape popularly promoted for females is one of thinness, for males it is one of exaggerated muscularity (Cohane and Pope 2001). Diamond Stanley (1987) views beauty as being ethnocentric and lying in the eyes of the members of that culture. He says the division between beauty and ugliness is not only a matter between cultures or between periods in the same society but is a

question of aesthetic principle. The major cause of the changing ideals of beauty is often attributed to cross-cultural interactions. Christopher Frazier (2006) says that the concept of beauty of a culture change as a result of influences from other cultures. The change in a culture can be brought about by external cultural contact particularly domination. There is often the subjugation of the non-west by the west through the means of mass media and commercialism.

According to Banet-Weiser (1999), the beauty pageant is caught in another crossroads: that between feminine objectification and feminine empowerment. Feminists have long argued that beauty pageants perpetuate the commodification of women as objects of display, which ultimately creates victims of its participants and profiteers of the spectacle's many stagers: producers, directors, and the audience at large. Banet- Weiser also says that the beauty pageant has also become a "kind of feminist space where female identity is constructed by negotiating the contradictions of being socially constituted as 'just' a body while simultaneously producing oneself as an active thinking subject, indeed, a decidedly 'liberal' subject" (1999: 24). The dressed body in beauty pageants constitutes a rich site for dress research on representation, gender construction, performance and politics. While beauty contests demonstrate the proliferation of Western styles and influences, they are also setting into motion complicated negotiations between local and global norms of beauty, gender and sexuality (Cohen et al. 1996).

Cosmetics in our own culture beautify the body. Involved are aesthetic values, a sense of style and context, and the overt aim of enhancing the individual. By rendering the person in a particular style in itself beautiful, he or she too becomes more beautiful than in the unadorned state. As well as the social messages carried in the style, personality effects may be strived for, to appear alluring, striking, soft, and so on (Strathern (1979). Consumers are constantly on the prowl to acquire the latest products and services that will help them to attain this elusive quality. To capitalize on this desire, marketers compete fiercely to position their products and to design mass media communications so as to embody current ideals of beauty (Bloch and Richins 1992). Cosmetic advertising straddles twin discourses of science and beauty whereby the beauty is the goal and the science the means of achieving it. With treatment cosmetics, the authority of science lends credence not just to the efficacy of

the product but the legitimacy of the beauty that is the product's goal. This is most clearly evident in the huge range of anti-ageing creams and treatments now being sold as the newly liberated consumers of the 1970s become the forty-somethings of the new millennium. Women are being sold youth but alongside that beauty constituent is the opposite sales pitch that ageing is unacceptable femininity. So two different meanings are enabled by the beauty is youth myth- the represented one and the connoted difference- 'age is ugly'. Their studies further revealed that "the problem seems to be that so many of the images offered to women in the media are the same- slender, fair, fit, young, sexual- and the goods sold to women are sold to 'help' them achieve that image whilst, at the same time, women are expected increasingly to occupy a large variety of roles- sex symbol, career woman, mother, wife, housewife, athlete. For girls entering adulthood the discontinuity between their 'real' selves, the representation of women and the range of roles they are shown occupying must present as at best challenging, certainly confusing and possibly confounding. All women modify, some morph and some mutilate in the effort to define themselves- all of us are subject to the same pressures and so to some extent all women suffer as subjects of social construction (Wykes and Gunter 2005). Greer (1970:57) vilifies as simply turning the person into a sex object. The more the cosmetic style incorporates conventional canons of taste, the more of an object is created. Enhancement of aspects of the person-facial beauty, sexual attributes- is felt to detract from the whole. The woman becomes nothing but the beautification. Hence people come to adorn themselves in an unconventional way in order to express what they claim, style hides- their personality."

Dress also has a significant part to play in the process of being visible, of occupying social and cultural space in a confident manner. This is particularly significant in the context of age where older women can find themselves becoming invisible culturally, no longer seen or noticed. This is in contrast with the experience of youth where young women can find themselves and their bodies' hypervisible, constituted oppressively in an omnipresent male gaze. For older women, however, and to some degree older men too, the struggle is to be seen at all. Here dress, especially if chosen and worn in a confident and positive manner, can be part of an assertion of value, a repudiation of invisibility (Twigg Julia 2013: 4). Barnard (1996) noted, clothes are ideological. They encode values through which individuals are ranked and judged;

and they mark out and naturalize hierarchies of power and status. This includes those in relation to age; and it is clear that there are aspects of the dress traditionally associated with age that carry such meanings-the dull, drab, dark, self-effacing, “don’t-look-at-me” styles associated with age that express marginalization, withdrawal and secondary status. Ageing is a political process. Challenging these clothing norms can thus be read as a challenge to the political status of older people in the wildest sense.

A great many consumption activities reflect a desire to control natural forces, particularly those resulting from the inevitable passage of time and the equally inevitable prospect of aging and eventually dying. According to Scott (1993); Wolf (2002) noted that from the consumption of hair-colouring products, hair-loss remedies, skin-care products designed to obscure signs of aging, and finally cosmetic surgery, the culturally pervasive desire to control the process of aging has been translated into a multi-billion-dollar cosmetic industry (Belk 1988). These promotional discourses reiterate that the correct lifestyle and the correct application of consumer technologies offer a means to resist the forces of nature that might otherwise affect the body. This cultural orientation also renders the passive acceptance of "natural bodily deterioration and the bodily betrayals that accompany aging . . . as signs of moral laxitude" (Featherstone 1991: 178).

Increasing consciousness about appearance leads to body dissatisfaction. Body dissatisfaction has led to the rise in aesthetic surgery worldwide. “The rise of aesthetic surgery as a widely accepted practice reflects the popular belief in its ability not only to correct bodily deviance and deformation, but also to “cure” and “restore” the psyche that has been damaged by the body’s stigmatization. The role of aesthetic surgery, then, is twofold: In curing the ills of the body, it can also cure the “unhappy” psyche. That aesthetic surgery is now a “form of psychotherapy” (1998: xi) points to the symbolic power of the body to reflect the status of the psyche itself (Gilman 1998)’. According to Davis (1995:18). Mass media have played an integral role in the popularization of cosmetic surgery. First, media coverage of celebrities and their body work glamorizes cosmetic surgery, sending a message that “no one is so beautiful that she cannot become even more so with the help of surgery”. To conform to the dominant standards of beauty most people try to physically change or alter their

bodies. Many people try to look like what they see in the media. Many want to alter or enhance their appearance to feel more socially desirable. Cosmetic surgeries have become normalized and gaining acceptance around the world due to the increase in the popularity of cosmetic surgery among actors and celebrities.

Studies on the Nagas

J.P Mills in his monograph (1922) gives an account of the dress practices of the Lotha Nagas. In his study he showed that in traditional Lotha society, a dark blue *rive* (loincloth) could be worn only by a warrior of great distinction. He stated that a boy's first garment assumed without any ceremonies when about seven or eight years old is the flap of one of his father's discarded "lengtas" hung from a bit of string tied round his waist. For girls, *Khondrosü*, a cloth which is about ten inches deep, white with a dark blue border and a little red embroidery in the middle is the first skirt she puts on when she turns about five or six years old.

In another important study, Elwin Verrier (1969) gave us a glimpse of the dress practices of the Angami Nagas. He said that the dress of the Angami Naga consists of a blue or black kilt prettily ornamented with cowrie shells and a coarse brown cloth made of the bark of the nettle plant, is loosely thrown over the shoulders. The warrior wears a collar round the neck reaching to the waist, made of goats' hair, dyed red, intermixed with long flowing locks of hair of the persons he has killed, ornamented with cowrie shells. No one is entitled to wear this insignia of honour unless he has killed many of his enemies and brought home their heads. Christoph Von Fürer Haimendorf also made a significant contribution to the study of the Nagas. However in his book 'The Naked Nagas' (1939) very little has been written about the dress practices of the Nagas and we find only passing references. His study gives an overview of the Nagas focussing mainly on the Konyak Nagas.

J.H Hutton also made important contribution to the study of the Nagas. He studied different Naga tribes like the Angami Nagas (1921), the Sema Nagas (1921) and the Ao Nagas (1928) and gave a detailed ethnographic account of each tribe.

According to Aier Anungla (2004), the Naga dress and ornaments are more than a matter of aesthetic and decency but the symbolism of it plays very significant role in

their culture and social life. She says that they make unspoken clear statements that define the identity of the wearer, their social status, and the group to which they belong. She further points out that in Naga society the ornaments and the motifs of their dress serve as a symbolic vocabulary that makes unspoken statements with regard to the various identity, status, and valour of the wearer ranging from tattoo marks on the body and the dress they wear. Alemchiba (1968), in his study gives an account of different traditional Naga textiles and its associated cultural significance.

Thong (1997), in his study, explained that certain shawls in Naga society were a mark of rank and status. According to him the designs weaved in each of these statuses shawls varied from tribe to tribe and also from person to person depending on their success in head hunting, erection of stone monuments and hosting the feast of merit. He further noted that clothings in Naga society were also used to differentiate social status, gender, married status etc. Similarly Haksar Nandita (2011), in her study noted that in traditional Naga society the tribe to which a person belonged to could be clearly identified from their shawls as each tribe had distinct colours and designs on their shawl. She also further revealed that the status a person occupied in the Naga society was discernible through their clothing.

According to Ao Akang (2004), the dress and costumes of the Naga people are very colourful and exquisite in their respective motifs and design. He observes that, irrespective of male and female dresses, apparel and costumes, various patterns of motifs and design run through their full length from head to foot. According to him, the motifs and design certainly indicate and signify the social and cultural status of the wearer in society. Of the costumes, male armlet and headgear are expensively decorated with ivory, tiger, and wild boar tooth, hornbill feathers which are fixed are very significant and meaningful. The other custom blended with goat's hair and cowry shells are also not less meaningful. He also adds that the shawl and skirts with an intricate pattern of motifs and design are so appealing and can indicate the group and tribe of the wearer.

Vibha Joshi in her paper (2000: 378-380) on the Nagas talks about how textiles have both utilitarian as well as symbolic function. She says that the kind of clothes we wear is reflective of social relations and of the expression of social identities and values. She further says that the cloth worn by a person is suggestive of the power

relationship he/she may have with other members of the community. She talks about the changes in the style of clothing with the advent of Christianity in Naga society. To quote her “The sanctions against traditional clothing were also applied to all the Naga students who had joined the schools. They were banned from wearing the traditional cloth and ornaments and were encouraged to wear Assam style dhotis or western style shorts and shirts.”

Mongro Kajen (1999) in his book discusses the Naga men and women’s traditional attires, ornaments adorned by the Nagas, musical instruments used by the Nagas, meanings and significance attached to each of these, the process of making it, rituals and beliefs associated with it thereby providing invaluable information on the Naga culture. Similarly Kanungo Alok Kumar (2006), in his study discussed a wide range of Naga ornaments, its significance and the place from which these materials originated.

At the same time, socio-cultural changes taking place in the Naga society with the advent of Christianity, colonialism, education, westernization, modernisation, globalization are reflected through the studies carried out by some scholars. Shikhu Inato (2007: 172) in his study on the Nagas says that, “though modernisation and post-modernisation did not come to the Nagas in the form of a powerful conquering nation with military might, its frequent and varied contacts and influences in the garb of westernisation through fashion, mass-media, philosophy and literature have made the Nagas adopt elements like clothing, education, morality, behaviour and intellect, and techniques and integrate them into their own culture in their own way. This has resulted in the Nagas abandoning their centuries-old cultural identity, tradition, belief, and values and incorporate new culture and ideas from a much bigger world.”

According to Ao Temsula (2006), the impact of globalization will be most felt in the area of indigenous cultural products because to meet global standards, the products will have to be modified, re-designed and at times even be distorted. The identities embodied in cultural products will thus be eliminated for greater marketability. For example, the famous Ao-Naga shawl called “Mangkotepsu” is a male attire but these days one sees that jackets made out of it have become unisex and are sold at tourist spots with its lore and history totally ignored. Other handicrafts, dance forms are also being manipulated to ‘fit’ into the required mould. This process of de-identifying

native cultures and their products for the sake of global recognition and economic expediency will inevitably lead to a hybridization of identities in cultural artefacts.

The few studies mentioned above focused on various aspects of the Naga culture like social, cultural, economic and religious aspects. However, it needs to be mentioned that an in- depth study pertaining to the clothing practices, various body adornment, concept of beauty, changes taking place in Naga society have not been carried out. An attempt, therefore, is made to cover all these aspects and provide a better understanding of the Naga society.

Significance of the study

Anthropologists for centuries spent a great deal of their time in understanding various aspects of the tribal communities ranging from studies in caste structure, family, marriage and kinship organization, religion, magic, folklore, economic organization, tribal problems and welfare measures and so on. However, anthropological work on clothing, beauty, and the significance of various types of body adornments for a long time received only passing attention and is comparatively an unexplored area. Very few anthropological studies have been carried out in this area of research. An attempt, therefore, is made to highlight the significance of clothing and beauty and how it can be used as a medium in understanding the socio-cultural aspects of the Naga community and which also helps in perceiving the process and dynamics transpiring between tradition and transition of Naga culture. There is also a need to collect valuable data with regard to Naga clothing, ornaments, arts and crafts and to preserve the rich Naga cultural traditions before it gets disintegrated due to rapid modernisation.

Theoretical framework

This study adopted a symbolic approach using the theories of Mary Douglas, Victor Turner and Van Gennep's concept of rites of passage. Mary Douglas talks about the symbolic significance of the body. She says, symbols are the only means of communication. They are the only means of expressing value; the main instruments of thought, the only regulators of experience. For any communication to take place, the symbols must be structured. As Douglas explains, 'if the body is a "text" upon which

social meanings are inscribed, then a common vocabulary, a common symbol set, is needed to decipher those meanings. Our bodies transmit a dizzying array of complex information about ourselves, with or without our intention, and we and other members of our culture tend to be expert at reading those culturally specific meanings almost instantaneously.’ According to her the physical body is a microcosm of the social body. Symbols grounded in the human body are used to express social experience, and vice versa, the human body is “taught” to individuals by society. By understanding how the body works, we understand how society works (Douglas 1970).

The other approach employed is that of Victor Turner, he says, certain dominant or focal symbols conspicuously possess this property of multivocality which allow for the economic representation of key aspects of culture and belief. Each dominant symbol has a “fan” or “spectrum” of referents, which are linked by what is usually a simple mode of association, its very simplicity enabling it to interconnect a wide variety of significata. For example, the associational link provided by “Whiteness” enables white clay (*mpemba*) to stand for a multiplicity of ideas and phenomena, ranging from biological referents as “semen”, to abstract ideas such as “ritual purity”, “innocence” from witchcraft, and solidarity with the ancestor spirits” (Turner 1967 :50).

Arnold Van Gennep’s defines “Rites de Passage” as “rites which accompany every change of place, state, social position and age” He showed that all rites of transition are marked by three phases: separation, margin (or limen), and aggregation.

1. The first phase of separation comprises symbolic behaviour signifying the detachment of the individual or group either from an earlier fixed point in the social structure or a set of cultural conditions (a “state”)
2. During the intervening liminal period, the state of the ritual subject (the “passenger”) is ambiguous, he passes through a realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state.
3. In the third phase the passage is consummated. The ritual subject, individual or corporate, is in a stable state once more, by virtue of this, has rights and obligations of a clearly defined and “structural” type, and is expected to behave in accordance with certain customary norms and ethical standards

(Turner 1967:94). Victor Turner further says that the transitional beings are particularly polluting, since they are neither one thing nor another, or may be both, or neither here nor there; or may even be nowhere, and are at the very least “ betwixt and between” all the recognized points in space-time of structural classification (Turner 1967: 97).

Using the approaches of the above mentioned theorists, the study tried to highlight the various aspects of clothing and beauty to help throw light and in better understanding the dynamics of the Naga society.

Objectives of the study

1. The study mainly aims to bring out an ethnographic account of Naga culture focussing mainly on aspects of clothing and beauty and to examine how it plays a crucial part in the formation of one’s individual and culture identity.
2. Examining how the social values and the Naga religion and beliefs can have a difference in their choice and style of clothing they choose, the study tries to see whether fashion remains diametrically opposed to tradition and to the forms of dress and bodily adornment which are obligatory and fixed signs of Naga social identity and status.
3. Since fashion changes periodically and individuals may follow fashion more or less assiduously, the study essentially looks into the aspect of competition and display of personal prestige within the community as part of the intra-class competition. Similarly, the study will also try to understand the strong influence of globalization and media on the younger generation and the extent it affects their choices.

Methodology

The study was carried out for a period of one and half year using various anthropological methods. A total of 115 households were selected through random sampling. The first few days were spent in establishing rapport. At this stage, household census schedules was used for taking basic information like occupation, age, sex, educational status, religious affiliation, family type, marriage system etc.

Carrying out the household survey helped the researcher in better understanding the layout of the research area and helped the researcher in securing information required for the study.

For intensive study, Key informants were identified to take an in-depth account. Observation method, both participant and non-participant was also applied. This method helped the researcher in validating the information given out by the respondents. Interview method was also used to collect data. Structured interviews as well as unstructured interview technique were employed for collecting the information. Case studies were also employed to get an in depth and better insight of the society. Secondary data was also utilised for collecting information.

The above mentioned methods and techniques were employed right through the course of fieldwork which helped the researcher in getting better insight and understanding of the society as a whole.

Chapterization of the thesis

The chapterization of the thesis is as follows. Chapter one gives an introduction to the concept of clothing and beauty, the views, and approaches opined by different scholars, statement of the problem, the objective of the study and the methodology adopted in the study. Chapter two titled 'Ethnographic context of the Nagas: Social and Cultural' will deal with the ethnographic account of the study area to give a comprehensive idea of the people studied. In Chapter three 'Traditional clothing as symbols of Naga ethnic and cultural identity', an attempt is made to focus on various aspects of Naga traditional clothing and the role it plays in shaping the cultural identity and individual identity. The fourth chapter titled 'The Significance of Body adornment among the Nagas' will include the significance of body adornment in Naga culture and try to understand the deep symbolic meanings attached to it which are reflective of the Naga traditional values and beliefs. The fifth chapter 'Role of media in body ideals and modern clothing practices among the Nagas' comprises of the impact of globalization in Naga's perception of clothing and beauty, taking into account elements of westernization and the influence of mass media in shaping the body ideals of the Nagas and also identifies the variations of dress norms and mirror the community's social values and beliefs through their choices. The concluding

chapter, 'Summary and conclusion' will provide a summary of the findings presented in the above chapters and draw a conclusion from the analysis presented in these chapters.

CHAPTER-2

ETHNOGRAPHIC CONTEXT OF THE NAGAS: SOCIAL AND CULTURAL

The state of Nagaland

Nagaland a mountainous state with lush green hills is located in the extreme north-east part of the country bounded on its sides by Myanmar in the east, Assam in the west, Arunachal Pradesh, and a part of Assam in the north, and Manipur in the South. Nagaland achieved statehood on 1st December 1963 and became the 16th state of the Indian Union. The state is divided into eleven administrative districts viz. Kohima, Dimapur, Wokha, Mokokchung, Tuensang, Zunheboto, Mon, Phek, Peren, Kiphire and Longleng. The districts are further divided into many towns and villages. Each of the districts is inhabited by one major tribe and each of the tribe has its own demarcated area. Some Nagas are also found to inhabit in the adjoining states of Manipur, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, and also the neighbouring country of Myanmar.

The state capital is Kohima, and Dimapur is the commercial hub and the largest city in the state. Christianity is the main religion with Christians constituting 90.02% of the population. About 80% of the population profess the Baptist faith and because of the predominance of Baptists over other denominations Nagaland is also known as ‘the most Baptist state in the world.’ Nagaland, Meghalaya, and Mizoram due to its higher percentages of Christian population make it Christian majority states in India. The literacy rate of Nagaland according to 2011 census is 80.11%. It consists of male literacy rate of 83.3% and the female literacy stands at 76.7%. Mokokchung, Wokha, and Zunheboto are the most literate districts with a percentage of 91.6%, 87.7% and 85.3% respectively. Nagaland is well connected to other states and districts via roads, railways, and air. Dimapur is also the only district in Nagaland which has an airport and railway station.

The people

The Nagas are an ethnic group inhabiting the state of Nagaland. The Nagas comprises of sixteen major tribes and sub-tribes, each with its own traditions, customs, and practices. They are the Angami, Ao, Lotha, Sumi, Rengma, Chakhesang, Chang, Khiamniungan, Konyak, Phom, Sangtam, Yimchungrü, Zeliang, Pochury, Kuki and Kachari. The Nagas belong to the mongoloid stock and they trace their migration from Mongolia and China. There is no historical document or a written record to support their claim nonetheless the rich cultural traditions of the Nagas have been handed down through oral tradition in the form of myths, stories, and legends. The Nagas are warm, friendly people and known for their hospitality.

Languages

The Nagas speak dialect belonging to the Tibeto- Burman group of languages. Each tribe has their own distinct dialect. Even within the same tribe, there are variations in the language spoken based on the village and region. For instance, the Ao Nagas have two linguistic groups namely Chungli and Mongsen. Chungli is the common language amongst them. Likewise, the Chakhesangs speaks three distinct dialects namely Chokri, Khezha and Poumai. Since most of the Naga dialects are mostly unintelligible, a common and widely spoken language known as Nagamese which is an amalgamation of languages like Assamese, Bengali and Hindi is used to communicate within themselves. A large number of the people can understand and speak Hindi, the official language of India. Nevertheless, English is the official language of the state and is the medium of instruction in all schools and colleges. The English language is widely used in modern Naga society.

Geographical setting

The state of Nagaland lies approximately between 25°6' N and 27°4' N latitudes and between 93°20'E and 95°15'E longitudes. The state covers an area of 16,579 square kilometres with a population of 19, 80602 according to census 2011. It is one of the smallest states in India with a population density of 119 per sq.km. The sex ratio of the state according to 2011 census is 931 females per 1000 males. Mount Saramati with an altitude of 3841 metres above sea level in Kiphire district is the highest peak in Nagaland. Japfü peak with an altitude of 3048 metres above sea level, located about

15 km south of Kohima is the second highest peak in Nagaland. The major rivers that flow within the state are Dhansiri, Doyang, Milak, Tizu, Dikhu, Tsurang, Zungki, Likimro and Lanye.

Climate

Topographically, Nagaland is a mountainous state. The state is endowed with lush green valleys and majestic mountains. Nagaland is bestowed with a pleasant climate all year long. Nagaland has a monsoon climate and the state gets heavy rainfall for long periods of time during the summer season. The monsoon season starts from May to September. The average annual rainfall is about 200 to 280 cm. The temperature in the summer season ranges between 16 degree Celsius to 31 degree Celsius. It is cold during winter. The coldest months of the year are from November to January when the temperature drops to 4 degree Celsius during these months. Due to the state being situated at a higher altitude some of the places in Nagaland receive snowfall during the winter season.

Flora and fauna

Nagaland is blessed with a wide variety of flora and fauna. The state of Nagaland is covered by tropical and sub-tropical evergreen forests which are home to many valuable plants and animal species. Different species of bamboo grow in abundance in Nagaland. Bamboo has great economic value and has a significant role in the socio-economic life of the Nagas. The Nagas rely on bamboo for fuel, housing, handicrafts, agricultural implements and tools. Bamboo shoots are also an indispensable part of the traditional Naga dishes. Alder (*alnus*) is another popular tree grown in Nagaland which is also the state tree of Nagaland. Different species of flowering plants are also found in plenty in the region including orchids (*orchidaceae*) and anthurium (*anthurium andraeanum*). Nagaland is also home to the tallest Rhododendron (*rhododendron arboreum*) in the world measuring up to 108 feet which got featured in the Guinness Book of World Records. Rhododendron is also the state flower of Nagaland.

The state is also an important habitat for a wide variety of animals like bears, elephants, tiger, leopard, deer, monkey, hoolock gibbon, langur, varieties of snakes,

wagtail, pheasant, monitor lizard, porcupines, bison, and pangolins. Varieties of birds, insects, and bees are also found. Nagaland is home to the Great Indian Hornbill. Hornbill has a lot of significance in the Naga culture and is revered by the Nagas. Hornbill feathers are used as ornamentation. Another beautiful bird Tragopan (*tragopan blythii*) is found in Nagaland which is also the state bird of Nagaland. Some of the important National park and wildlife sanctuaries which are home to numerous flora and fauna are Fakim wildlife sanctuary, Pulie-Badze wildlife sanctuary, Intanki National park, Rangapahar reserve forest and Ghosu bird sanctuary.

The study area

Kohima, the capital of Nagaland and the District Headquarter of Kohima district, was selected for intensive research. Kohima district is the home of the Angami Nagas. Kohima town which lies in Kohima district is situated at an altitude of 1444.12 metres above sea level. Kohima village or 'Bara Basti' which is located in the north-eastern part of Kohima town is the second largest village in Asia. The original name of the village was 'kewhira' from which Kohima derived its name as the Britishers found it difficult to pronounce the local term. Kohima district shares its borders with the state of Assam and Dimapur district in the West, Phek district in the East, Manipur state and Peren district in the South and Wokha district in the North. The total area of Kohima district is 1,463 square kilometres with a population density of 183 square kilometres. According to 2011 census, Kohima district has a population of 270,063 of which male constituting 140,118 of the population and females constituting 129,945. Kohima is the second most populous district after Dimapur. The literacy rate of Kohima in 2011 is 85.58 %, overall male and female literacy are 89.28% and 81.56 % respectively (Directorate of Census Operations). Topographically Kohima is similar to other districts with hills and ridges. Kohima is located at 25°40' N 94°07'E and 25.67°N 94.12° E. Kohima being the capital of Nagaland, people from all over the districts have come and settled here. This was one of the main reasons for carrying out research in Kohima.

Many of the samples were also selected during the Hornbill Festival when Nagas from all around the state come together to celebrate and participate in the events. This was seen as a good opportunity to meet and interact with diverse Naga tribes. Samples were also selected from Longsa Village in Wokha district.

Based on the samples collected from the total population, a table on the distribution of population regarding age and sex is given below.

Table 2.1: Distribution of the sample population based on age and sex

AGE	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE%	FEMALE%
0-5	8	2	10	3.5%	0.79%
6-10	5	4	9	2.2%	1.5%
11-15	10	3	13	4.4 %	1.1%
16-20	15	6	21	6.6%	2.3%
21-25	19	26	45	8.3%	10.3%
26-30	36	38	74	15.8%	15%
31-35	42	66	108	18.5%	26.2%
36-40	14	16	30	6.1%	6.3%
41-45	5	14	19	2.2%	5.5%
46-50	13	17	30	5.7%	6.7%
51-55	7	19	26	3%	7.5%
56-60	22	27	49	9.6%	10.7%
60 plus	31	14	45	13.6 %	5.5%
Total	227	252	479	47.3%	52.6%

Data regarding the family type of the sample population is presented in table 2

Table 2.2: Family typology and distribution of families

FAMILY TYPE	NO. OF FAMILIES
Nuclear family	114
Joint family	Nil
Single member family	1

The most common type of family found among the Nagas is nuclear consisting of parents and their children. The family is headed by the father. It is predominantly nuclear because most of the dependent parents stay back in the villages. However there can be cases where old parents after the death of the spouse stay with their children's family thereby giving rise to a nuclear family type with dependent parents.

From the study sample numerical composition of majority of the family falls between 4-6. A joint family system where more than one generation lives together in the same household is absent. Sons and daughters generally establish new household after their marriage. Since the Naga society is patriarchal women do not stay in her parent's house after marriage.

Traditional Naga society is mainly agrarian. The primary source of their economy was based on the production of crops. But as the Naga society transitioned from an agrarian to a modernized society, new types of economies emerged. And as the research is mostly based on an urban setup, the sample population are mostly government employees, people working in non-government sectors. The following table shows the distribution of samples based on their occupation is presented.

Table 2.3: Distribution of Nagas in the selected sample based on occupation/ profession

OCCUPATION/PROFESSION	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Agriculture	–	–	–
Hunting and food gathering	–	–	–
Wage labour	1	–	1
Govt. Employee	73	75	148
Non Govt employee	27	41	68
Ex-serviceman	–	–	–
Business	5	11	16
Home maker	–	48	48
Self employed	10	2	12
Unemployed	36	24	60
Retired	23	12	35
Student	49	35	84
Total			472

Ethnographic account of the Nagas

Naga society is an agglomeration of the many different tribes with their own distinct culture and traditions. So trying to understand Naga society as a whole is a difficult task. There are variations in their interpretation about the way each tribe originated. Each tribe has their own variation of how they came about and occupied their present homeland. Despite the variation, their cultural core is the same. The cultural traditions and customary practices of the Nagas are briefly discussed below:

Family

The type of family found among the Nagas is predominantly nuclear consisting of parents and their children. The family is dominated by a male member, with the father as its head. Children stay with their parents until marriage and move out of their parental home after they get married. In some families, children extend their stay and live with parents even after marriage. The Naga society being patriarchal follow a patrilocal/ virilocal post-marital rule and women go to the husband's house after marriage. Polygamous forms of family existed in the past, consisting of a man, his wives, and their children. But now this type of families do not exist among the Nagas.

Marriage

Monogamy, where the marriage takes place between one man and one woman, is the form of marriage found among the Nagas. Other forms of marriages like polygamy though not widespread were also practiced in the past. Polygamy was practiced only by the rich man among the Lotha Nagas where marrying many women was a symbol of higher status in the society. It showed that he had the means to support many wives. Both sororal polygyny and non-sororal polygyny was practiced. The Sumi Nagas have the custom of marrying father's wives after his death excluding his mother. This is done to keep the property within the family. Polygamy is strictly prohibited in the modern Naga society. Polyandrous forms of marriages are not prevalent.

The Nagas are endogamous where the custom required a person to marry within their own particular tribe but they strictly follow clan exogamy where the marriage rule

required that people belonging from the same clan cannot inter-marry. Nevertheless, among the Konyak tribes, the hereditary chiefs known as the '*anghs*' could have many wives and retain their pure blood by marrying women from within their own *angh* clan. It was only the male heir and the son of the queen who could inherit the *anghship*. Cross cousin marriages are permitted among some of the Naga tribes but parallel cousins are equated with siblings and marriage with them is disapproved. The rule of residence among the Nagas is patrilocal and sometimes neolocal.

Strict rules and regulations are prescribed at the time of selection of mates. The tradition required the boy's family to ask for the girl's hand in marriage. Parental consent was necessary to get married. The custom of bride price (*eloe man*) was given to the bride's family by the groom. Clothes, ornaments, live-stock, ceremonial baskets were also given to a bride by her parents. '*Hanlam*' is a marriage tradition practiced by the Lotha Nagas. It is a custom in which the bride's family demands unblemished pig from the groom's family. The more number of pigs given the higher the prestige of the groom. The groom's family usually provides two to three pigs each weighing above hundred kilograms. Few days before the marriage, the pigs are slaughtered and the meat is distributed to all the bride's consanguineal kins extending up to her clan and lineage members signifying the bond shared between the kin groups. On receiving a portion of the meat, a return gift is given usually in the form of cash. The gifts collected are given to the bride at the time of the marriage as a symbol of love from her family and kinsmen. Among some of the Naga tribe, it is customary for the groom to render his service (*lomyak man*) for his future father-in-law prior to marriage for a specified period of time.

According to the Sumi custom, to find out the worth of a prospective groom, he was given big strips of cooked pork fat to eat. A man who could consume large quantity was an indication of strength and vigor and therefore a desirable suitor. It also symbolized of a person belonging to a wealthy family as it was perceived that eating meat was a sign of wealth. It was an indicator of eating luxuriously and hence equated with opulence.

The marriage customs of the Nagas has evolved over time. There are not many restrictions and people now have more freedom and more choice to select their own spouses. Inter-tribe marriages, inter-religious marriages, inter-racial marriages are

gaining popularity because of acculturation. Love marriages are more popular compared to arranged marriages as people are becoming more aware of their choices. Child marriages were prevalent in the Naga society where a girl child got married after puberty. But this has been gotten rid of and no longer practiced in modern Naga society. Monogamy still is the prescribed form of marriage in Naga society.

Kinship

The Nagas follows the patrilineal rule of descent organization whereby the children are closely affiliated to the father's consanguineal kin group. Descent is traced through the male line. Respecting parents and elders is an integral part of the Naga tradition. They never address their elders by their names as it is considered impolite. Based on the relationship specific kinship term is assigned to refer to a particular kin. The kinship terms used by some of the Nagas are presented below:

Table 2.4: Naga Kinship Terms

LOTHA KINSHIP TERMS	
Father	<i>Apo</i>
Mother	<i>Apvü/Ayo</i>
Elder brother	<i>Ata</i>
Elder sister	<i>Ata</i>
Younger sister	<i>Aka/ Kaka</i>
Younger brother	<i>Ango/Okharo</i>
Elder brother's wife	<i>Ami</i>
Younger brother's wife	<i>Ami</i>
Sister's(elder/younger) husband	<i>Anüing</i>
Husband's brother	<i>Arhan</i>
Sister-in-law's husband	<i>Azhü</i>
Brother-in-law's wife	<i>Arvü</i>
Son-in-law	<i>Aruro/Amyako</i>
Grandfather	<i>Amotsü</i>
Grandmother	<i>Atsü/ Apyo</i>
Father-in-law(wife's father/husband's father)	<i>Am/Amo</i>

Mother-in-law(wife's mother/ husband's mother)	<i>Ano</i>
Father's elder brother	<i>Apo eramo/ Aporamo</i>
Father's elder brother's wife	<i>Apvü eramo/ Apvüram</i>
Mother's brother (elder/younger)	<i>Amo</i>
Mother's brother's wife (elder/ younger)	<i>Ano</i>
Father's younger brother	<i>Apo nongo</i>
Father's younger brother's wife	<i>Apvü nongo/ Apvü okharo</i>
Father's elder/younger sister	<i>Ano</i>
Father's elder/younger sister's husband	<i>Amo</i>
Father's sister's daughter (from male to female)	<i>Ariv</i>
Father's sister's daughter (from female to female)	<i>Atsolov</i>
Mother's brother's daughter	<i>Apvüro</i>
ANGAMI KINSHIP TERMS	
Father	<i>Apuo/ Apfu/ Apfü</i>
Mother	<i>Azuo/ Apfü</i>
Elder brother	<i>A/puo dzürieu</i>
Elder sister	<i>A/puo dzüriepfü</i>
Younger sister	<i>A/puo siezefü</i>
Grandfather	<i>Apuotsa/ Apfütsa</i>
Grandmother	<i>Atsa</i>
Paternal uncle (elder)	<i>Apuozhau/ apfüzhau</i>
Maternal uncle (elder)	<i>Amizhau</i>
Maternal uncle	<i>Ami</i>
Paternal aunt	<i>Anie</i>
Maternal aunt (elder)	<i>Azuozha-a/ apfüzha-a</i>
Maternal aunt (younger)	<i>Azuociüü/apfüciüü</i>
Daughter	<i>Puo/ a nuopfü</i>
Son	<i>Puo/ a nuo-u</i>

Grandchildren	<i>Utsunuoko/ atsuu/ atsupfii/puo tsuu/puo tsupfii</i>
Husband	<i>Nupfuu</i>
Wife	<i>Kimia</i>
Cousin	<i>Siezedziirie</i>
AO KINSHIP TERMS	
Father	<i>Opa</i>
Mother	<i>Oja</i>
Son	<i>Jabaso</i>
Daughter	<i>Jala</i>
Youngest girl/ daughter	<i>Tenii</i>
Youngest boy/ son	<i>Tebusang</i>
Sister	<i>Oya</i>
Brother	<i>Odi</i>
Grandmother	<i>Otsii/ Otsiila</i>
Grandfather	<i>Obou</i>
Paternal uncle (elder)	<i>Oba tambu</i>
Paternal uncle (younger)	<i>Oba Tanubu</i>
Maternal Uncle	<i>Oko</i>
Maternal aunt (elder)	<i>Oja tantsii</i>
Maternal aunt (younger)	<i>Oja tanutsii</i>

Incest and adultery

According to Naga customs, incest is tabooed and sexual relations among close relatives are strictly forbidden. The taboo is extended to members belonging to the same lineage and clan. People involved in an incestuous relationship were ostracized from the village. Among the Lotha Nagas, a heavy fine was imposed on the offenders. They were made to pay a pig as a fine known as *ecchawoko kotsen* to the villagers and even banished them from the village. They were made to construct house outside the village. They were stigmatized and not allowed to fetch water even from the village well.

Adultery is considered a sin. Sexual morality is considered a virtue. The man and woman accused of committing adultery were made to pay a heavy penalty. There is a stigma associated with illegal pregnancies. The pregnant woman and the man involved in the illicit activity are condemned and socially ostracized. Among some Naga tribes when a married woman was accused of adultery then as a form of punishment her hair was forcefully shaved or unevenly cut publicly. In contemporary Naga society, the church renounces the offenders from the church membership. The Church possesses the authority to forgive the sins and their membership accepted only after they repent for their sins.

Divorce

Divorce among the Nagas was not very common. The major causes of divorce were barrenness, want of a male child, adultery, personal differences etc. The divorced couples were entitled to claim compensation. Traditionally among the Lothas, if the man was responsible for the termination of the marital union, then he was made to pay a fine of ten rupees to the woman and vice versa. Alimony for support and maintenance is not given when a couple divorces. According to the Naga customary law, the father gets the custody of their children. During a divorce, there is the unfair and inequitable distribution of the assets. The man retains the maximum share from their joint property. A woman was allowed to take her personal possessions but other than that she gets only a small share from their joint property. Among the Angami Nagas, only one-third of the property is given to the woman. Among some Naga tribes the woman had to return the bride price given to her at the time of marriage if she is divorced for committing adultery. The Naga custom allows a person to go for second marriage whereby a divorcee or widower is permitted to remarry after the dissolution of marriage or death of a spouse. In the present Naga society, there has been a rise in the trend of divorce. The attitudes of the people are changing. Divorce is more socially acceptable and it carries less social stigma unlike it was in the past.

Economic activity

Agriculture is the primary occupation and mainstay of the Nagas. About 71.03% of the population lives in rural areas and subsists on an agrarian lifestyle whereas the remaining 28.97% of the population lives in the urban areas. A large number of people have migrated to urban areas seeking better opportunities and ensuring better livelihood. However, agriculture is still the main economic activity as over 70% of the population is dependent on agriculture (Census 2011).

Jhum or shifting or slash and burn cultivation is the predominant agricultural practice among the Nagas. It involves cutting and burning of a patch of the forest land and using the field for growing agricultural crops. The land is cultivated for few years until soil fertility is left exhausted which is then abandoned for another plot of land. The land is allowed to regain its soil fertility by letting it lie fallow for seven to ten years. Once the soil is replenished of its nutrients the same land is cultivated again and the cycle continues. The terrace is another form of cultivation practiced but is restricted to only a few tribes like the Angamis, and the Chakhesangs. The Angami Nagas are known for their skill on terraced wet-rice cultivation.

The agricultural implements used are of a primitive type and agriculture is mainly dependent on manual labour. The implements used are hoe, *dao* (machete), sickle, spade, axe, rake, scrapper, grain beater, winnowing fan, stone and wooden grain-grinder, rain covering made cane, and palm etc. Ploughs drawn by animals or by machines are not used due to the hilly terrain. Agricultural lands are usually rain-fed and the people rely on rainfall for water. Whereas for the other mode of cultivation i.e terrace, water is supplied from streams, groundwater, wells, and tanks.

The practice of domesticating animals for food, fiber is also found in the Naga culture which played an important role in their economy and key to their livelihood. Animals that were reared include cattle, buffalo, *mithun* (*bos frontalis*), goats, dogs, pig, and poultry. Pork is considered a delicacy among the Nagas and pigs are raised mainly for the meat. Dog meat is consumed by the Nagas and they are believed to have medicinal properties. As Nagas relied on hunting, gathering, fishing and trapping wild animals for their subsistence, dogs were also used for hunting. *Mithun* is considered as one of the most sacred animals and it holds an important traditional status in the

socio-cultural life of the Nagas. As such *mithun* were reared since owning of *mithun* was an indication of a person's social position and wealth. Animal sacrifice was an important part of the Naga culture and as such animals were also reared for the purpose of ritual killing and as offering to appease the deities. Hunting is still a way of life in rural areas. They usually hunt animals like wild-boar, deer, bear, tiger, porcupine, rabbit, different varieties of birds etc.

The division of labor and responsibilities in Naga society is based on gender. The men folk are engaged in hunting, fishing, and war, while the women tend the children, looks after the house, cooks, weaves, fetch firewood and water. Traditionally the women fetched water using bamboo barrels from far-off places.

The Nagas lived in a state of isolation far away from civilization and without having any significant contact with the outside world except for the occasional trade among the plains people of Assam for centuries. They were economically self-sufficient and self-reliant. Barter was the mode of exchange between the tribes and people of the neighboring states. Goods and services were exchanged in return for salt, dried fish, beads, and ornaments, agricultural implements, cotton, ginger, chili. The Ao Nagas developed the use of currency known as *chabili* made from the edge of obsolete *daos* (machete) known as *rongnok*. The Ao Nagas also used another form of currency made from brass discs known as *laya* to trade with the Eastern Nagas like the Konyak, Chang and Phom villages. Cowries, conch shells, beads, live-stock and salt were also used as currency and medium of exchange in trade by the Nagas. This system of exchange was around for a long time before money was introduced in the state.

Food habits

Rice is the staple food of the Nagas which is consumed twice a day. Food is normally boiled and steamed. Indigenous Naga food preparation does not prefer oil. Bamboo shoots (*bastenga*), dried fish (*sukhamas*), and fermented soya bean (*axone*) are popular among the Nagas. These are used in numerous Naga cuisines for better flavor. A wide variety of fresh and dried herbs are used in cooking for their medicinal properties and aromatic qualities. Garlic and ginger are another two ingredients that are an integral part in Naga cooking. Spices such as cardamom, cinnamon, turmeric, cumin, nutmeg are used sparingly. Meat is a major part of their diet. They prefer pork,

beef, chicken, fish, *mithun* meat, venison (deer meat), dog meat, bird meat, crab, shrimps, snails, grasshoppers, frogs, bee larvae, and silkworm. However, Pork is the predominant meat consumed by the Nagas.

Seasonal vegetables which are locally cultivated and consumed include pumpkin, cucumber, squash, gourds, mustard, sesame, brinjal, beans, peas, chilies, tomatoes, cabbage, carrot, spring-onions, ginger, and garlic. A variety of crops like rice, millet, maize, ‘Job’s tears’ and root vegetables including potatoes, yams, taro, and cassava are also grown. Fruits grown in the region consist of peaches, plums, guavas, pears, oranges, passion fruits, pineapple, kiwi, pomegranate, gooseberry, black berry, papaya, bananas. King chili also known as ‘*Raja Mircha*’ or ‘*Bhot Jolokia*’ certified as the World’s hottest chilli pepper in the Guinness World Records in 2007 is cultivated in Nagaland.

Table 2.5: Terms used for different types of meat

MEAT (mangso)	TERMS
Pork	Gahori mangso
Chicken	Murgi mangso
Beef	Guru mangso
Dog meat	Kuta mangso
Fish	Mas
Snails	Nula/ Hamock
Silkworm	Eri

Table 2.6: Terms used for vegetables/ roots and tubers

VEGETABLES/ ROOTS AND TUBERS	TERMS
Chili	Mircha
King Chili	Raja mircha
Squash	Iscus
Potato	Aloo
Sweet potato	Mitha aloo
Yam	Kuchu
Tomato	Kol tenga
Mustard leaves	Lai pata
Ginger	Aduwa
Garlic	Rusun
Sesame	Silom/ pentsü
Cucumber	Kheera

Table 2.7: Terms used for fruits

FRUITS	TERMS
Guava	Moduram
Pineapple	Anaras
Pears	Nashpati
Banana	Kol
Passion fruit	Bell

Rice beer was the staple drink of the Nagas. They brewed their own indigenous liquor. The Naga community participated in ceremonial drinking during the feast of merit, rituals, and other ceremonies. At present, Nagaland being a Christian state prohibits the use of alcohol. Consumption of alcohol is made illegal. Various social reformers and organizations including the Nagaland Baptist Church Council have been taking a strong stand and advocating the prohibition of alcohol. Drunkenness is looked at as a social disgrace. The Church disapproves the use of tobacco and

intoxicating drinks. Despite the efforts, they have not been able to curb this social evil from the Naga society completely.

Over the years, there has also been a change in the food habits. Cultural interactions with other societies, modernisation, globalization, and urbanization have had an impact on the food patterns. Domestic consumption of beverages like tea and coffee is also on the rise introduced to them by the British. The lifestyles and food preference of the younger generations have evolved. There has been an increase in the intake of ‘junk’ foods, ‘fast’ foods, and processed food available in the market.

Morung

Morung or bachelor’s dormitory is one of the oldest institutions found among the Nagas. It is a place where all the young boys after attaining puberty slept until marriage. Morung is known as *chumpo* in Lotha, *kichuki* in Angami, *apuki* in Sema, and *rensi* in Rengma. Among the Ao Nagas, there are separate dormitories for boys and girls. The Bachelor’s dormitory is known as *ariju* and *tsüki* for girls. In the past, the villages were divided into wards known as *khels* on the basis of clan membership. There used to be a morung for each *khel* within the village. The morung were social institutions where the social behaviour of the individuals were governed and a place where the cultural norms, values, beliefs, practices of the community were preserved and transmitted. Originally morungs were set up to guard the village against attacks from the enemies. The morung boys kept a strict vigil and took turns to guard the village from their adversaries.

Morung served as an educational institution prior to the British era as there were no formal schools in Nagaland. Education was imparted through traditional institutions of morung where young boys learned about social, cultural, educational and religious activities. The morung boys were categorized into different groups based on their age. Each of the age group had their own sets of duties and obligation. The senior morung boys reinforced discipline among the juniors. The morung boys were required to strictly obey the orders of the seniors without any breach of rules otherwise strict punishments were imposed on the offenders. The young boys received education in art and crafts, discipline, folk songs and dances which were taught to them by the seniors. The morung boys were given combat training and taught how to handle

weapons, defence and war tactics, strategies which prepared them for war. In a society where masculinity is highly prized, the morung boys were made to pass through tests to prove their masculinity and manhood. The boys were derided for not being man enough if they did not fulfil the duties and obligation that were expected from them. Women were prohibited from entering the morung as it was regarded as a bad omen. A married man was also not permitted to sleep in the dormitory.

Morung also served as a recreation centre where the young boys entertained themselves by spending their time in leisure activities such as singing and dancing. During the evenings, the morung boys came together to listen to folktales and tell stories. Morung as a social institution lost its importance and was totally abandoned after the adoption of Christianity.

Property and inheritance

Naga society is patriarchal where the father is the head of the household. The property is inherited through the male line. Movable and immovable properties are passed down from father to the son and are patrilineal. Immovable property such as land is distributed among the sons. Most of the Nagas follow the custom of ultimogeniture whereby the youngest son inherits the maximum share of the father's property including his house, granaries, and his own share from the distributed property; whereas certain tribes follow the custom of primogeniture whereby the eldest son inherits the largest share of the family property. If there is no male heir then the property is inherited by a male kin who is next in the line of succession. Daughters do not enjoy the same rights as the sons. They had no right to inheritance of property, particularly land. However, parents gifted their daughters with clothing, ornaments, weaving looms, baskets, paddy etc when she is married. But other than that, they have no rights of inheritance. Nevertheless, a widow after the death of her husband gets the right to maintenance and can retain the property and inheritance of her deceased husband. But the right ceases if she decides to remarry or after her death. Clan land is jointly owned by clan members which allows them to use the land collectively but cannot be inherited by individual families.

Status of women

The Nagas are a patriarchal society where women were often seen as sub-ordinates and regarded as the weaker sex and inferior to men. Traditionally women were assigned to take care of the children and look after the household chores. In the past, the older generation did not give importance to education. Women in the past received little schooling as girls were prohibited from going to schools. Women were often seen as a liability and their contribution to the household were highly valued than education. So instead of letting them attend schools, parents made them work in the fields as a result female literacy was low. Parents perceived it more important that the girl child learns household chores than receiving a formal education. The status distinction against women, however, varied from tribe to tribe. In the past, child marriages were prevalent in the Naga society. Many girls got married at a young age. But in the present Naga society, this practice has been done away with. Traditionally because of patrilineal customs, women were also not given the inheritance rights. Women had fewer privileges than the men. Women in the Naga society could not inherit the father's property.

In present Naga society, the position of the women has significantly improved. Naga women enjoy a fairly high status. They are given respect and enjoy an equal status with men. Women of the present generation have more freedom. The present generation women are not deprived of their rights and there are a lot of opportunities for them. Access to better education have emancipated Naga women and has given them better avenues to work and study. Education has empowered the Naga women and brought about gender equality. The gap between the male and female literacy has been greatly reduced and there has been a substantial growth in female literacy rate. There has been an improvement in women's economic participation and their role is not limited to the family as was in the traditional society. Many Naga women now are highly educated and economically independent. The social norms are changing and there have been changes in the status and the role of women in Naga society. Naga women work outside the home and are not confined to the traditional gender roles. Women have made tremendous progress and are on par with men in all fields. There is a rise in the number of women as family bread winners also. An increasing number of men today are finding it comfortable having spouses who earn more than them.

Women contribute to significant decision making in household matters as well. Though there is considerable equality between men and women and women have made major strides, but like any other patriarchal society, men still have greater decision-making powers. Women get unequal representation in decision making and men are still the decision makers in public sphere.

Religion

The Nagas were animist by faith. They believed in the existence of the soul and were into venerating diverse spirits. These spirits were appeased during rituals, festivals, and ceremonies seeking good health, a rich harvest, and prosperity. The Nagas perceived illness and misfortunes befalling on them to be attributed to these spirits. Hence prayers, rituals and animal sacrifices were performed to appease these spirits to keep them away from any untoward incidents and restore harmony. Basing on religious beliefs, breaking a taboo or violating norms is considered a sin. The Nagas believed the soul to exist both in animate and inanimate objects. The Nagas believed that the soul had the capacity to come out from the body and wander about in different places. The Nagas also worshipped and venerated the deceased ancestors as they were believed to have a continued existence in the after world and were regarded to have an influence in the affairs of the living. They believe these spirits to be watching over their crops, livestock, and bring good fortune. Their beliefs are depicted through their narratives in the form of myths, legends, and folk songs.

According to Naga customs, a good burial was not given to individuals who had an unnatural death like accidents, suicide, falls, drowning, death at child birth, natural disasters etc. Dying under such circumstances is believed to be caused by the work of the evil spirits and therefore dreaded. There were taboos and restrictions associated with unnatural death. The corpse are disposed of in forests and distant places and not allowed to be buried in the village. Among some of the Naga tribes, the family of the deceased had to abandon their houses and stay in a taboo hut for specified period of time. Their animistic beliefs to a large extent governed their norms and values and the way the society was structured.

Death

The Nagas believed in the existence of the soul even after death. When a person died, the soul was believed to depart from the body and proceed on its way to the Land of the Dead. At the burial, a lot of things such as clothing, ornaments, spears, *dao*, shields, fire sticks, food and drinks, utensils, live chicken, weaving looms, implements, and personal possessions of the deceased which they needed in the afterlife were placed in the coffin. When an Angami women die, baskets, yarn, spinning and weaving looms are placed on top of her grave after burial. Among some Naga tribes, dogs were also sacrificed to aid a warrior on his journey. Traditionally, umbrellas were kept above the graves as protection against rain or sunlight. The souls were believed to revisit their homes and make contacts with their loved ones in their dreams. In the past, the loved ones tried to communicate with the deceased with the help of shamans (*ratsen*) who were believed to have an access into the spirit world and were consulted to act as intermediaries between the dead and the living. It was also considered that one's deeds and behaviours on earth when alive determined the kind of life they will experience in the Land of the Dead. So it was important to carry out good deeds in their lifetime to ensure a better and pleasant after life.

The 'Land of the Dead' is known as *echü likvü* among the Lotha Nagas and *tipu tenem* among the Ao Nagas. The Konyaks believe in the existence of two distinct souls, one is believed to go to the Land of the Dead and the other resides in the skull after the death of the person. The Land of the Dead is known as *Yimbu* among the Konyak Nagas. Among the Konyak Nagas, the dead bodies were kept on a raised platform in the centre of the village and made to decompose while the head is pulled off after it is decomposed. The head was considered an asset to the village.

The Ao Nagas believed that the departed soul on its way to the land of the dead stops and takes a bath in a river known as *Longritzu Lenden*. It is only then that they become aware of the fact that they are already dead and proceed on their journey to the land of the dead. According to Ao beliefs, they go to the house of *Meyutsungba* after death. He is regarded as the God of justice and God of the Land of the dead. Upon death, one's fate was determined by the 'Supreme Being' *Meyutsungba*. A spear is thrown on the tree of judgement in his courtyard to determine the good and bad deeds done on earth. If it hits the target, it signified the person have lived a

righteous life on earth. But if it fails to hit then it was a manifestation of the individual's actions and bad deeds. The belief among the Angami Nagas was that the soul has to engage in a fight with *Metsimo*, the custodian of the gateway leading to the land of the dead. Defeat against *Metsimo* will deny the soul the right of entry and their soul will wander.

Among the Nagas burial place also demonstrated the status of the deceased. A feast-giver and warrior are believed to enjoy the same status even in the afterlife. Memorial stones or wooden posts are also erected by the Nagas to commemorate the death. Among the Nagas, when a rich man or warrior died, a post or stone was erected in his honour to symbolize his social status. When a warrior died, gourds were hung up symbolising human head and the number of gourds amounted to the number of heads taken during his lifetime. Hunting trophies and the skulls of animals sacrificed by him was also displayed. Personal possessions of the deceased like *dao*, spear and shields and objects symbolic to the heads taken by the warrior during his lifetime were placed on the grave as an indicator of his social status and to aid him in the afterlife. The deceased prowess in love was also displayed through certain objects among some tribes.

The Konyak Nagas put in place a wooden soul effigy as a representation of the deceased person close to the burial ground. Among the Sangtam Nagas, a bamboo pole was erected near the grave of a warrior which was ornately decorated with *mithun* horn, birds, carved human head, and weapons of the deceased which will come to aid in the afterlife and represent his achievements as a great warrior. Among the Lotha Naga totem post is raised at the grave of a *pvüiti* (priest). It is engraved with motifs of *mithun* head, celestial bodies, female breasts, a human head, and hornbill indicating his status and in honour of the deceased.

After the advent of Christianity, such beliefs and customs have ceased to exist. The deceased are given a Christian burial. Funeral service is held at the home of the deceased, with the pastor officiating the service. The pastor reads out passages from the Bible and the mourners attending the service take part in singing hymns and prayers for the departed soul and the bereaved family members. The remains of the dead are buried in the cemetery and one usually finds gravestone laid upon a grave.

Political organisation

Traditionally, the Nagas lived in villages and each village was a republic, self-sufficient, self-reliant and all independent of one another. A Naga village is headed by a council of elders or village chiefs. The village council known as *putu menden* among the Ao Nagas consist of elders representing each clan. The Konyak Nagas were ruled by hereditary chiefs called the *anghs* who acquired considerable control over his subjects. The word 'Angh' means 'the beginning of everything'. Each Konyak village is ruled by an *angh* and he has the right to exercise his power over the masses. Even amongst the *anghs*, there is another category of *angh* known as the chief *anghs* who are higher in order of rank. They have centralised control over different villages in the Konyak area. The Sumi Nagas were also ruled by hereditary chiefs. They were entitled to various privileges and assumed the administrative duties and worked for the functioning of the village. In the past among the Lotha Naga, the village priest called *pvüiti* had supreme power and occupied a very high status in traditional Lotha society. He was assisted by the *yingae*, *chüchang* and *dungti*. They were sought for religious guidance and also overseeing the administration of the village. After the British invasion of the Naga territory, these institutions ceased to exist and the villages began to be ruled by *gaon bura* and *dobashi* who were elected by the government officials. The *gaon bura* were in charge of collection of house taxes whereas the *dobashi* worked as interpreters for the British. The village administration was controlled and maintained by them. At present, the villages are administered by village council constituting of the council of members such as Chairman, Vice-Chairman and other executive members. The village council has the authority over the administration of the village and work for the development of the village with funds provided by the state government.

Festivals

Nagaland is often described as the Land of festivals. Numerous festivals are celebrated throughout the year. All these festivals are associated with agricultural activities and are mainly harvest festivals. Most of the festivals are rooted in religious traditions and observed as a way of giving thanks to the Gods for the blessing of the harvest. Festivals are also an occasion for social gathering and are celebrated with much pomp and gaiety. Festivals are a time of merry making, fun, enjoyment,

strengthening family bonds, and reconciliation among friends and foes. During festivals and ceremonies, the meat of the slaughtered animals is distributed amongst elders, dignitaries of the village, close family members, kins and friends. Specific portions of meat are given to show respect to elders, strengthen family ties and establish a friendship. The head of the slaughtered pigs is given to dignitaries of the village or elders as a sign of respect.

Some of the major festivals of the Nagas are:

Sekrenyi: *Sekrenyi* is a ten-day purification festival celebrated annually in the month of February by the Angami Nagas one of the major tribes in Nagaland. This festival is also known by the name '*phousanyi*'. Sanctification ritual is performed during this time. On the first day, both young and old from the village community go to the village well to bathe. At night, two young men ritually purify the village well by cleaning it. After the purification ritual has been performed, nobody is permitted to collect water from the well and to ensure that, the youths watch over the well. Women particularly are forbidden to draw water from the well and they, therefore, were required to collect and store water for household use prior to the ritual. Early in the morning the next day, young men of the village perform the sanctification and purification ritual. They all go down to the village well and ritually cleanse their bodies, clothing, and weapons as a symbol of cleanliness and washing away their impurity and misfortunes and seeking good health for the coming year. After the ceremony, they wear two new shawls *mhoushü* and *lohe* and sprinkle water on their chest, their right arm and knees. This ceremony of ritual significance performed by the Angami menfolk is known as *dzüseva* meaning touching the sleeping water. On coming back home, a rooster is sacrificed as a way to examine the omens and foretell the future. It was considered an auspicious moment if the right leg fell over the left leg. The entrails of the rooster were put up on the outer side of the house for the priest to examine it. From the fourth day onwards there is singing, dancing, and feasting. Another significant aspect of the festival is called *thekra hie* where young men and women sit around together and take part in the festivities by feasting and singing traditional songs all through the day. On the seventh day of the festival all young men go for hunting. Subsequently, on the eighth day all the people take part in the 'gate pulling' which forms an integral feature of the ceremony.

Tokhu Emong: *Tokhu emong* is a post harvest festival celebrated by the Lothas, one of the major tribes in Nagaland. The festival of *tokhu emong* marks the end of the agricultural season. The festival is celebrated on 7th November every year but in the past, this festival was observed for a period of nine days in the first week of November. It is celebrated as a day of giving thanks for God's favour and blessing of the harvest. Rituals were observed during the festival and it was considered inauspicious to venture out for hunting, fishing, and travelling during this time. The festival is a time of get-together, merry-making and feasting. It was also customary to exchange food and drinks as gifts symbolising love and close association between family members and friends. In the past, marriages were held and houses constructed only after *tokhu emong* was celebrated as it symbolised a new beginning. The festival was also a time to liberate the souls of the deceased died during the particular year.

Moatsü: Moatsü is a harvest festival celebrated by the Ao Nagas, another major tribe of Nagaland. Moatsü is celebrated annually in the first week of May after sowing to invoke God's blessings and seeking a good harvest from the deities. *Moatsü* is the time of the year when people take a break and relax after completion of strenuous work in their fields, sowing seeds, cleaning wells (*tsubü*), and restoration of houses. As part of the celebration, people lit bonfire called *sangpangtu* which is an important feature of the festival. People gather around the bonfire dressed in their best traditional attires to celebrate and with women serving up food and drinks. During this time, the people also seek information from a seer who has the knowledge and ability to foresee the future. *Tsungremong* is another festival celebrated by the Ao's during the month of August. It is a pre-harvest festival seeking God's blessings for a bountiful harvest.

Tuluni: *Tuluni* is a festival celebrated by the Sumi tribe known as the 'warrior tribe' among the Nagas. This festival is observed in the month of July marking the completion of seed sowing. *Tuluni* is celebrated during that abundant time of the year when the harvest is bountiful. During *tuluni*, prayers and offering are given to *Litsaba* the deity who gives life and protection to the crops. During this time engaged couples strengthen their relationship. The future groom to be and his family gets invited over to the future bride's house for dinner and exchange of gifts of food takes place. It is also a period of time when betrothed couples get married marking a new beginning.

The festival also provides an opportunity for people to renew and strengthen family ties and friendship. It is also an occasion of forgiveness and reconciling between enemies by exchanging food and drinks or by hosting a feast. People also show compassion to the poor and needy by feeding them with food and drinks during *tuluni*. The Sumi Nagas also celebrate a post harvest festival known as *Ahuna* in the month of November signifying the end of the agricultural season.

Sukrunye: The Chakhesangs celebrate the festival *sukrunye* and is celebrated in the month of January. This festival also revolves around the agricultural cycle and also celebrated to ensure good health of the community. During this time the men go for community bird watching and bird trapping. Once the birds are captured it is hung on the decorated tip of a tall bamboo. The captured birds are used to foretell the future.

Monyu: Monyu is an important festival of the Phom tribe. It is a spring festival celebrated in the month of April which lasts for six days. It is observed after sowing invoking God's blessings for bountiful crops. The log drum was beaten before and during the festival to announce the onset of the festival to the neighbouring villages. The festival is also a time to celebrate love and strengthen interpersonal relationship between the family members as married daughters and sisters are invited to their parents or brothers house for the celebration. Certain portions of meat and food items are offered as gifts to married daughters and sisters to uphold their family ties and celebrate the love between them. In return, the married daughters and sisters provide with gifts of specially prepared food items to the elderly clan members signifying their love and respect and as a way of accepting blessings from the elders.

Ngada: Ngada is a post harvest festival of the Rengma tribe which is celebrated in the month of November for eight days. This festival also marks the end of the agricultural season. Like the other Nagas, the Rengma Nagas also believe in the afterlife. It is customary to offer rice beer to the deceased relatives by placing it on their grave by the women as it is believed that that the soul of the deceased loved one's visit their families during this time.

Naknyulem: *Naknyulem* is the main festival of the Changs which is held in the month of July. According to legends, the world experienced six days of total darkness. Their normal life was affected as it was too dark to venture out and so people remained

indoors for six days. On the seventh day there was light, people were delighted and in order to commemorate the joyous occasion celebrated the *naknyulem* festival. During the festival, the people use the leaves of *ngounaam* which are placed along the pathway of the village, hung outside the houses and worn around the ears by children which act as a protective shield and ward off the evil spirits. People stay indoors and dread stepping out of their houses after sunset due to the fear of being harmed by the spirit called *shambuli muhgha* who is believed to stop by the village and thought to inflict suffering on whoever is found outside.

Victory dance/ Warrior dance

Victory dances are performed by the Nagas to bring good luck to the warriors before going to war or after success in war. To honour the warrior's, young Naga men and women performed the victory dance together to celebrate the triumph over their enemies. The dance is performed using *daos*, spears, shields and in full ceremonial dress. War dances were performed by the warriors with the accompaniment of traditional folk music and war cry. The warriors engaged themselves in mock combat as a means to display threat and scare among the enemies.

Among the Phom Nagas, in the olden days a specific day was set apart for a ceremonial ritual whereby each warrior brought over the skulls that had been retained over the years in the *morung* (dormitory). The skulls were placed in rows, and specific songs were sung and dances were presented. They also performed a series of rituals reaffirming the continuity of the community.

The Khamniungan Nagas perform a war dance known as *tsouchong*. The dance is performed by all the physically strong men, getting ready to go for war. Wearing elaborate costumes of warriors, armoured with shields, spears, *dao* (machete), and chanting the war cry they re-enact the battlefields. The dancers mimick the movements of fierce wild animals like the tiger, bears, lion and wild boar. The ferocity and the courage of these animals are depicted in their dances. The dance is accompanied by shouts and war cries. The dance also signifies that they have enemies to overcome. The Khamniungan Nagas perform another war dance known as *sheekuo*. The dance is ritualistic as it is performed to save the village from being attacked. All the men dress up in traditional fineries and carry *dao*, spears and shields

used in combat, and re-enacting scenes of warfare, chanting war cry and they go dancing round the village and then assemble outside the *morung*. They carry on with the dancing and raising victorious war cries that the enemies will be defeated. The Khiamniungan warriors on their return to the village after victorious warfare sing the victory song and display the heads of the enemies won in battle on bamboo poles.

The Lotha warriors guarding the village boundary performed folk dances called *shantha*. Another folk dance called *sharische* was performed by the Lotha men and women during peace process with the neighbouring villages extending their hand in friendship and reconciliation. Folk dances are also performed on the event of dedication of a new *morung* (*chumpo*). After the *pvüthi* (priest) performs the ceremonial rites, all the *morung* boys led by the *morung* leader take part in folk dances. They dance in their colourful traditional attires and through their dance convey messages to the villagers that by virtue of their bravery, strength, and valour, together they will stand and defend and protect the villagers from all possible dangers.

In the past, war dance known as *thuriphe* was performed by the Chakhesang Nagas. The dance was performed to express joy when the warriors arrived back from a victorious head hunting raid. The captured head was covered in a cloth called *bashi* and which was hung on the head takers back. He was given a heroic reception to acknowledge his accomplishment which was followed by feasting where only men could participate in the ceremony. In celebration of their conquest, the war dance was performed with chanting war cries. The Hei Ru war dance is performed during the Zeliang festivals of Hega and Chega Gadi. It is a group dance presented by both men and women in their traditional fineries. During festivals, the male members of the community undergo ritual sanctification ceremonies invoking the spirits for good fortune and to prepare the young men to become great warriors.

Naga art and craft

The art and craft of the Nagas are visually very attractive. Besides agriculture people in the past engaged themselves in weaving, pottery making, carpentry, handicrafts and black smithy. The tradition of pottery making was known to the Nagas and this activity was carried out mostly by women nevertheless it was a men's occupation among certain tribes. The art of pottery making was restricted only to few people in

the villages. The Nagas manufactured pottery wares without the use of wheel. The clay was moulded by the hand and potteries of various shapes, sizes and designs were moulded by shaping tools like a paddle.

Basketry is an activity carried out by men. The baskets are made from bamboos and cane because of its easy availability. Most Naga men are skilled basket weavers. The baskets come in different shapes, sizes, design and patterns and is used for different purposes like carrying firewood, water, storing grain, vegetables, dried edibles and rice beer, ornamental basket, warrior's victory basket, measuring basket, bamboo sieve etc. The Nagas also weave intricately designed ornaments from fine strips of cane and bamboo like armlets, necklace, gauntlet, bangles.

Wood carving is a traditional art form found among the Naga men. Animals such as tiger, *mithun*, *mithun* head, human head, human figures, warriors in full traditional regalia, female breasts, hornbill, hornbill feathers, varieties of birds, traditional weapons like spears, *dao*, shields, scabbard, star, moon etc, gets representation in their wood carvings, totem poles, and huts. The main village gates are hewn from a huge block of wood and elaborately decorated with all these motifs. The *mithun* symbolises wealth and fertility, hornbill is a symbol of beauty, the symbolism of tigers is that of fierceness, strength, courage, power, protection, and intelligence. As monkeys share a close association with humans they often symbolise smartness and intelligence. Snake is associated with danger and elephant are depicted for its strength and wisdom. The Konyaks are renowned for their beautiful wooden carvings and metal ornaments. Erotic carvings are a common feature of the Konyak *morung's* architectural symbolism. Phallic symbols and female breasts are a prominent features in Naga carvings as it is a representation of fertility. The *mithun* head, and human head are recurrent symbols in Naga arts and crafts.

Significance of the Log drum

Log drum is an important object and integral part of Naga society. Log drum has religious significance and was seen as a powerful cultural symbol. It was used only by certain Naga tribes like the Ao, Yimchungrü, Khiamniungan, Phom, Chang, Konyak, and Sangtam. The log drum is known as *tongten* among the Ao Nagas. The log drum was beaten by a group of men, few on each side using thick wooden strikers. The log

drum was beaten to announce the onset of festival to the neighbouring villages, of successful head-hunting raid, as an alarm signal of an advancing enemy, to announce the death of a renowned person and alerting the villagers from any possible danger. Thus, the distinct rhythmic beating of the log drum carried different meanings. The assigned meanings behind each rhythmic beating of the drum were comprehensible only to the villagers as a way of keeping the information hidden from the warring villages. Wooden log drum was hollowed out from a single huge tree trunk. It is in the shape of a canoe thereby many researchers had suggested Naga descendants to be from the seafaring communities of South-East Asia. The log drum is carved with a human head or animal head towards one end. Elaborate rituals were observed to choose the tree that was to be carved out into a log drum. The tree was distinguished as either male or female. Taboos and restrictions were observed while cutting down the tree. A specific day was assigned for the log drum pulling ceremony where all the men folk dressed in their fineries went to the forest and dragged it in the village and installed it in the *morung*. Dragging of the log drum was a joyous occasion for the entire community and was commemorated with ritual feasting and drinking. It was regarded as the village deity and found in all the villages. In the past, sacred ritual involving human blood sacrifice was performed when a new log drum was installed in the village *morung*. However it, later on, got substituted by the blood of a sacrificial animal. The spirit of the log drum was venerated by smearing the log drum with blood. This task was assigned only to the best warrior. Brass gongs were also used by the Konyak Nagas as musical instruments and also used to announce the onset of ceremonies and festivals. It was also kept as a decorative item in wealthy homes.

Traditional Naga houses

In Naga society, the architectural designs, motifs, roofing material of the house all makes a clear statement about the owner's status. There is a distinction between the houses of the rich and poor among the Nagas. The house of rich men could be clearly identified based on the structural design of the house. Traditionally the gable of the house of a man who had performed the feast of merit was adorned with *mithun* horn which was a perceived indicator of his higher social status. The front of the house was often adorned with animal motifs, horns, *mithun* head, a human head, women's breasts, leopard, human figures, hornbill feathers, warriors in full dress, and a warrior

holding captured heads which served as a symbol of his social standing. Animal bones, tusk, horns, antlers, carcass etc were also decorated in homes as hunting trophies.

Among the Angami Nagas, in the first stage of feast giving, the front part of the house is roofed with thatch, in the second stage, bargeboards are attached to the gable, which is followed by adding wooden structure in the shape of a horn known as *kika* in the third stage. Finally after the completion of the full series the host gets new roofing material of wooden shingles all of which symbolising his social status. Among the Rengma Nagas, semi-circular edges of the front roof and the front porch displayed the first in the stage of feast giving. A wooden *mithun* horn motif at the gable of the house is installed after the full series and the house is decorated with carvings of *mithun* heads, and human heads. Outside the house, decorated bamboo poles with tufts of cane leaves were raised symbolising the status of the feast-giver. Among the Sumi Nagas, a person who has performed the second stage of feast giving erects a ritual pole known as *aghuza* outside his house. The bamboo pole is decorated with grass tassels and gourd symbolising the owner's status. Wooden horn structures are also added to the house of a feast-giver. Similarly, the Chakhesang Nagas also add wooden structure in the shape of horns if the owner is a feast-giver to symbolise his status. A hole was carved out in the wooden horn if the owner performed the full series.

The house of a warrior or *morung* among the Sangtam tribe is embellished with cane balls hung from the gable which is a symbol of human head and it tallies the number of heads taken. When a warrior dies, these insignias are kept on the grave as a mark of his warrior status. The *anghs*, chief of the Konyak tribes bedeck their houses and porch with a decorative wall display of human skulls, *mithun* and animal skulls, tusks, horns, beaks, and wood carvings, which are symbolic representations of their supremacy, achievements, power, strength, wealth, and prosperity. A number of skulls displayed also reinforced the social position of the possessor. The feast givers among the Khamniungan Nagas install slate roofing. Gourds are symbolic of human head and are usually decorated in ritual posts, bamboo poles, to signify the number of heads taken among the Nagas.

In the past the roof in most Naga houses were thatched and the roof of the *morung* was often decorated with tassels of grass signifying wealth. The *morung* was

constructed only after performing rituals and ceremonies. It was also one of the most decorated houses in the village. The wooden posts, beams that were to be used for construction had to be straight and blemish free. The pillars of the *morungs* were intricately carved with animal and human sculptures like hornbill, tiger, lizards, snakes, elephant, *mithun* head, a human head, and human figures all of which symbolised wealth, beauty, heroism, strength, and ferocity.

The advent of Christianity

For centuries the Nagas were surviving in isolated existence fervently following their age-old customs and traditions. They had cultural contact with the Ahoms, the rulers of Assam as they frequented Assam for trade. Other than that they had no outside influence. Around 1830's the British attempted to subjugate the Naga hills under their administration but was strongly opposed and resisted by the Nagas. The Nagas waged war against the British, attacked and raided their camps and resisted the British force for a long time. However, the British succeeded in annexing the region in mid-nineteenth century. Along with the British rulers came the Christian missionaries.

The first missionary to have initiated contact with the Nagas was Reverend Miles Bronson around 1840's. However, he failed in his attempt to gain a firm foothold and stayed only for a brief period. The missionary who made a huge impact among the Nagas was Edward Winter Clark. He along with his wife Mary J. Mead from the American Baptist Missionary Union arrived in Sibsagar, Assam on March 30 1869, as missionary to the Assam mission. The Nagas used to come to the plains of Assam for trade; it was here that the Clarks first came in contact with them. The Nagas were fierce head-hunters and dreaded by others. Nevertheless, Clark endeavoured to reach out to the Nagas and share the Gospel of Christ. Clark's assistant Godhula Brown an Assamese evangelist ventured into the Naga Hills on October 1871 seeking to establish a foothold in Molungkimong (Deka Haimong) village in Mokokchung district. Clark arrived at Molungkimong (Deka Haimong) on 18th December 1872. A few Nagas accepted the new religion and converted to Christianity, however, working as a missionary among the Nagas was not easy. He faced strong opposition from the Naga populace and endured a lot of hardship even endangering his own life. It became hard to continue the missionary work under the constant threat. Clark along with a few Naga converts ventured out into the jungle on 24th October 1876 seeking to

establish another base and founded the first mission centre of the American Baptist Missionary Union which they called Molung (Molungyimsen Baptist Church 1997).

After him, other American missionaries ventured into different regions in the Naga Hills. As American Baptist missionaries embarked on a mission to convert the Nagas, initially there was a lot of resistance. The missionaries faced many obstacles. The early Naga converts were disowned from their villages. The missionaries lived amidst the Nagas for years spreading the Gospel of Christ along with that working diligently for the welfare of the Nagas. They introduced education and established quite a few schools. There was no written record or script among the Nagas. For centuries oral tradition was the means by which they handed down their customs and traditions. They did not know how to read and write. However, the British administrators, American missionaries who came to Naga hills in the nineteenth century took a profound interest in the culture of the Nagas. They made comprehensive studies and wrote numerous books and monographs depicting the customs, values, beliefs and practices of the Nagas thereby significantly contributing to the understanding of Naga culture. One still has to refer back to these writings to get information regarding their way of life and get a glimpse of the Naga society during that era due to the unavailability of written records.

The missionaries carried out humanitarian works. They painstakingly learned the local dialect and wrote books, translated books into the Naga dialect and were taught in schools. The missionaries interfered in their customs and practices. The age old practice of head-hunting was abolished with the coming of Christianity. The missionaries instilled new ideas and new attitudes among the people and played a significant role in bringing about change in the Naga society. The determination, sacrifice, and the relentless effort by the missionaries paid off with the majority of the Nagas converting to Christianity. The advent of Christianity ushered in a new era. With the coming of Christianity, brought about by the American Missionaries, the once 'naked Nagas' not only adopted a new religion but a new way of life. The Nagas abandoned their age-old customs and traditions which formed the core of their cultural identity for the new religion.

CHAPTER-3

TRADITIONAL CLOTHING AS SYMBOLS OF NAGA ETHNIC AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

The Nagas are celebrated for their vibrant and intricately designed clothings with each tribe having its own distinct costumes, motifs, designs and dress pattern. Each of the Naga tribe is distinguishable from the traditional clothing and ornaments they adorn. The various traditional clothings of the Nagas are symbols of their cultural as well as their individual identity. Each cloth had its own special meaning which determined the status of the wearer. Wearing of traditional attires and ornaments were bounded by strict social customs. Clothing restrictions and taboos were observed against wearing certain clothes because of their associated symbolic meanings. Violating the socially enforced clothing norms was seen as a grave offence. Heroism and being possessors of fertility is a highly pursued quality and these cultural values are reflected in their clothings. In this chapter, an attempt therefore, is made to understand the social values, beliefs, traditions, the social significance of Naga traditional clothings and associated aspects to gain a better insight in understanding the Naga society as a whole. An effort is made to highlight how each of the Naga traditional clothing is not just part of personal adornment but symbolically linked to their cultural practices like head hunting and feast of merit which was an important feature of the Naga culture.

Weaving and dyeing

The Naga women are skilful weavers creating beautifully designed clothings. In the past due to inaccessibility of manufactured garments, the Nagas weaved their own clothes. The motifs representing the day to day lives of the Nagas are artistically depicted in their shawls and traditional attires. Tailored clothes became popular only after contact with the west. Spinning, weaving, and embroidery were an activity carried out by the womenfolk, knowledge handed down to them by their mothers. Back strap loom or back-tension loin loom were used for weaving. The norm in the traditional Naga society required women to weave. Women with great artistic skills in weaving were greatly admired. Women spent long hours spinning the yarn, it was a

laborious task nonetheless women weaved clothes for their entire family. The Nagas wove clothes from locally available fibres and dyes. The traditional garments were made using the locally grown cotton which was spun into yarns. The yarns were woven and dyed with indigenous materials. The Nagas used native plant dyes such as indigo which gives a distinctive blue colour for clothing and also other natural dyes.

Traditionally the Lotha and Sumi customs forbade women from weaving when their husbands were away in warfare, trade, fishing, and hunting as violating the taboo was believed to bring misfortune upon the husband. Among the Lotha Nagas, the heads collected during head-hunting were hung on a sacred tree in the centre of the village known as '*mhenkitong*'. The tree is of considerable significance and is an important part of their beliefs and tradition. *Mhenkitong* had a symbolic significance as the tree was considered a symbol of fertility and greatly revered by the people. It is a place around which rituals were observed. The falling of the tree branches symbolised a bad omen. The villagers observed taboo whereby they were prohibited from weaving and spinning, hunting, working in the fields. Breaking the taboo was believed to bring misfortune or bad luck. Similar beliefs persisted among the Rengma Nagas as well. They hung the heads of the enemies in the head tree. The falling of any branches of the tree was considered bad omen amongst them too. Taboos were observed and the villagers were forbidden from spinning, weaving and working in the fields. It was believed that breach of taboo will lead to misfortune. Among the Angami Nagas, certain taboos and restrictions were observed when weaving a child's first clothing. The weaver must restrain from using rude and offensive language so as to avoid misfortune falling upon the child. Observation of taboos and restrictions in Naga culture is associated with their religious beliefs and practices.

Dyeing of clothes was also involved with superstitious beliefs. Restrictions and taboos were observed while dyeing clothes. The task was carried out only on specific months. It was mainly the older women who took part in the dyeing of fabrics and those involved in the activity were required to remain chaste and observe dietary restrictions. Red was the predominant colour in most Naga clothing, ornaments and crafts because of its symbolic association with blood and power and there were many superstitious beliefs surrounding the colour. As the red colour symbolises blood, women were strictly prohibited to touch and dye the cloths in red colour as violating

the taboo would result in her fatal death. The Lotha Nagas believed that risk for illness was involved when dyeing the fabric red as a person was likely to be afflicted by dysentery. Hence, it was mainly the old women, who were no longer considered as an asset to the community, engaged in the activity. In addition to that, Lotha men must refrain from dyeing clothes to ensure good catch in hunting and fishing. Menstrual taboos were practiced by the Ao Nagas, as women were prohibited to dye clothes during menstruation. The Nagas also believed that pregnant women should abstain from dyeing clothes as that was believed to have a bad effect on the baby. Ritual secrecy was maintained in the process of dyeing clothes and only the person involved in the activity must be present or else it would cause colour fading from the cloth.

Traditional Naga clothing and its associated symbolic meanings

The social status of a person is manifested through the clothing they wear. As Desmond Morris remarks “It is impossible to wear clothes without transmitting social signals. Every costume tells a story, often a very subtle one, about its wearer” (1977:213). Similarly, traditional clothings were used as a medium of expression in Naga society to reveal the status and social identity of the wearer.

Traditionally the Naga society was socially stratified and clothes served as symbols to define people’s social class. There was distinction in body adornments on the basis of the social position of the wearer. The status and privileges had to be earned through his achievements and merit and not fixed by birth as in the case of ascribed status. A person in the Naga society was entitled to adorn themselves with valuable ornaments and clothing’s depending on the status achieved by the person through ‘head-hunting’ and ‘feast of merit’. Men’s clothings were far more elaborately designed and carried more significant meanings as this can be attributed to their beliefs of ‘head-hunting’, and the ‘feast of merit’ and its relevance in a patriarchal society.

Head-hunting

Nagas were a warlike tribe with constant warfare within the region. They were engaged in inter-tribal feud. Head-hunting was an integral part of their culture. Due to the practice of head-hunting there was hostility within the neighbouring villages, between the tribes and outside the region. The Naga villages were built on hill tops or on higher elevations and their villages were fortified as protection against their enemies. It was the responsibility of men to safeguard the village from the

adversaries. Men guarded the village gates keeping careful watch of any possible danger and alerted the village. In the past, women going to the fields were accompanied by guards as protection from enemies. Fetching water is a part of women's activity and women usually stayed together in groups when walking long distances to the water sources for the fear of being attacked by the enemies as women's head was considered a prized trophy among the Nagas. Heads of women and children were considered of high value as it proved that the head-hunters succeeded in getting past the heavily guarded village.

The main purpose of head-hunting was because of the belief that the head carries the 'soul matter'. As a result, head-hunting was practiced to acquire the soul matter which Nagas believed resided in the head. Taking an enemy's head was believed to bring wealth and prosperity. For increasing the fertility of the village it was considered essential to bring the 'soul matter' that contained in the human head. Rituals were performed for bountiful harvests and fertility in the village. The Nagas believed that the survival and the continuity of their village depended on attracting the life force inherent in nature through the acts of taking human head. The head of the enemies was taken as prized trophies. Heads of women and children were also not spared but taking the head of infirm and insane person was a taboo for the Nagas.

The head-hunters have to remain chaste before a head-hunting expedition as sexual activities were considered taboo. To be captured and beheaded in a war was deemed as disgraceful in the community. Animal sacrifices were carried out and the entrails of the sacrificed animals were used to read omens and foretell the future before a head-hunting expedition. The head hunters were given a heroic reception in the village after a victorious head-hunting expedition. The villagers celebrated the occasion with great fanfare. All the villagers took part in ceremonial drinking and feasting after every successful head-hunting expedition. A village gained prestige and power based on the number of head-hunting trophies collected.

Head-hunting was a symbol of masculinity. Men were required to display their manhood through bravery and courage. Bravery, strength, courage, virility, masculinity are the qualities which were greatly admired and highly prized. Every man in the village except men with disabilities was required to join in the warfare. Refraining oneself from the battle was considered disgraceful. There was prestige

attached to taking heads and the head hunters boastfully displayed their trophies. A man who distinguished himself by taking many heads rose in status and prestige and was very much respected within the community and those not very successful in their pursuit were ridiculed. The head hunters were given respect and recognition in the society for their heroism. Every Naga men aspired to become a great warrior. The warrior enjoyed a prominent position in the society with the greater number of heads he acquired during warfare. The act of taking an enemy's head was regarded as bringing honour to the village and through their heroic deeds increasing the fertility of the village. Along with power and glory, the war was also waged over territorial disputes and possession of land. The head-hunters are believed to occupy an honourable place even 'afterlife'.

In the Naga society, the head-hunters were motivated to take an enemy's head not only to bring fertility in the village but also because of the fact that the society accorded them with special status and entitlement to wear distinctive attires and ornaments. The head- hunters were entitled to adorn special attires, ornaments, weapons, head-gear symbolising their triumphant pursuit in head-hunting which is discussed in the later part of the chapter. The use of hair as an embellishment in clothings, ornaments and weapons were done mainly by warriors who had earned the right to do so by taking the head of an enemy.

Feast of merit

Feast of merit was practiced by almost all the Naga tribes. But the ritual act of performing a feast of merit differed from tribe to tribe. In traditional Naga society for a person to elevate his status and acquire the right to wear prestigious shawls and ornaments, he had to undertake successive stages of feast giving which is known as the 'feast of merit'. Feast giving improved the position of the individual in the social hierarchy as a man claimed higher status through feast of merit. There is a subsequent interval after each stage as the feasts were expensive and the expense increased after every stage. With every stage of feast giving, the host and his family acquired more power and status within the village community. In addition to that, the clothings, ornaments, and house decoration became more elaborate after every stage. After the completion of the full series the feast-giver would erect a monolith or a forked

wooden post outside his house or in the pathway of the village and gain himself the right to wear certain clothings, and the house of the feast-giver was also decorated with wooden engravings; a symbol marking him as a respectable affluent man within the community. The erection of monolith or forked 'Y' wooden post outside the host's house signified the completed stage of feast giving and served as fertility symbols and symbolic representation of his social status. The fertility of the rich man was believed to be transmitted to the entire village community. The feast-giver held more privileges than a commoner. The entire decision making and ritual were carried out by those who had performed the feast of merit. A man who did not perform the feast of merit was looked down upon and they occupied a low status in the social hierarchy (see diagram 1).

The wealth that is procured by the rich was distributed within the community through the practice of feast giving and this was done to share his blessings and wealth and in turn, increase his fertility as well as the villagers. A man was considered rich based on the amount of wealth such as granaries, and livestock he possessed, and also based on the ability to host the feast of merit. The man spent fortunes giving away the feasts which though not beneficial economically, but gained him a respectable position in the society. The rich displayed their wealth through holding extravagant feasts. The festival was stretched over days. Preparation for the feast usually begins before the feast. Brewing of rice beer was done by the women during the feast of merit. The host distributed rice beer, rice, and meat to the community. Food and drinks were served in abundance to the guests.

Rituals are performed in each stage of feast giving which work in accordance with certain rules which are strictly prescribed. Feast of merit was performed only by a married man as the spouse of the feast-giver also played a significant role in the observance of rituals and ceremony. The feast-giver sacrificed his domestic animals and invoked blessings for the entire village. The ritual act of animal sacrifices to propitiate or appease the Gods was performed during feast giving. The sacrificial animals were fowl, pigs, and *mithun* (*bos frontalis*). *Mithun* played a significant part in their economy as well as the cultural life of the Nagas. Owning of *mithun* was considered a symbol of displaying the social position and wealth of the person. The Naga ceremonial feastings are traditionally marked with the sacrifice of a *mithun*.

Mithun is generally considered sacred. The animal chosen for sacrifice had to be blemish free and was ritually sacrificed to appease the spirits. The blood of the sacrificial animal was smeared on the posts and the monoliths. The Nagas believed that these stones and the wooden post possessed great magical properties. The ritual act of feast giving and the practice of head-hunting was believed to benefit not only the owner but the whole village. The reason was that they were seen as transmitters of fertility (see diagram 2).

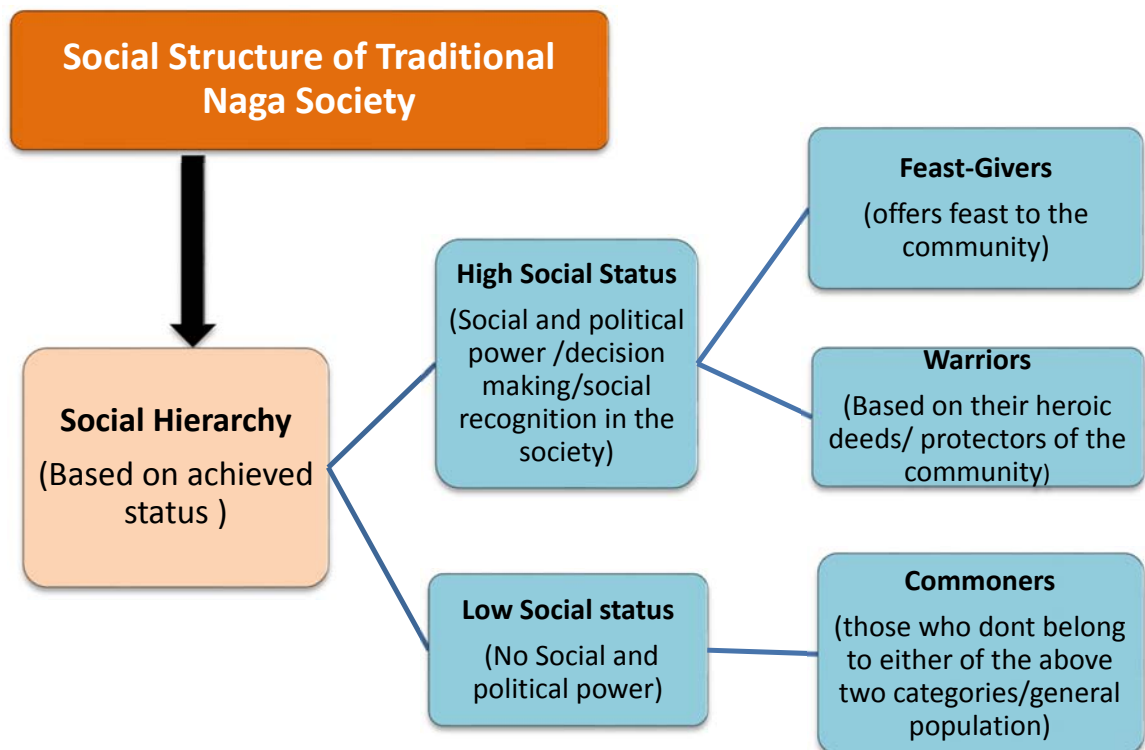


Diagram 1: The social structure of traditional Naga society

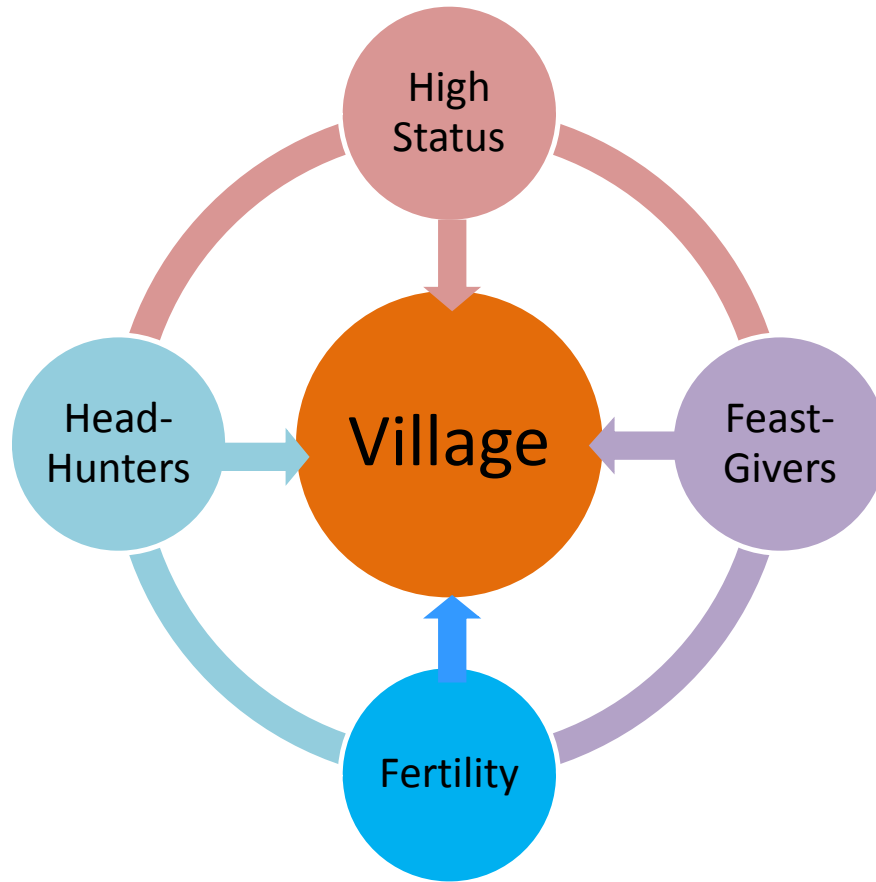


Diagram 2: Representation of transmission of fertility

Traditional clothing as status symbol

Shawls are the predominant cloth among the Nagas. The shawls are worn by both young and old and the designs of the shawl are gender and age specific. There are certain shawls made exclusively for married persons. Most of the Naga shawls are woven in red as it symbolised blood. In the past, among the Nagas, a rich man adorned prestigious shawl which distinguished him from the rest of the group. The shawl symbolised pride and prestige which helped him in ascending the social ladder and was central to Naga identity. Among the Lotha Nagas, a man who had performed the feast of merit was known as an *ekhyo ekhüing* (hero) and who had not given the feast were known as *kishiuroe* (commoner). An *ekhyo ekhüing* played important role in all the decision-making process within the village. He occupied a high status and enjoyed a lot of privilege within the community. A shawl known as *phanrüpsü* was worn by those who had completed the first stage of feast giving (*ozhü eyu*). The shawl is dark blue in colour with patterns in red and white or blue. There is no cloth for the

second stage, but the third stage of feast giving makes the man eligible to wear the *ethasü*, a dark blue shawl with designs in red. After the completion of the full series of feast giving by dragging the stone and erecting the monolith in front of the feast giver's house, a feast-giver, and his wife is entitled to wear the prestigious shawl known as *longpensü* regarded as 'rich men's shawl' symbolising his social standing within the society. The shawl is dark blue in colour with five horizontal lines of light blue and three narrow lines of light blue at the top and bottom (see plate 13). The number of lines on the shawl indicates the number of ceremonial feast performed by the wearer.

When a man performs the stone dragging ritual on more than one occasion then he adds additional lines on the *longpensü* shawl which is known as *eshamsü*. It is a highly prestigious shawl marking the notable social position of the wearer. A person who had succeeded in spearing an enemy and had completed the first stage of feast giving wore a shawl known as *jümthesu*. The Lotha priest (*pviiti*) wore a special red shawl with broad black and narrow blue bands called *pviitisu* indicating his high status in the society.

Among the Lotha Nagas before the stone dragging ceremony, restrictions are placed on the host and his family. They are required to stay in *emvüranki* (taboo hut) constructed at the back of his house. The social norm requires the feast-giver to practice sexual abstinence till the end of the ceremony. Strangers from other villages are also prohibited from entering his house. Preparation for the feast begins few days ahead of the ceremony. The host provides food and drinks to all those who come and help him. Rituals to bring about good fortune to the host are performed by old men. On the appointed day all the men folk go to the site, put the monolith on a bamboo frame and fasten it with creepers. Rice beer is smeared over the stone. After the rituals, the stone is carried by all the men present with singing and great rejoicing. Halfway down the procession, they are joined by the host and his clan members who have already performed the ceremony before him. The host brings along with him eggs, fowl, and axe. The fowl is sacrificed by the *wokchung*, a man who has already performed the feast of merit and along with the eggs place it in front of the stone. The ritual is performed to bless the host, his family, and the whole village with wealth and prosperity. After performing the rituals, the monolith is carried to the village and kept

outside the host's house. During the evening the whole village participates in feasting, singing, and merry-making. The place where the stone monolith is to be erected is dug up and consecrated the following day. Subsequently, the feast-giver's wife along with three old women come out from the host's house and in a ceremonial manner walk around the dug up earth making sure that they are facing opposite to the "Land of the dead" (*echü likvü*). Each of them sways their foot over the place. After the ritual is performed they ritually purify themselves by cleansing their bodies prior to entering the house. The stone monolith is then erected and the villagers celebrate the occasion by feasting and merry-making. The Lotha Nagas sets up only one stone monolith in the initial stages but as he proceeds further he erects two stone (see plate 15).

Among the Lotha Naga, *rikyüsü* a prestigious shawl woven in red and dark blue yarn was worn by the warrior who brought victory to the village by taking a head or by rich men who has performed the feast of merit. *Rikyüsü* is similar to the rich men's shawl worn by the Ao Nagas. The centre of the shawl was stitched in white yarn and has a symbolic representation of a human head, head of an elephant, tiger, *mithun* horns, hornbill and other birds which were painted on it.

The warrior shawl of the Ao Nagas is known as *mangkotepsü* or *tsüngkotepsü*. The shawl was entitled to be worn only by a warrior who had taken heads in warfare and rich men who have given the feast of merit as a symbol of power and their ranking in the society. The shawl reflects the symbolic and cultural significance of the Ao Naga society. It was a perceived marker of one's social position and an important status symbol. It is worn only by the men folk. The shawl consists of three pieces of cloth which are woven from red, black and white yarn and are stitched together. The shawl has a median white band and on each side are horizontal bands of black and red. The median white band is more elaborate and embellished than the other two pieces. It is painted with motifs in black by particular men specifically assigned for the purpose. Each of the motifs in the shawl has symbolic meanings attached to it, symbols which were part of their everyday lives. The human head depicted in the shawl signifies the number of heads taken and the wearer's achievement in head-hunting. It was a symbol of his courage and bravery. The *chabili* indicated the currency used by the Ao Nagas; the cock in the shawl is a sign of smartness of the warrior. The *mithun* symbolises the

wealth of the wearer. The lion, tiger, and elephant depicted in the shawl is a symbol of strength, status, power and valour. *Dao* and spear symbolise the weapons used during warfare. Celestial bodies like star, sun, and moon were a symbol of luck, fame, and power of the warrior and the distinction of the warriors. Hornbill, the bird revered by the Nagas for its splendour and beauty, is also depicted in the shawl. The drongo birds are noted for its bravery so the motif of drongo is painted only in the shawl of courageous warriors for defending the village against enemies. Shawl decorated in drongo bird motif was earned by a warrior who excelled in warfare. It needs to be mentioned that the technique of painting on clothes was known only by few Naga tribes like the Ao, Lotha, and Rengma. The task is carried out only by men and they are required to be chaste and observe dietary restrictions. These practices are associated with the concept of ritual purity and can be seen as a cleansing ritual. From the study, it can be ascertained that though weaving is an activity associated with women and is a gender specific role, nevertheless in certain Naga tribes men also contributed to the cloth making process. Detail paintings of clothes in the median band of the shawl illustrate this point (see Fig 1 & plate 18).

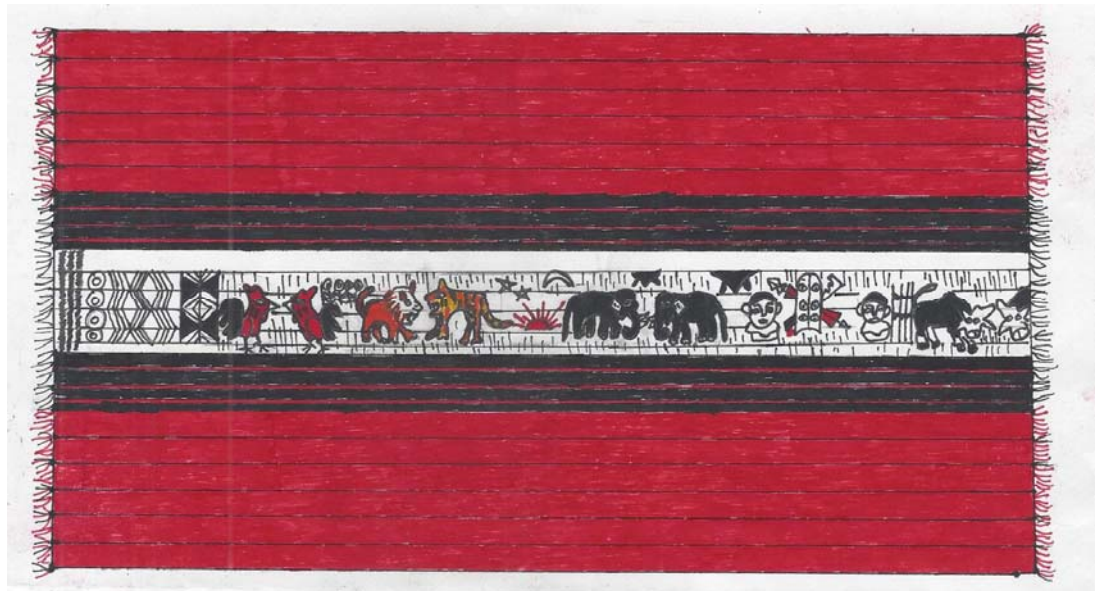


Fig 1: Mangkotepsü or tsüngkotepsü shawl of the Ao Nagas

The Ao Nagas wear another prestigious shawl known as *rongsusü*. The pattern of the shawl includes narrow bands of alternating dark blue and red colour with tufts of red dyed goat's hair and edged with tassels of red and black dyed goat's hair and adorned

with cowries. It was not easy to acquire the right to wear this shawl as it was worn only by a man whose father and grandfather have both performed the full series of the feast of merit including himself. Traditionally for the Ao Nagas, clothing decorated with cowries was a means to display higher status as it signified martial achievements of warriors who succeeded in burning down the village of an enemy. *Tabensasü* is another type of shawl worn by men who have performed the feast of merit and the son of a feast-giver. Another higher status clothing of the rich Ao Nagas is *aomelepsu*. The shawl was richly decorated with red dyed dog's hair. The shawl provided information about the wearer's status as it could be worn only by rich men and their families. A shawl in red with narrow dark blue bands called *yongmiremsü* was worn by rich Ao men who offered the ceremonial feast of merit, including his father. The shawl which the old Ao Naga men wear is called *kizesü*. Generally, no qualification is required for wearing it but whereas in some village spearing of an enemy's body was essential.

An ornate shawl known as *chi pi khwü* or *thüipikhü* was worn by the Chakhesang Nagas but only by those who had performed the feast of merit. The shawl is associated with power and status and cannot be worn by everyone. In the past, a wealthy man acquired the privilege to wear this shawl only after hosting feasts to the entire village. The shawl is predominantly black and bordered in orange colour. The shawl is embroidered all over with colourful floral and animal motifs, each colour and each motif having a deep symbolic meaning. The colours used in the shawl are orange, white, yellow, green and black. Orange is used to represent vigour, white is symbolic of purity and courage, yellow represents wealth and prosperity, green symbolises life and black represent the sacred. The elephant in the shawl is a symbol of wisdom and strength. The peacock depicted in the shawl is symbolic of beauty; the representation of butterfly is a symbol of joy. *Mithun* head carved out of wood adorned in a rich men's house is also represented in the shawl. Flower in the shawl represents emotions like happiness and fulfilment; the star is a symbol used to signify the charisma. The traditional plate displayed in the shawl symbolises abundance and wealth. Ivory armlets, conch shells, cowries which are symbolic of a rich men's status are also embroidered on the shawl. After each successive stage of feast giving, the rows of motifs are added in the shawl. In the olden days, it was believed that the women engaged in embroidering the motifs should complete the task within a day

before dusk. They held the belief that not completing the assigned work led to misfortune to both the wearer and the weaver. On the basis of merit, the feast-giver and his wife achieved a higher status in the society entitling them to wear the *chi pi khwü* or *thüpi khü* shawl and the privileges that came along with it (see Fig 2, plate 19 & 20).



Fig 2: Chi pi khwü or thüpi khü shawl of the Chakhesang Nagas

Among the Chakhesang Nagas, monoliths were erected by rich men who have performed the feast of merit. Weeks ahead of the feast giving ceremony, a suitable stone was carefully chosen in the forest and carved into the required shape. On the day of feast giving while the feast-giver's wife stay back and make preparations for the feast, the men folk dressed in their traditional attires go to the site. They meticulously fasten the monolith with vines, place it in the wooden sledge and steadily drag it all the way to the village with great joy, rejoicing, humming of traditional songs and merry making. It was customary to make an accomplished head-hunter who had captured the most amounts of heads or a skilled hunter who had killed ferocious animals to stand on the stone when it is being dragged. They take part in community feasting after arriving at the feast giver's home and erect the monolith in

front of his home or in the pathway of the village as a significance of his achievement. In the olden days, lard known as *zao chisu* among the Chakhesang Nagas was highly valued and it was given out only to those who have performed the feast of merit while a portion of meat was distributed to each household.

The Angami Nagas wear two distinct shawls called *loramhoushü* and *lohe* (see plate 14). The traditional clothings of the Angami Nagas does not display a clearly defined status distinction, unlike the other Naga tribes. The priest among the Angami Nagas wears a distinctive shawl symbolic of his social position called *phichü-pfe*. The Angami Nagas also wear an off white shawl with black horizontal stripes made from cotton and stinging nettle fibre called *zhathopfe* which was worn by a person who has performed the feast of merit.

Among the Angami Nagas, a rich married couple had to give a feast known as *Tem-za* followed by three consecutive stages of feast giving called *zhotho*. Subsequently, two suitable stones, one for the husband and the other for the wife were chosen. On a fixed day all the men folk in their traditional fineries dragged the monolith to the village from a faraway place. It was a time of great rejoicing and merry-making. At the time of stone pulling, the women accompanying the men with food and drinks were forbidden to touch the ropes that were secured to the monolith as it was regarded a taboo. All the villagers took part in the community feast provided by the host. The monolith was erected outside the feast-giver's house or a place where it could be easily seen which marked a symbol of their achievement.

The Angamis and the Chakhesangs erect a pair of monoliths, the bigger stone representing the male and the smaller stone the female. After the erection of the monolith, the stone is ritually sanctified by pouring rice beer (*zutho*) and smearing it with sacrificial animal blood. The monoliths are erected in the main pathway of the village or on the way to the fields so as to pass on the fertility of the rich man to the villagers who passes by. The custom and traditions of the Angami Naga and Chakhesang Naga are similar, as the Chakhesangs were previously part of the same tribe and known as the Eastern Angamis, which later separated and got recognition as the Chakhesang tribe.

Table 3.1 Symbolic meanings of birds

BIRDS	SYMBOLIC MEANINGS
1. Drongo	Symbol of bravery and courage.
2. Peacock	Symbol of beauty.
3. Cock	Symbol of smartness.
4. Scarlet Minivet	Symbol of high social status.
5. Blue Jay	Feathers used as ear ornament symbolise young Angami men.

Among the Rengma Nagas, *alungtsü* is a shawl worn by the rich men after performing the feast of merit but who have not yet succeeded in achieving the full series and hence lesser the prestige bestowed on the cloth. The Rengma men earned the right to wear the prestigious shawl *akha haiya* only after the completion of the full series of the feast of merit, and a warrior who has taken head in the head-hunting event wears a cloth called *arrhi hü pi*. *Teri Phiketsu* is another highly esteemed shawl of the Rengma Nagas. It could only be worn by distinguished warriors for their acts of heroism. The white median band of the shawl was painted using tree sap. The design in the shawl depicted the warriors, their ear ornaments, and lines to denote the arrow symbol, a very important weapon which aided them in war, hunting animals for food, clothing and body ornaments. Subsequent to each warrior is the design symbolically representing spoon. As per tradition, after the warriors came back from a head-hunting raid, it was considered taboo for them to eat with their hands and as a result, spoons were used for the purpose. The reason for this cultural practice was to retain the blood of the enemy and thereby preserve the soul matter and spiritual essence intact. Washing of one's hands was believed to take that away and make the person turn into a coward whereas keeping in possession the soul matter would make the warrior strong. Sentry posts which were used for monitoring and securing the village from the enemies are also symbolically depicted in the shawl through a zig-zag pattern. The designs in the shawl symbolically depict the path taken by the warriors during the raid. Hunting prowess of the wearer was also painted on the shawl

with a symbolic representation of animal motifs. All these symbols were a reflection of the Rengma traditional society.

The Rengma tribe also erect stone monolith to mark the feast of merit. Stones of different sizes are raised, the bigger one representing the feast-giver, the smaller one the wife, and further smaller ones stand for each of his children respectively. The Konyak, Zeliang, also erect stone monoliths after the feast of merit. Forked Y-shaped wooden posts were erected by some of the Naga tribe like the Ao, Sumi, Sangtam and the Chang during the feast of merit. The posts resemble the horn of the revered *mithun*. For the commemorative purpose, rich Zemi Naga men create a heap of earth outside his house symbolising his good harvest. This is done for abundance and prosperity for the coming years.

The richly decorated Sumi Naga shawl called *avikiyiphi* was worn only by a feast-giver and warriors of distinction. Specific importance was attached to the clothing as it signified the pre-eminent place the wearer occupied in the society. The black and white colour in the shawl symbolizes the feather of the hornbill, bird revered by the Nagas. An elaborate pattern in red is woven on the shawl. The square pattern in the shawl in red is the symbol of fire and war to represent the villages burned down during raids. Strict taboos were enforced and ordinary people were prohibited from wearing this shawl. *Asukudaphi*, the cowrie ornamented rich men's shawl was permitted to be worn only after the completion of the full series of the feast of merit. *Aqhumi* is a Sumi shawl with black base and narrow horizontal bands in red. This shawl could be worn only by rich Sumi men. Similarly a shawl called *abophi* with dark blue base and light blue horizontal bands with intricate designs in red was worn by rich men who had performed the feast of merit.

The rich men in Yimchungrü society identified themselves by wearing the cowries ornamented shawl called *rehuke khim*. The cloth has a black base and elaborately designed with circles of cowries. Cowries were symbols of opulence. Extensive amount of cowries in the shawl was indicative of the higher status of the wearer. Among the Yimchungrü Nagas, a person was entitled to wear cowries shawl only after giving the feast of merit. In addition to that, outline figures of human designs in the shawl suggested the wearer to be a warrior. The Yimchungrü Nagas have another shawl called *amerthre khim* which can be worn only by those persons who have killed

tigers. Another rich eminent shawl of the Yimchungrü tribe is *lungtungshe khim*. Adorning the shawl proclaimed the wearer's status as it could be worn only by the feast-giver and renowned warriors. This clothing signified their rank in the society. The Yimchungrü Nagas wear a prestigious warrior shawl called *rongkhim*. It was worn only by a warrior of great prominence who has successfully taken their enemy's head in war. The shawl is a symbolic representation for their acts of valour. Wearing of this shawl by a commoner is considered a taboo. The shawl is woven in red and black colour and consists of intricately woven red rectangular patterns. The red colour in the shawl signifies the blood of the enemy. *Kechinger Rongkhim* is another warrior shawl of the Yimchungrü tribe. The shawl has a resemblance with the *rongkhim* shawl and has similar red rectangular patterns in a black base, but is comparatively lesser in prestige to the *rongkhim* shawl. It is entitled to be worn only by warriors who have succeeded in taking an enemy's hand in the war. The findings suggest that acquiring certain body parts in a head-hunting expedition is regarded as an accomplishment and the warrior is accorded with higher social position and made to adorn distinctive clothing but comparatively lesser in stature to a man who succeeded in acquiring a human head.

The feast of merit among the Khamnuingan Nagas is known as *jamhang tsouthong* which was held in the month of February. The feast was organized by a rich man of the village. The social significance of hosting a feast for the entire village was to display his social status and command respect and prestige from the village community. The whole villagers get involved in making arrangements for the feast. They take part in an activity known as *abeniu tsemthao* in the first week of February. On the appointed day all the men folk gets themselves involved in drying the paddy and also collect the rice pounding log. And during the day time, the women thrash the paddy and winnow the chaff from the grain which was made use of during brewing of rice beer. Folk songs and folk dances were performed inside the house of the feast-giver. On the first day of feast giving it was only the males who dance in his house but then on the subsequent day females join them in singing and dancing. They sing and dance invoking God for His blessings, abundance, and prosperity upon the host. They also sing praises of his achievements and glorify him for his act of generosity and serving them with unlimited food and drinks. The Khamnuingan Naga shawl

ornamented with cowries was entitled to be worn only by a person who has given the feast of merit.

Among the Sangtam tribe, an elaborately designed shawl called *tsingrang su* could be worn only by men belonging to high social position similarly the wealthy wore another specially woven cloth called *supong su*. *Rongsu* shawl, a beautifully designed black shawl with patterns in grey and red, was worn by the warriors among the Sangtam Nagas. Clothing customs were very strict and commoners were forbidden from wearing it and women were also not permitted to put on the men's clothing. The cowrie embellished shawl of the Phom Nagas was called *fanet*. It signified wealth and status and was a perceived indicator of the wearer's status as rich men who offered feast and as insignia of warrior's rank.

The Konyak Nagas wear a shawl with designs of human figures stitched from cowries. It was worn only by a warrior who had taken heads or a wealthy man in the community. The number of the human figure in the shawl signified the number of heads taken. Even the walking stick of a warrior was decorated with human figures as a symbol of his status. Cowries in clothing are symbolic of the wearer's achievements. A red shawl with narrow black horizontal bands called *nye-myon* was worn on ceremonial occasions.

The Chang men have a cowrie embellished shawl called *moh nei* which was entitled to be worn only by a warrior who have gained possession of six heads or above in warfare. During the process of weaving this cloth, rituals, and dietary restrictions were observed by the weaver. Another distinctive male shawl worn by the Chang Nagas is called *tobu nei*. Outmost care was taken by the weaver and the wearer of the shawl as it was considered a bad omen to wear the shawl in a wrong way as that was believed to result in an untimely death of the wearer. The prestigious shawl called *shangbu nei* could be worn only by warriors. The weaving of this traditional clothing was considered sacred and therefore purification rituals were observed by the weaver. The weaver was required to abstain from eating outside food failing which misfortune will befall on her. Among the Chang Nagas the various designs, patterns and circles of cowries embellished in shawls, aprons, belts symbolise the celestial bodies like the moon and star signifying night, the best time when successful raids are mostly carried out.

Table 3.2: Symbolic meaning of animals

ANIMALS	SYMBOLIC MEANINGS
1. Lion	Symbol of strength, power, high status.
2. Elephant	Symbol of wisdom, strength and high status.
3. Wild-boar	Symbol of high status.
4. Buffalo	Symbol of high status.
5. Bear, Goat and Dog	Hair used in body adornment signifies the high status of a head-taker.
6. Antelope	Horns used as high status symbols.
7. Porcupine's quills	Symbol of royal family.

Another important traditional men's clothing from which status distinctions could be ascertained was a sash. All the Naga men wore a sash as body adornment slung diagonally across the chest. The designs and patterns differed from tribe to tribe. Sash was typically worn as warrior's insignia. The sash was often ornamented with fringed dyed goat's hair at the edge and intricately woven designs and patterns in red signifying blood which communicated the wearer's status. The number of sashes draped from the shoulders also communicated the status of the wearer. The ranking of the warrior could be assessed based on the insignia as in the case of a warrior who has taken one head wore only one sash but for high-rank warriors who captured more than one head wore two sashes across the shoulders. The Lotha warrior wore a sash known as *ryütssen* around the body woven in white, dark blue wool and the pattern is designed in red, red dyed dog and goat's hair, and orchid stalk. A warrior of note and a feast-giver wore two sashes draped diagonally across the chest as a way to display their merit. Similarly, the fringed sash worn by the Sumi men is known as *amlakha* and is decorated with cane and yellow orchid stalk, red dyed dog's hair.

Victor Turner in his study among the Ndembu talks about the multivocality of symbols in which he says that a single symbol may denote for numerous things.

Similarly among the Nagas red colour signifies multivocality of meanings. The use of red colour conveys cultural meanings and displays different aspects of the Naga culture. Historically as Nagas were head-hunters, the use of red colour gets symbolic representation in their clothing, ornaments, and weapons. Red is the colour of “blood”, “fire”, “success in war”, “strength”, “power”, “status”, “masculinity”, “courage” “danger”, and “ritual purity”. Blood was believed to carry a powerful quality and deemed as sacred. It was considered the essence of life. A warrior succeeding in retaining the blood of an enemy during warfare was considered a possessor of fertility. However, not all blood was believed to have potent power. As mentioned already, menstrual blood was considered to be impure. Menstrual taboos were observed and Ao Naga women were prohibited to dye their clothes during menstruation as it was believed to have a negative effect on the dyeing. These beliefs exhibit male supremacy over women in Naga society.

Blood is laden with many meanings in Naga culture, the inference of which are presented below.

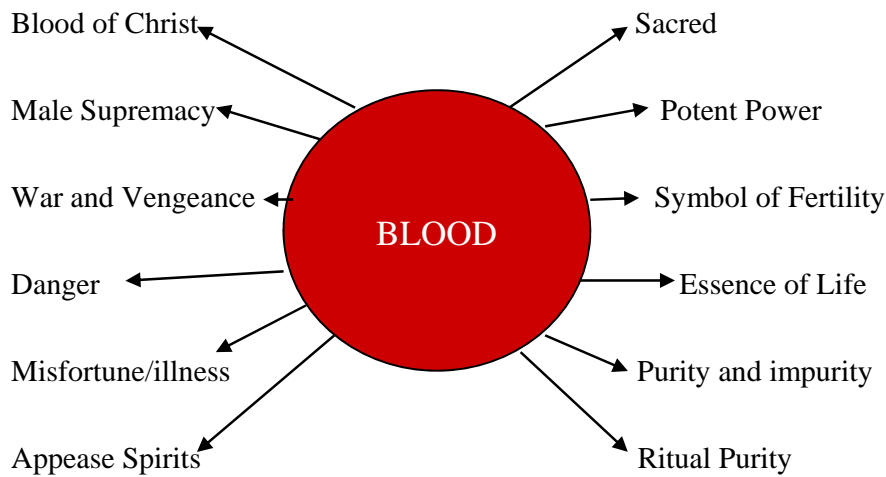


Diagram 3: Blood and its multivocal meanings.

Table 3.3: Colour Symbolism

COLOUR	SYMBOLISM
Red	Symbol of blood, success in war, fire, strength, power, status, masculinity and courage.
Orange	Symbol of vigour (Chakhesang Nagas).
White	Symbol of purity and courage (Chakhesang Nagas).
Yellow	Represents wealth and prosperity (Chakhesang Nagas).
Green	Symbolises life (Chakhesang Nagas).
Black	Represents the sacred (Chakhesang Nagas) and symbol of funeral or death.
Black and White	Symbol of Hornbill feathers (Sumi Nagas)

The traditional dress of Naga men was either a kilt or loincloth. Wearing of the cotton apron is characteristic of most Naga men in the bygone days. The kilt was worn mainly by the Angami, Chakhesang and Zeliang men whereas the rest of the tribes wear the loincloth. It was an everyday wear for men in traditional Naga society and the style varied from tribe to tribe. The loincloth is known as *langtem* among the Ao Nagas. The loincloths of Sangtam, Yimchungrü, Pochury, Phom, Khamniungan, and Chang tribe are decorated with a brass disc in the middle portion.

In the case of a warrior or a feast-giver the kilt or loincloth was often embellished with rows of cowries signifying the wealth and status of the wearer. Among the Lotha Nagas the loin cloth is woven in dark blue wool and is known as *rive* worn on an everyday basis while *rive* decorated in cowries (*fufu*) known as *fufu rive* was worn by the rich men or warrior on ceremonial occasions. The Angami men wear a black kilt. Three or four rows of cowries ornamented kilt is entitled to be worn only after taking a head and symbolised the martial achievements of the wearer (see diagram 4). The sewing of cowries on the kilt was done only by men and women were strictly forbidden from sewing it on the grounds of preventing the men from becoming weak. To secure the kilt, the belt was worn around the waist. Another traditional attire of the young Angami men consists of an adornment made of white cotton yarn in tassels suspended from the waist and worn over the kilt in the front part. Wearing of this

adornment was a symbol of the wearer's success in love. The Sumi Naga men also wear a square apron embellished with cowrie shells called *amini-kedah* and cowrie ornamented loincloth called *lapuchoh*. The Rengma Naga men wear apron ornamented with Job's tears. They were renowned for their great skill in this craft. Rengma men who succeeded in killing a tiger exhibited their remarkable hunting prowess by decorating their loin cloth with circles of cowries which symbolised tiger's eye.

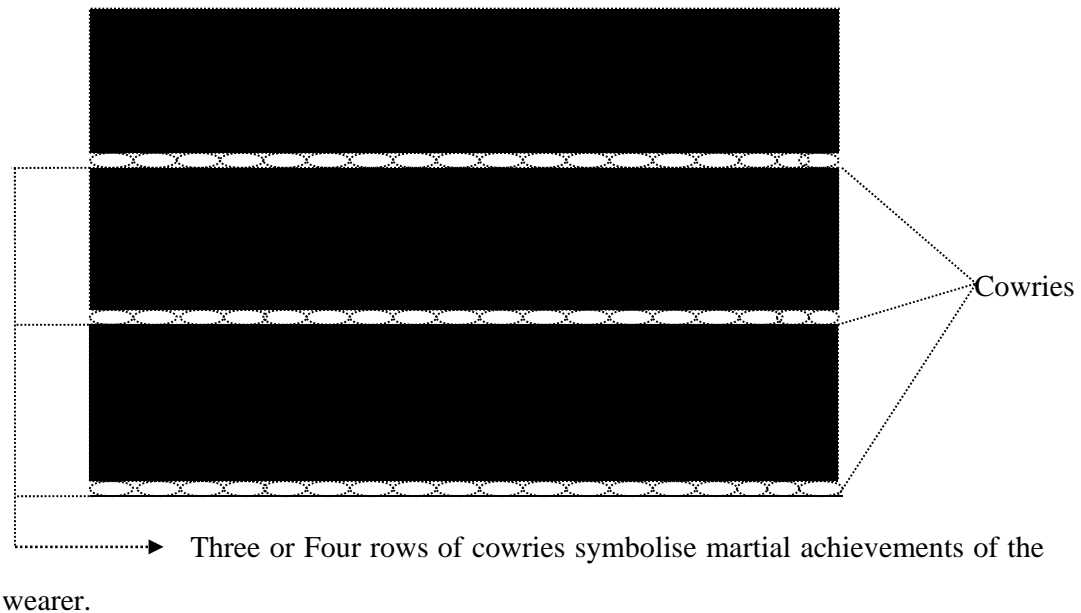


Diagram 4: Black kilt of an Angami men

The traditional way of feast giving is no longer practiced by the Nagas. It lost its social significance after the Naga's conversion into Christianity and as the missionaries forbade the Nagas from practicing their age-old traditions. However, the Nagas have retained and reinforced their cultural practices to a certain extent. The erection of monolith has taken a new form with the churches erecting jubilee memorial stones to commemorate important religious occasions. The age-old traditions have been replaced by Christian rites and rituals. Similarly, head-hunting was a prominent feature of the Naga culture. It continued till the beginning of the twentieth century but later abolished with Christianity. However, remnants of the great warrior tradition of the Nagas, their socio-political features, values, rituals, and beliefs are all reflected through their traditional attires, arts, and crafts.

Table 3.4: Cultural Symbols and Meanings

CULTURAL SYMBOLS	MEANINGS
	<p>Human head is a commonly featured symbol in all forms of Naga art depicting the Naga custom of head-hunting.</p>
	<p>Wooden engraving showing a Naga warrior wearing a head dress made from hornbill feathers. The expertise of the warrior, his courage, status in the society was symbolised by the number of hornbill feathers.</p>
	<p>Red was the predominant colour in most Naga clothing, ornaments and crafts because of its symbolic association with blood and power.</p>
	<p><i>Mithun</i> (<i>bos frontalis</i>) was a symbol of a person's social position and wealth.</p>
	<p>Hornbill, the bird revered by the Nagas for its splendour and beauty.</p>
	<p>Tiger is a symbol of strength and power.</p>

Women's clothing and social status

The traditional dress of Naga women is a wrap-around or sarong known as *mekhala*. It consists of one piece of clothing draped from the waist and was worn by women of all ages. But in the past, the women draped their *mekhala* from breast till the knees. This female garment was worn by women of all ages and on all occasions. Each of the tribe wore varieties of *mekhala* in a different colour, designs, and patterns. There are variations in the *mekhala* based on the geographical region, village, clan, and phratry. The styles of draping also differed from tribe to tribe. But more than just a female clothing it played an important role in the transmission of social messages. It had a lot of social significance as the colour and the patterns weaved in the *mekhala* gave clear identification of one's identity, clan and tribe affiliation, social status, symbols of everyday lives, and also their beliefs thereby reflecting the cultural values of the Naga society. *Mekhala* is known as *sürüm* in Lotha dialect. There are a wide variety of *sürüm* but based on the geographical region it is categorised into two types. *Lio sürüm* belongs to lower range of Wokha district and *nrung sürhüm* belonging to upper range of Wokha district (see plate 25).

The Angami women wear a white wrap-around known as *pfemhou*. The Konyak women also wear a beautifully designed *mekhala* called *nyamlong nyiha*. The wrap-around has a black base with colourful horizontal bands which according to tradition is believed to be inspired by the rainbow. The design in the *mekhala* signifies the integrity of the Konyak women.

In traditional Naga society, women's clothing also transmitted a social message about her family's wealth and status. The wives and daughters of feast-givers and warriors were also accorded special status and privileges. It is interesting to note that the status of a woman was based on the merit and higher status achieved by her husband or father and not of her own thereby reflecting the subordinate role women played in the society. Among the Ao Nagas, *mekhala* (wrap-around) is known as *sübeti* (see plate 26). *Sübeti* was a means of displaying the wealth of the wearer in ancient Ao society. The Ao women wear varieties of *sübeti*. Some of it includes *ngamisu*, *azu jangnupsu*, and *yongzu jangau*. The designs and patterns in the *mekhala* depend on the position of the wearer in the social hierarchy. For instance, *azu jangnupsu* is woven in black, red and yellow yarn.

Depending on the social status the designs differed for a commoner and that of the wives and daughters of rich men. For the wealthy, the designs in the wrap around were far more elaborate than the poor. The wives of the Sumi chief and rich men who have completed the full stages of feast giving embellish their *mekhala* with cowries giving an indication of their higher social status. Among the Phom Nagas, rich women displayed their social status by wearing *mekhala* called *shaka*. The Phom women wear another intricately designed *mekhala* called *shungnang* (see plate 28).

Among the Rengma Naga young girls wore no clothing but when a girl reaches the stage of adolescence she is required to wear a *mekhala* known as *nya* signifying the transition from childhood to adulthood. The cloth is dark blue in colour and has a white median band and it was also worn by the older women. Class differentiation could be clearly identified from this clothing, as the designs differed for the wife of a feast-giver and that of a commoner. The social position of the husband determines the designs and patterns weaved in the *mekhala*. For rich women, the cloth was decorated with patterns in red in the white median band. An intricately designed *mekhala* known as *alongza khim* or *langa imjung* was worn by rich Yimchungrü women.

Among the Rengma Nagas, a women's shawl ornamented with cowries was indicative of her family's status as it was only worn by the wives and daughters of men who have performed the 'feast of merit'. Circles of cowries in their cloth symbolise tiger's eye. Red dyed dog's hair and beetle wings were also stitched to the cloth for embellishment and as an indicator of the wearer's social status. The symbolism of food and feasting and the women playing a pivotal role in the feast of merit was displayed through the shawl worn by the rich men's wife and daughter among the Sangtam Nagas. The designs in the shawl depict rice grains, mortar, and pestle which were used to pound the rice for preparing the rice beer and feeding the entire village.

The prestigious shawl worn by the rich Lotha women is *opvüram*. The Chakhesang women wear a shawl known as *saparadu* or *therüidiera*. The motif in the shawl symbolises pig faeces. The shawl reveals the economic activity of the womenfolk like pig rearing which is also raised to be slaughtered during festivals and ceremonies. *Tokhüsü* is worn by Lotha women at the occasion of *tokhü* (festival). The Konyak women wear an intricately designed shawl called *nikola*. The most popular shawl of the Ao women is *angtongsü* or *etsüngsü*. It is royal blue in colour with the narrow

alternating black line. It was worn by women on all occasions. The very elaborate clothings are worn only on ceremonial occasions.

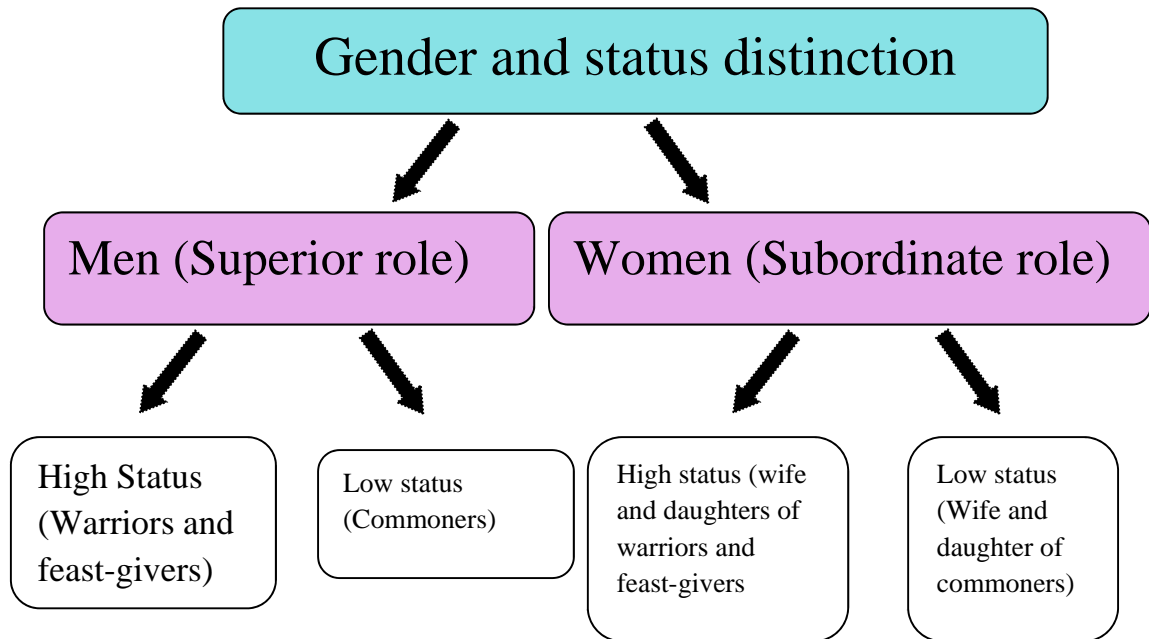


Diagram 5: Gender and status distinction

Naga Clothing: identities of age, marriage and clan affiliation

Clothing contains a lot of information relating to various social aspects and helps in revealing the age group, marital status and identity of the wearer. The first clothing worn by the young Yimchungrü girls is a white *mekhala* (wrap-around) with narrow bands in black and red called *kechingperu khim*. Among the Lothas *konrosü* is a wrap-around worn by the young girls before puberty and *shipang* is a traditional attire worn by a young unmarried woman. The clothing specially designed for young unmarried boys and girls among the Changs is called *kaksi nei* and it gave clear indications of the age group status of the wearer. Similarly, the clothes for the young men among the Rengmas is called *moyet tsü*.

The clothings of the Lotha women include *lorosü* which is a shawl worn by a bride and also by young women at the time of visiting the husband's house after marriage and *emathasü* were worn by women on special occasions such as marriage. A newly wedded Chang couple displayed their marital status by adorning the cloth called *silang nei*. Another shawl known as *shatni* was worn only by a rich woman among the

Konyak Nagas. According to the custom when the daughter of a rich man marries, she wears the *shatni* shawl gifted to her by her parents. She safely keeps the shawl to be later used to wrap her body on her death.

Clothing was also used by the Chang Nagas to exert clan identity. A shawl called *soonei* was exclusive to the *ongpang* clan. Wearing of this was strictly regulated and members of other clans were prohibited from wearing it. Violation of the socially enforced clothing norm resulted in the payment of fine by the offender. *Suvangsü* or *chuchusubangsü* is a red base shawl with dark blue bands and white median band. Clan distinction was clearly identified as this was worn mainly by the *Jamir*, *Longkumer*, *Pongen*, and *Molier* clan of the Ao tribe. The shawl was worn by a warrior who has taken head and also feast-giver. The additional design in the shawl denotes whether the wearer is a feast-giver or warrior or both. However, among the molier clan, no specific achievements were required to put on this cloth.

Low status clothing

In traditional Naga society, the differences between the rich and the poor were distinctly visible through their clothing. A wealthy person's attire was more elaborate and distinct from the poor people who often wore simple garments. The low-class people were prohibited from wearing high-status clothes. Clothing was used as a medium to infer the socio-economic status of the wearer. The clothings and ornaments in Naga society had to be earned. It was considered a taboo to wear a warrior's shawl, other attires, and ornaments by a commoner. A commoner found wearing warrior's or feast-givers' clothing and ornaments which he or she was not entitled to, was made to pay a penalty. The poor among the Lothas wore ordinary clothing called *sütam* which means 'plain' and could be worn by both men and women. It is a simple white clothing with dark blue horizontal lines. *Süse* or *kishüroesü* was a shawl worn only by the *kishüroe* (commoner) who had not performed the feast of merit. The ordinary people in some Lotha villages were clearly identified based on their simple clothing called *sünli*. The clothes worn by them reflected their low standing in the society. A commoner from *yimpang* village who had not performed a feast of merit wore an ordinary shawl called *tsüni* which was indicative of low class. The everyday wear for the Angami Nagas was a black shawl called *ratapfe* and was worn by both genders. Among the Ao Naga, it was usually

plain clothes like *subüsü* or *sünaksü* which were worn on a daily basis. The day to day clothing of the Phom Nagas was *vihe-ashak* and *nempong ashak*. It could be worn by everyone and did not require any outstanding qualification to wear it. In the past among the Rengma Nagas, a commoner who had not performed the feast of merit or taken an enemy's head could be identified by the white shawl with narrow black bands called *rhikho* worn by the person. Class distinction was also clearly visible among the Sumi Nagas as well, as the poor people wore a shawl made from stinging nettle called *nusuphi*. *Lototsu* is another *mekhala* worn by the Sumi women. No restrictions were applied to wear it and were worn by everyone. The commoners among the Yimchungrü tribe wore simple garments called *aneak khim*, *mokhok khim*, *sangkonglim khim*. No restrictions were imposed on wearing these clothings.

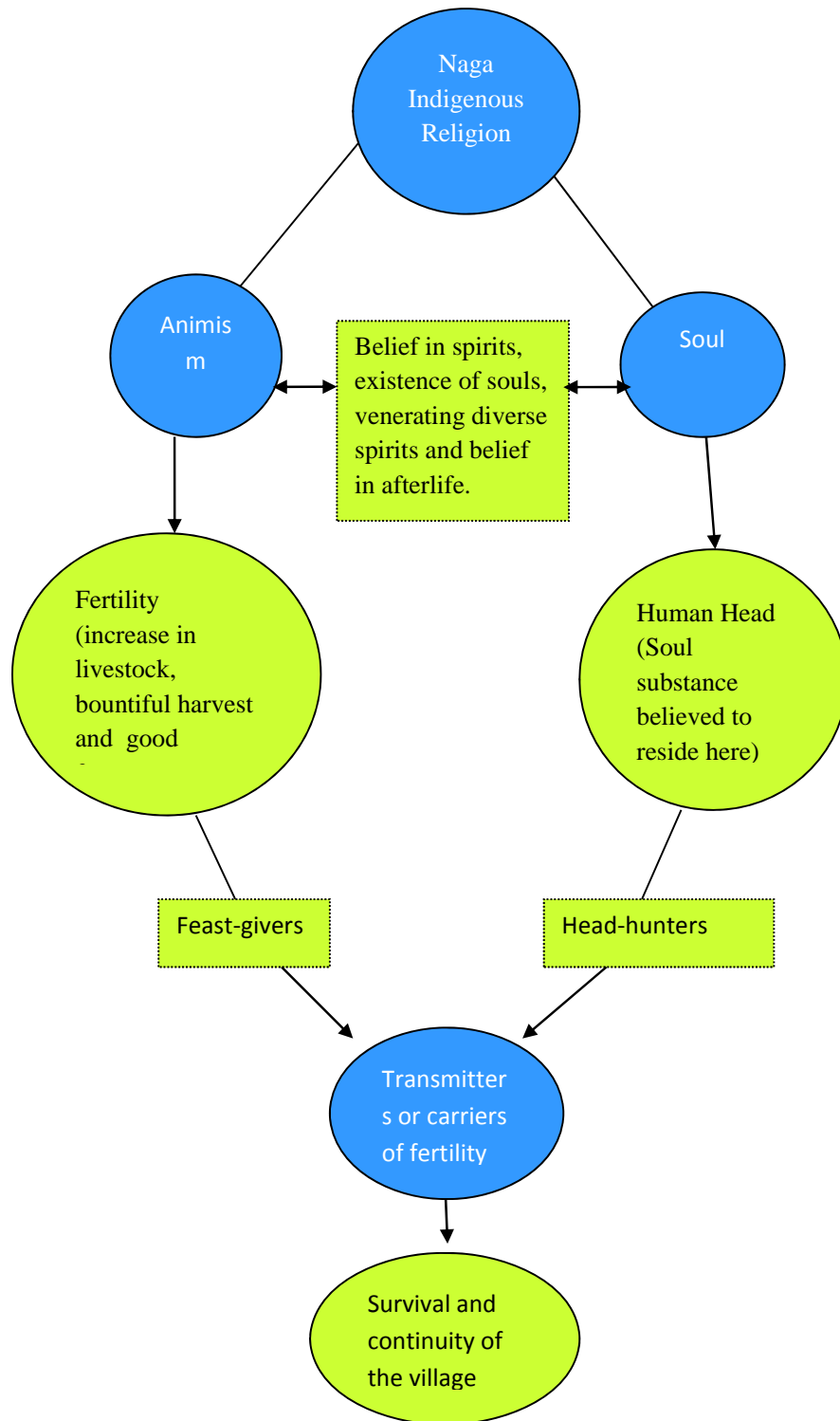


Diagram 6: Naga Indigenous religion

Table 3.5: Cultural Symbols and Meanings

CULTURAL SYMBOLS	MEANINGS
1. Flower	Emotions like happiness and fulfilment.
2. Butterfly	Symbol of joy.
3. Celestial bodies like moon, star	Symbol of charisma, night.
4. Ivory, Carnelian beads, Conch shells, Cowries	Symbol of wealth and high status, also used as currency.
5. Circle of Cowries	Symbolise tiger's eye. Cowries also symbolise teeth of slain enemies.
6. Blue beads	Symbol of royalty and high status.
7. Red dyed goat's hair	Signify blood and also symbolical representation of blood flowing out from the mouth.
8. Beetle wings	Symbol of wearer's high social status.
9. Outline figures of human	Symbol of warrior status.
10. Yellow orchid stalk	Signify tongue and mouth.
11. Traditional plate	Symbol of abundance and wealth.
12. Monolith and forked wooden post	Symbol of rich men's achievement and symbol of fertility.
13. Monolith (Present context)	Jubilee memorial stones to commemorate important religious occasions (Christianity).

The impact of the west: Changing dynamics of the indigenous clothing

Naga society remained confined and isolated from the mainland for centuries, their cultural traditions remaining intact. The Nagas gained exposure to the cultural traditions of the West after coming in contact with the British. The Nagas first came in contact with the British in the year 1832. The impact of the British rule and the propagation of Christianity within the state had a profound influence on the cultural traditions of the Nagas. It brought significant cultural changes within the traditional value system of the Nagas. It led to the introduction of many western values, ideas and beliefs.

The emergence of western education brought about by the British and American Christian missionaries have been an instrument of social change and have a significant role in the modernization of Naga society. It helped in the transmission of many western cultural values and thus bringing about a rise of a new consciousness among Nagas. More than fifty years ago education was inaccessible to the majority of the Nagas. Traditionally the Nagas were an agrarian society, but due to the rapid spread of education and modernization in the past few decades, people have taken up professional jobs. Western education provided them better prospects for jobs in Government services and better opportunities. Seeking better economic, educational and job opportunities, a large number of Naga Youth have moved out from their state to study and work in cities. Education has raised their chance of upward social mobility. Access to modern educational facilities had a significant impact in the Naga society. Contact with the west and the widespread education opened a world of opportunities for them.

Due to higher income levels, the standard of living of the Nagas has been greatly improved. Nagas living in the urban areas have access to consumer goods. They have well-furnished houses, own cars and have access to basic amenities.

Western-styled clothing got prominence the coming of British and American missionaries. The coming of factory produced yarn brought significant changes in Naga dress practices. Traditional home spun clothes began to be replaced by factory produced ready-made clothes. The missionaries had a lot of influence in the way the

early Naga converts dressed. The missionaries enforced clothing sanctions against traditional clothing and introduced the western styled clothing in schools. Since the beginning of the 20th century, the Christian converts and the educated Nagas began adapting the western styled clothing. The indigenous social custom of the Nagas like head-hunting and the 'feast of merit' was also abolished after conversion into Christianity.

Before coming in contact with the west, trade relations outside the state were limited. Barter was the mode of exchange between the tribes and people of the neighbouring states. There was no market to buy resources and there were no clothing stores. Cotton was cultivated in most of the villages and the Nagas made clothes out of cotton fibres and clothing was simple. Cotton fibres were spun into yarns by rolling on the thigh by the women. The clothing production system was family based. Animal skin and furs were used to make clothing and ornaments. Wearing of shoes was unknown to them and people made their shoes hollowed out from a block of wood. However, today, better road connectivity has led to the expansion of trade and exchange of goods and services between the villages and the urban areas and also between the neighbouring countries. New means of transport and communication helped in connecting people from different parts of the region. It also helped in facilitating commerce. Cotton is no longer produced due to easy availability of yarns in the market and as a result the cotton cultivation declined. At present, the Naga women still weave but the knowledge of this art form is now confined only to a handful of women.

The cultural aspects of the West, their ideas, values, beliefs, and products have diffused into the present day Naga society and as a result, the core traditions of the Naga society has been drastically transformed. Clothing and aspects of beauty have evolved over the years. The custom of wearing traditional attires and ornaments as symbols of one's social status and valour has changed over the course of history. The once revered traditional clothings are now seen to be fast replaced by the western garments. The Nagas have adopted new ways of life and new attitudes. The Nagas have also been profoundly influenced by the Western culture due to its perceived superiority. In modern Naga society, there is a dominance of western customs and values. Western-styled clothing co-exists with the traditional clothings, however,

western clothing are worn on an everyday basis and preferred over ethnic attires. Traditional attires are worn only on special occasions. At present, the sight of a person walking in the streets in full traditional attires has become a rarity except during ceremonial occasions. The younger generation is more comfortable wearing western attires than their own traditional attires. Western influence can also be seen in terms of their choices and the latest trends are followed religiously. Elements of western style are borrowed and incorporated into their own styles. Jeans is a very popular garment worn by almost everyone. It has a wider appeal and fashion staple for most people. Western ideals are more pronounced among the Nagas because of the missionary influence and also because of the growing influence of the media.

Due to the globalization of markets, there is a proliferation of both domestic and foreign products in the market and the Naga consumers are spoilt for choice. There are now a lot of choices available to them in terms of brands, styles, designs etc. There is a flow of commodities from South-east Asian and North-east Asian countries due to the geographical proximity of North-eastern states with countries like Thailand, China, Korea, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Bhutan. India's 'Look East Policy' has enabled economic cooperation with the neighbouring South-East and North-east Asian countries and this has led to the establishment of strong economic ties. Because of that, there is easy availability of consumer goods from these countries. There are clothing items, beauty products, and accessories, food items, household wares at reasonable prices from the neighbouring South-east and North-east Asian countries. There are a number of affluent households and many can afford luxury products. Many people spend a considerable amount of their income on lifestyle products. There is the relative demand for foreign manufactured garments within the state because of the higher prestige associated with it. There is a preference for foreign brands as most people perceive it to be superior, of better quality and are highly valued. Most people preferred the design aesthetics of foreign brands over Indian brands.

The Nagas are also in constant exposure to the people from other cultures. There are a lot of people from diverse cultural background, ethnicity, nationality, living together in Nagaland. There are a large number of Tibetans, Nepalese, Manipuris, Garos, Khasis, Mizos, Assamese, Bengalis, Biharis, Marwaris, South Indians, North Indian

and Bangladeshi communities living in Nagaland. A lot of people from outside the state like the Bangladeshi immigrants have set up business establishments and providing goods and services to the Nagas. The number of Nagas travelling abroad is increasing. Nagas are also getting acquainted with other cultures through foreign travel. There are a large number of Tibetan stores in Nagaland. The Tibetans are a business community who have settled in Nagaland for a long time. Goods that are sold in Tibetan stores are mainly imported from Kathmandu, Nepal. There was a free flow of Nepalese commodities in the market. People preferred buying from Tibetan stores because they sell quality products at affordable prices. The Tibetans had established a strong foothold for many decades. But at present, there is a decline in the popularity of commodities from Nepal due to growing competition within the market. The Tibetans are being forced out from the market due to the emergence of the new market economy and the flooding of Chinese and Thailand goods in the market. Goods from China and Thailand have gained increased popularity. Nowadays most of the goods like clothing, shoes, and other accessories are imported from Thailand and China.

The impact of westernization, modernization and globalisation have a profound affect among the Naga youth. They have very little knowledge about their own culture and more inclined to follow the west and this can be observed from the way they dress, attitude, mannerisms, food habits, the language they use, music etc. Since contact with the west and accelerating modernization, there has been a change in the lifestyle of the Nagas, as a result, the sets of customs and traditions shared as a community is getting lost. This has an implication in the changing lifestyle of today's youth and the structuring of their identities. With changing social environment and the path towards modernization, there has been a shift in the behaviours, attitude and value system of today's youth. The worldview of the present generation is becoming more and more global and they are more open to change. Today, Naga youth have better opportunities and they are able to realize their views and aspirations. They have more freedom to make their own choices unlike those of their parent's generations. The gap between the older and the younger generations have also widened and we find differences of opinion and values across generations because of the above mentioned factors.

Clothing and status in modern Naga society

The modern Naga society is a class based society. Economic specialization has led to class stratification among the Nagas. There is growing economic inequality among the different sections of Naga society. There is a widening gap between the 'haves' and 'have-nots'. Class divisions are widening because of their differential accessibility to wealth. Like any developing economy, individualism has taken precedence over communal ties. Power is controlled by the rich. Clothes can be seen as a perceived indicator of social status. A wealthy person can afford high-quality clothes and may dress up in expensive clothes. Expensive clothing communicates wealth and status of the person.

Money does influence the clothing choices. The purchasing power varies among persons due to disparities in income. There were observed differences in clothing due to economic inequality between the rich and the poor. Clothing is relevant to power. The rich have access to opportunities and can afford luxury brands, designer clothes but the poor, due to their low purchasing power, cannot afford better quality clothes. Attainment of wealth, power, prestige, and status has become the socially valued qualities. Now the politicians and bureaucrats occupy the highest position in the Naga society.

In present Naga society, a man's worth is measured by the amount of money he makes and the wealth accumulated. Earning large wealth is equated with success. Buying of luxury items is a means to display the wealth of the owner. Indulging oneself in expensive things increases the self-worth of the person as it communicates wealth. People flaunt their financial worth by consuming valuable goods. Display of luxury goods have become status symbols since a person who is rich and successful can afford all the comforts and luxuries of life. With the money they can dine in fine restaurants, eat good food, wear good clothes, drive in fancy cars, adorn the body in costly ornaments, and live in a good house. Perceived high-status goods serve as visual markers to distinguish between the upper class and the lower class. For example; owning a Louis Vuitton bag implies status. It is symbolic of the status of the wearer. Hermes Birkin bag is a symbol of wealth as it is mostly the rich who can afford it and the Nagas are very much aware of this. From the research carried out, it

was found that some of the wealthy shoppers had the luxury of buying high fashion brand name such as Louis Vuitton thus signifying their higher social status.

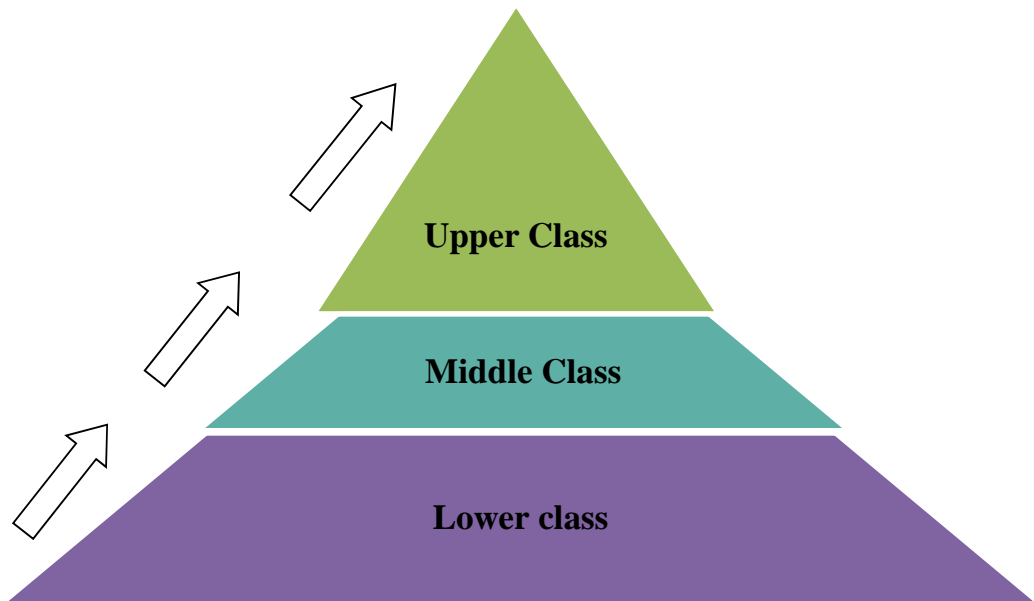


Diagram 7: Social Stratification in Modern Naga Society

Commercialization of Naga traditional clothing, arts, and crafts

Due to the expansion of market, the Naga traditional clothing, ornaments, arts and crafts are gradually evolving to cater to the growing demand in the market. Cultural contact and cultural exchanges have resulted in the creation of new cultural meanings. New motifs, new styles, new designs, patterns and colours are getting integrated into the Naga culture. A new variety of arts and artefacts are produced keeping in view the preference of the changing customers. The Naga arts and artefacts are sold commercially. The Naga artisans produce their traditional indigenous clothing, ornaments and crafts for sale in the market to both locals and the outsiders. Traditional styles are incorporated in modern wear. It was observed that many Naga fashion designers are using the traditional motifs and crafts in contemporary outfits. Some Naga youth also used their rich cultural heritage in their personal styles by mixing traditional and contemporary styles. Neckties with traditional Naga motifs and designs are also worn by men. Commercialization, no doubt, has provided Nagas with business opportunities and has improved their livelihood. But on the flip side, there are cultural consequences. The traditional attires, ornaments, various forms of

arts and crafts, the symbolic meaning associated with each and every aspect of these components which are a reflection of the cultural expression and cultural values of the Nagas have lost its significance. The traditional attires, ornaments, various other arts and crafts have also lost its distinctiveness and are turning into mere consumer goods thereby threatening the Naga culture itself.

Notes

1. The Nagas believed that the human head possessed powerful force that could influence and impact their lives in a huge way. Human skulls were preserved in the Naga villages as fertility was believed to reside in the human head. The head of the enemies was kept in a sacred place. Among the Konyak Nagas, the human skulls were fed with rice beer so as to make their spirits revisit the village and bring fertility.
2. The Sumi Nagas after bringing back the enemy's head also hang it in a tree whereas the Angamis bury it. On coming back from a successful head-hunting expedition, the Konyak warriors bring the head of the enemies in an open area in front of the *morung*. The heads are raised on a bamboo pole attached to a menhir or on a flat stone surface and let it remain there for some days. It is then shifted and the head hunting trophies are displayed outside the *morung* or the *angh's* house.
3. Among many Naga tribes, the captured heads are hung on bamboo poles. The Sumi Nagas erect bamboo poles to hang gourds to represent the number of heads taken during raids at a ceremonial site of the village. Likewise, when a warrior dies, bamboo poles hung with gourds and earthen pots are also erected to mark his warrior status. The skulls are preserved among the Nagas because it was believed that the fertility still resided in the skull and this was believed to have an influence on the prosperity of the village.
4. The Naga society has undergone rapid transformation within a very short period of time. Globalization has made the interaction between people from different places, countries possible and has lessened the distance. There is interconnectedness between the economy of a country or region with the global economy. The world has become increasingly connected and seamless.

CHAPTER-4

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BODY ADORNMENT AMONG THE NAGAS

The use of body adornment as a form of expression is found across all cultures. In Naga culture, it has a lot of significance and it serves as a visual representation of the Naga society. Each of the Naga groups has their own wide variation of personal adornments. Body adornment is used not only for decorative purpose but is used as a vocabulary and conveys important information about the social structure of the Naga society. It provides valuable insights about their economic status, the social status of the wearer, religion, age and gender roles, etc, and gives us a glimpse of past Naga cultural traditions. The attempt in this chapter, therefore, is to understand the deep symbolic meanings attached to the body adornments which are reflective of the Naga traditional values and rich cultural traditions. The study also attempts to explore the change in the attitudes and beliefs brought about by Naga conversion into new religion and modernisation and how this has an impact on their traditional values.

Ornaments

The strong aesthetic values of the Nagas is artistically represented in their ornaments which are made from a wide range of materials like carnelian beads, glass beads, conch shells, cowries, animal bones, teeth, horn, claws, beaks of birds, bird feathers, porcupines quills, tufts of cotton, wood, cane, ivory, metals, plant fibres, bark, ornamental plants, etc. In the past, both men and women adorned their bodies in colourful and elaborate ornaments. They wore extensive amount of ornaments, such as earrings, necklaces, head dresses, head fillets, girdles, bangles, bracelets, and armllets. Job's tears which are locally grown were also used in making jewellery and for ornamentation. Use of hair for ornamentation is an integral feature of Naga culture. Tassels of human hair and red-dyed goat's hair as ornament were common. The art of making beadwork, cowries sewn on clothings and ornaments were mainly done by men. Some of the ornaments were ritually cleansed and taboos and restrictions were observed before they were adorned. The decorative ornaments adorned by Naga men and women were part of their personal adornment but, more

than aesthetics, each of the Naga ornaments has its symbolic meaning signifying the social status of the wearer, their economic status, the tribe they belong to, prowess of a warrior and symbols of love. In traditional Naga society, ornaments formed as non-verbal communication which provided information about the person wearing them. The distinctions within the class could also be clearly identified from the ornaments the Naga men and women adorned. Both rich and the poor wore ornaments, but for the wealthy, ornaments were usually made using precious shells and beads. Costly ornaments were passed down as heirloom and were given to daughters during their marriage. The perceived value of a woman increased based on the expensive jewellery she brought along with her to her husband's household. It symbolised the bride belonging to an affluent family and was an indication of her high social status and as a result fetched higher bride price among certain tribes.

Ivory was considered as highly valuable among the Nagas and was used in a lot of their ornaments. It was a symbol of wealth and status. Carnelian beads are also used extensively in Naga ornaments. Multi-strand carnelian necklaces are popular among the Nagas. Raw materials for ornaments came from different places. Conch shells, cowries, carnelian beads, glass beads were not locally available. It was usually procured by trading with people from neighbouring states and countries namely Assam, Manipur, West Bengal, Myanmar and Tibet. The conch shell and cowries were used by the Nagas for making different types of ornaments and were viewed as a highly valued item and were status symbols. It was also used as a currency in the slave trade. The value of conch shell as observed by J.P Mills in his study is presented (Mills J.P 1937: 72). An old Angami table of barter runs as follows (see table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Value of Conch shells

VALUE OF SLAVES AND ANIMALS	VALUE OF CONCH SHELLS
1 male slave	1 cow and 3 conch shells
1 female slave	3 cows and 4 or 5 conch shells
1 cow	10 conch shells
1 pig	2 conch shells
1 goat	2 conch shells
1 fowl	1 packet of salt.

Ornaments worn by the Naga tribes and its significance

Ao

Feathers were a sign of status in the traditional Ao society. The tail feather of Drongo bird is held in high esteem among the Ao Nagas. The bird is greatly admired for its bravery. Acquiring the feather was difficult and thereby expensive. It was equivalent to the value of a *mithun*. It was only the head takers, feast-givers, wives and daughters of feast-givers who decorated themselves with the feathers of drongo bird and scarlet minivet which were highly valued as ear ornament. The Ao women also wear costly crystal earrings called *tongpang* which is characteristic of the tribe. The Ao Naga women chose to adorn themselves with these earrings because of its high intrinsic value. It was considered highly valuable and was an indicator of the wearer's wealth and status. According to legend, the *tongpang* is alluring and it enhances the beauty of a woman and makes her desirable for men (see fig 3).

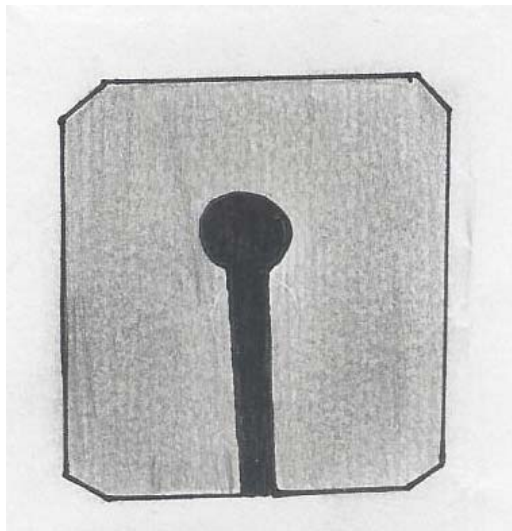


Fig 3: Crystal earrings *tongpang* worn by Ao women

Among the Ao Nagas, class and gender distinction was visible through the use of particular ornaments. It was usually the rich men who wore the conch shell necklace known as *lankummulong* and women were prohibited from wearing it. It can be passed down as heirloom from one generation to another generation. The heirloom was passed on to the male heirs as a symbol of their family's fortune and wealth. Multi-stranded conch shell necklaces were higher in prestige compared to a single string.

The boar-tusk choker was worn by most of the Naga warriors. Among the Ao Nagas, the choker symbolised their status and achievements. The boar-tusk choker is known as *shibu* in Ao dialect and is of two types. The choker with a pair of boar-tusk, one on each side joined together by a small piece of conch shells and carnelian bead in the centre is known as *ajapa*. It is common and can be worn by anyone but the choker which has two pairs or three pairs of the tusk, called *shipureb*, was worn as a status symbol and only the warriors were granted the right to wear it. The boar-tusk choker was ritually sanctified by a shaman before wearing it. Sons of rich men before attaining the age to wear the boar-tusk choker wears brass ornament around the neck. Another interesting ornament which the Ao warriors wear is the wooden breast ornament called *khaptang* in which cowries are embellished to symbolize enemy's teeth, red-dyed cane and yellow orchid stalk to signify the tongue and fringed red-dyed goat's hair symbolically representing blood flowing out from the mouth. All these metaphors symbolically represent the wearer's triumph over the enemy and succeeding in capturing the victim's life essence and thereby increasing his fertility. Thus, at the core of this cultural practice lies the Naga belief in the spirit world.

The Naga men used gauntlet covering the wrist which was used as armour to protect the hands. It was an exclusive male ornament used by men from all the Naga tribes. The use of this ornament is linked to gender distinction in Naga society as women were prohibited from wearing it. It was an expression of gender identity. The gauntlet is known as *khaup* in Ao dialect and which were used as status symbols. The Ao Nagas also wear an armlet known as *kumbang* made from different types of raw materials like metals, ivory, wood, etc.

The Ao Naga women wear a carnelian bead and trumpet shaped brass spike necklace called *mechongchangshi*. It was worn by the wife and daughter of a man who has done the feast of merit. Similar necklace is worn by the Chang and Sangtam women. The Ao Naga women also wear carnelian bead necklace called *mesemyok*. A particular necklace called *yiptiongwangkam* was specifically meant for the wives and daughters of feast givers. A ceremonial necklace known as *changtongzuk* was worn by Ao men and women. Several brass bells numbering about ten to twenty were fastened to a string. Wearing of this jewellery was a marker of one's social status. The

adornment of this necklace clearly demonstrated that the wearer belonged to a rich family or worn by a warrior and his wife.

Lotha

Drongo feathers and scarlet minivet feathers as ear adornment was worn by the Lotha men. They also wore brass earrings known as *yingpenro*. It was worn for protection against *Longkomvü*, a spirit believed to take humans to faraway places. The Lotha men wear ivory armlet known as *khekup* or *khezi* or *khoro*. Class distinctions could be recognised even from this ornament as rich people demonstrated their superiority by using *khekup* made from ivory and the poor wore an imitation made from wood.

Among the Lotha Nagas the first three warriors succeeding in spearing an enemy are entitled to decorate their gauntlets with cowries in a cross pattern on the upper part of his gauntlet. Red-dyed hair was used for ornamentation. For a warrior of distinction, longer hair was used and for a skilled hunter who has contributed in capturing and killing of a tiger, black hair was added. The Lotha warriors also wore the boar-tusk choker. A warrior of great renown wore wooden breast ornament called *rüho* symbolising the head of an enemy. It was decorated with cowries signifying enemy's teeth, red-dyed cane signifying tongue and red-dyed goat's hair signifying blood.

The Lotha women wore necklaces known as *yikphyan*, *choko*, and *tsukro* made from a variety of materials, including conch shell, carnelian beads, bone spacer and ivory which were all status symbols. The Lotha women wore an armlet known as *tivu* made from aluminium. The aluminium was melted and poured in a bamboo mould based on the desired size and shape. After the metal has solidified the bamboo was cut and removed. Brass bangles known as *sangsu rumpum* were used by the Lotha women. Among the Lothas, traditionally when a person died, he or she was made to wear a wrist band made of carnelian bead known as *kheram* to enable them to purchase water from *echüli vandamü*, the spirit guarding *echü likvü* the land of the dead.

Rengma

Among the Rengma Nagas, a person buying shell ornaments observes taboo and is strictly forbidden to venture out of the village during this time and as a protective measure even the villagers are prohibited from coming to his house. This was carried out to ensure the fertility of crops.

Gauntlets among the Rengmas were worn only by a head taker. Wooden breast ornament was also worn by the Rengma warriors who had taken heads called *arrhi hü*. The design, pattern, and colour of the ornament each carried symbolic meanings. The red colour used in dyed goat's hair was symbolic of blood, cowries symbolised the teeth of their slain enemies and cane and orchid stalk signified the mouth

The age status and marital status in traditional Rengma society could also be identified based on the adornment of the wearer. As among the Rengma Nagas, young girls display their unmarried status by wearing white ear ornament but replace it with a different ear ornament after marriage to signify their marital status. Similarly, a chain of beads connected from one lobe of ear to the other was worn by the young girls. When Rengma girls attain marriageable age they also wear an ornament called *nyeshe*. A cowry ornamented belt was entitled to be worn only by a feast-giver's wife. Rich Rengma women also wear a girdle over their *mekhala* signifying their social status.

Angami

The gauntlets of the Angami warrior were embellished with human hair which was a symbol of the wearer's status. The Angami warrior also wear cane armlet ornamented with human hair and cowries symbolising the hands of the enemies that were cut off and brought to the village. Breast ornament worn by the Angami signified that the wearer has killed an enemy. The warrior among the Angami and Chakhesang tribe wears an ear ornament of tassels of dyed goat's hair embellished with "Job's tears", beetle wings, dyed cane and boar tusk. Traditionally the young Angami men also wear ear ornament made of blue jay feathers. Beetle necklace is also worn by the Angami men. They also wear a string of necklace made from berries of *solanum khasianum*. The young unmarried Angami men put on a neck ornament made of white yarn as a symbol of token of love from their beloved.

The Angami women wear an ear ornament made from shells which was customarily worn by young girls and women. It was only taken out on the birth of her first child and bestowed as a gift to the husband to be preserved as heirloom. This custom also signified her transition to motherhood. Tassels of red-dyed goat's hair were also worn

by the Angami women. The Angami women also wear bugle shaped brass armlet and a costly ornament called *chiüdzie* covering the upper part of the body.

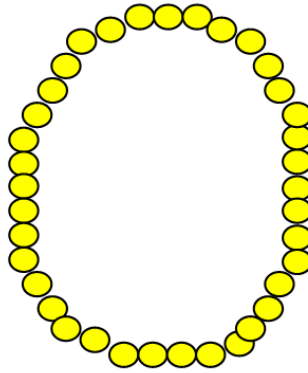


Fig 4: An Angami necklace made from berries of *Solanum khasianum*

Konyak

The Konyak men wore round ear ornament carved from a conch shell and engraved with designs of human head and human figures with red coloured tassels symbolising the warrior status of the wearer. They also wear antelope horns as ear ornaments which were status symbols. Tassel earrings were worn by the Konyak men and the women also wear huge earrings in clusters. The Konyak women from royal family as a mark of distinction wear red dyed porcupine's quills as decorative ear ornament.

Both Konyak men and women wear multi-stranded bead necklaces. The Konyak women wore necklaces of colour beads as body adornment to cover their upper part of the body. They also wear a necklace known as *ligju*. In the past *ligju* was given as a wedding gift to a daughter as a symbol of her parent's blessings. Among the Konyak Nagas, a warrior adorned a necklace with brass heads; the number of brass heads symbolised the amount of heads hunted.

The ivory armlet was worn by the Konyak Nagas as status symbols and was a sign of being capable to triumph over the biggest animal. The bracelet made from an entire conch shell and engraved with exquisite designs was worn by the Konyak women. The Konyak men wore cane belts tightly wound around their waist. The cane belt was worn to achieve a slim figure and used for the aesthetic purpose. The Konyak *anghs*

(chief) wear blue beads below the knees as a symbol of royalty and status, whereas the commoners wear a band of palm leaf fastened below their knees.

Yimchungrü, Sangtam, Chang, and Khamniungan

The Nagas have a close association with animals and express their admiration by using fur, skin, teeth, bones, antlers, etc, to decorate themselves. They believe that the wearer will be in possession of the animal like quality like fierceness, power, beauty, and intelligence. The various Naga tribes like the Yimchungrü, Sangtam, Chang, Khamniungan wear a chin strap made of tiger claws and tiger teeth necklaces exhibiting the bravery and the courage of the wearer (see fig 5 & plate 40). The characteristics which a tiger possess like strength, power, agility, ferociousness are believed to be transmitted to the wearer.

Metaphoric parallel exist between the tiger and the human. Nagas, since the time immemorial have been living amidst nature and were hunters. They relied for their subsistence on preyed animals, which was analogous to the tiger who is also an agile hunter. Comparable attributes exist between the tiger and man. Nagas in the earlier times were formidable head-hunters who were aggressive and daring, not frightened to go and ambush the enemies even if it meant losing their lives. The tiger is also one of the fiercest and the wildest of animals. They had a fantasy for the animal and its characteristics were over emphasized. Wishing for the powers such as immense strength of the animal or the dread of it might be the basis of this depiction.

The Yimchungrü warriors wore brass neck ornament denoting the number of heads taken. Similarly, among the Chang Nagas, boar-tusk choker signified that the wearer is a head-taker. Round ear ornament carved from conch shell with symbolic tattoo designs engraved on it was also worn by the rich Chang men and a head taker. The men from these tribes also wear spiral earrings. Spiked brass armlet known as *khiaptso* was worn by a Khamniungan warrior as insignia of his warrior status.

Ornaments were also used as symbols of love. According to Yimchungrü custom, a young man on attaining marriageable age looks for a bride. On finding the right person to marry, he gives her a wrist band as a gift. If the girl puts on the wrist band it is a symbol of the girl accepting the marriage proposal and consequently marriage is fixed.

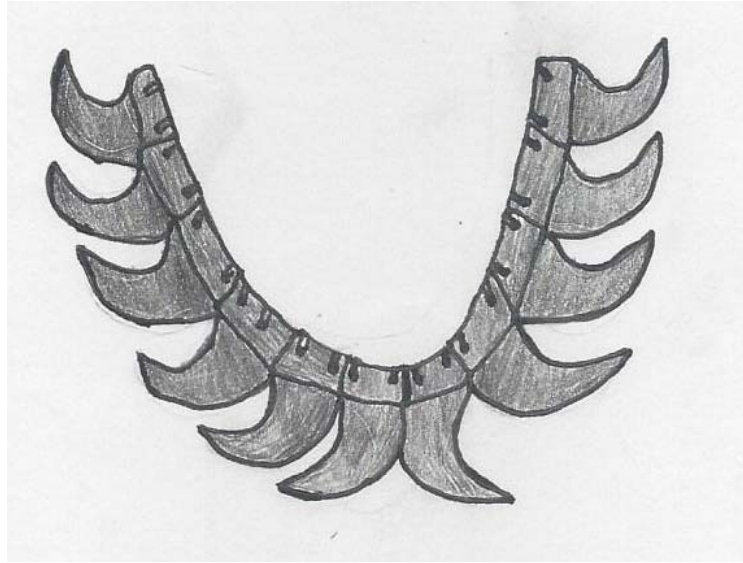


Fig 5: Chinstrap made of tiger claws worn by Naga men

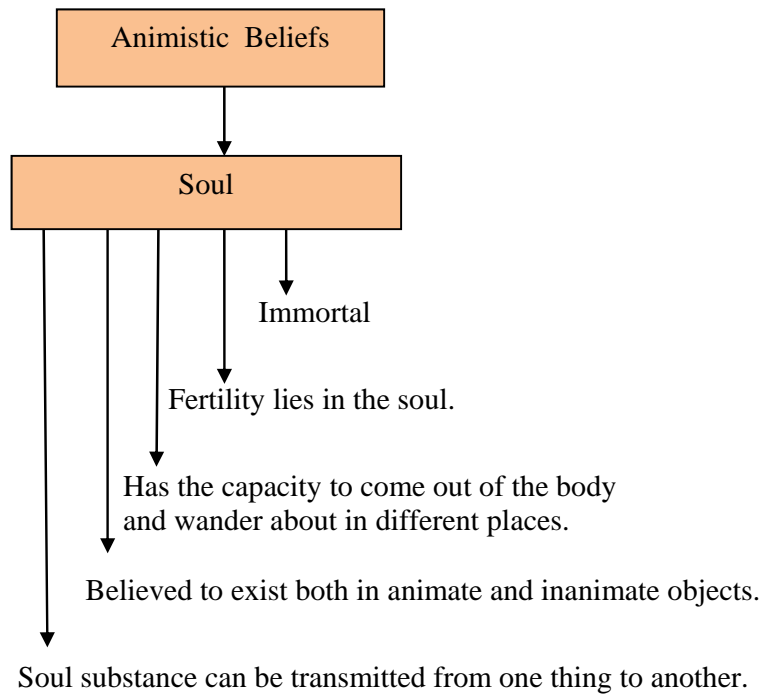


Diagram 8: The Concept of Soul in Naga Culture.

Sumi

Boar-tusk chokers called *aminihu* were worn by the Sumi warriors as symbols of prestige. These were worn only after being able to take an enemy's head or by a skilled hunter who has captured and killed leopard or tiger. Two pairs of boar-tusk choker are entitled to only warriors of great renown. The Sumi men also wear conch shell necklace called *ashoghila*.

The gauntlet ornamented with cowries was used as status symbol. The gauntlet is known as *samogha* among the Sumi. It was only those warriors who had taken heads in head-hunting acquired the right to wear this type of gauntlets. The gauntlets are made by first filing the cowries on a stone. Then rows of cowries are sewn closely on a piece of cloth. Strips of bamboo or cane are attached at both the ends and tied on the wrist with the help of a string. It was also decorated with red-dyed goat's hair.

Cowries or white bead earrings were worn by the young Sumi girls as a mark of their unmarried status. The Sumi Naga women wear a broad girdle of yellow beads over the *mekhala*. The additional number of strings of beads in her girdle symbolises her status as a rich woman. To secure the *mekhala* the Sumi women wear a belt embellished with cowries. Similar girdle made of dark blue beads known as *atsupri* are worn over the *mekhala* (wrap around) by the Pochury Naga women. The more the number of beaded strings in her girdle, the higher the prestige of the wearer as it identifies her as the wife of a feast-giver who has completed the full series.

Table 4.2: Ornaments and Symbol of unmarital status

ORNAMENTS	SYMBOL OF UNMARITAL STATUS
1. Cowries or white bead earrings	Worn by young Sumi girls.
2. Neck ornament made of white yarn	Worn by young unmarried Angami men.
3. White ear ornament	Worn by young Rengma girls.
4. Ear ornament made from shells	Worn by young Angami women.

Symbolism of hair and ornamentation

Hair is an important aspect of the human body and is an important part of someone's general appearance. Hair is taken into consideration when evaluating a person's overall appearance. There is a societal expectation for both men and women on how they should look like. In traditional Naga society, the age, gender and social status of the individual could be ascertained based on their hairstyles and hair ornaments they wore. Traditionally among some of the Naga tribes, like the Lotha, Sumi, Rengma, Ao, Sangtam, and the Chang, men kept their hair short. The hair was cut short with the aid of *dao* (machete) as hair cutting tools were not available. A block of wood was placed along the length of the hair and the *dao*'s sharp edge was used to cut the hair. The hair on the top was grown long and cut in a straight line all around the length of the hair and the hair below was tapered short. The other tribes like the Konyak and Angami men grew their hair long and tied it at the back into a knot. The host of the "feast of merit" was also entitled to adorn their hair in a certain way among the Angami Naga. The feast-giver among the Angamis was restricted not to cut his hair for thirty days after hosting the feast as this was associated with the concept of fertility.

Gender identity, age group, and marital status are also expressed through hairstyles and hair length. The custom of the Angami, the Chakhesang, the Ao, Rengma, and the Sumi tribes required the young girls to shave their heads as a symbol of their age and unmarried status and allowed to grow hair only after marriage. Growing of hair was symbolic of her marital status as it was only the married woman who kept their hair long. However, the custom differed from tribe to tribe. Short bob haircut for Zemi girls signifies her unmarried status. Among the Konyak Nagas, it was the female slaves who shaved their heads as indicative of their slave status. As per Angami tradition, an adulterous woman was also made to shave her hair as a sign of disgrace. The Lotha Nagas practiced the custom of shaving the hair of a girl child till about the age of five or six years and permitted to grow their hair only when they begin to wear their first clothing. Likewise, the boys also shaved their hair but leaving a strip of hair in the crown. According to the Lotha tradition, pregnant women were prohibited to cut their hair. Traditionally all the married Naga women tied their hair in a bun or braided their hair (*tsantsü/ otsan picho*). Among the Lotha Nagas, family members of a person dying an unnatural death were made to shave off their hair as a symbol of

penance. It was not just the deceased but the entire family was tabooed upon and their role in the society ceased, as people tried not to maintain any relation with them for some time. Passing appalling air through material objects was considered plausible so people thought they would be extremely susceptible to it if they accepted things from the sufferer's family and thus food, water, firewood, etc, that were offered were not received.

Among the Rengma Nagas, a ceremony was performed to commemorate the first hair cutting of a child. Children got their first haircut few months after birth and hold special significance. It is considered taboo to completely shave off the hair of the boys. Hair is associated with the concept of fertility. When a Rengma girl is engaged to be married, her fiancé is strictly forbidden to cut her hair. Otherwise, he will be faced with bad fortune and reduction in his crop yield and will cause a shortage of food in the household. According to the Rengma custom, after performing the feast of merit, the host along with the male members of the household are forbidden from cutting their hair until the *Ngada* festival or after harvest. This custom is associated with fertility as it is believed that violation of the norm will result in the depletion of the food stock.

(A diagrammatic representation of symbolism of hair is shown in the next page).

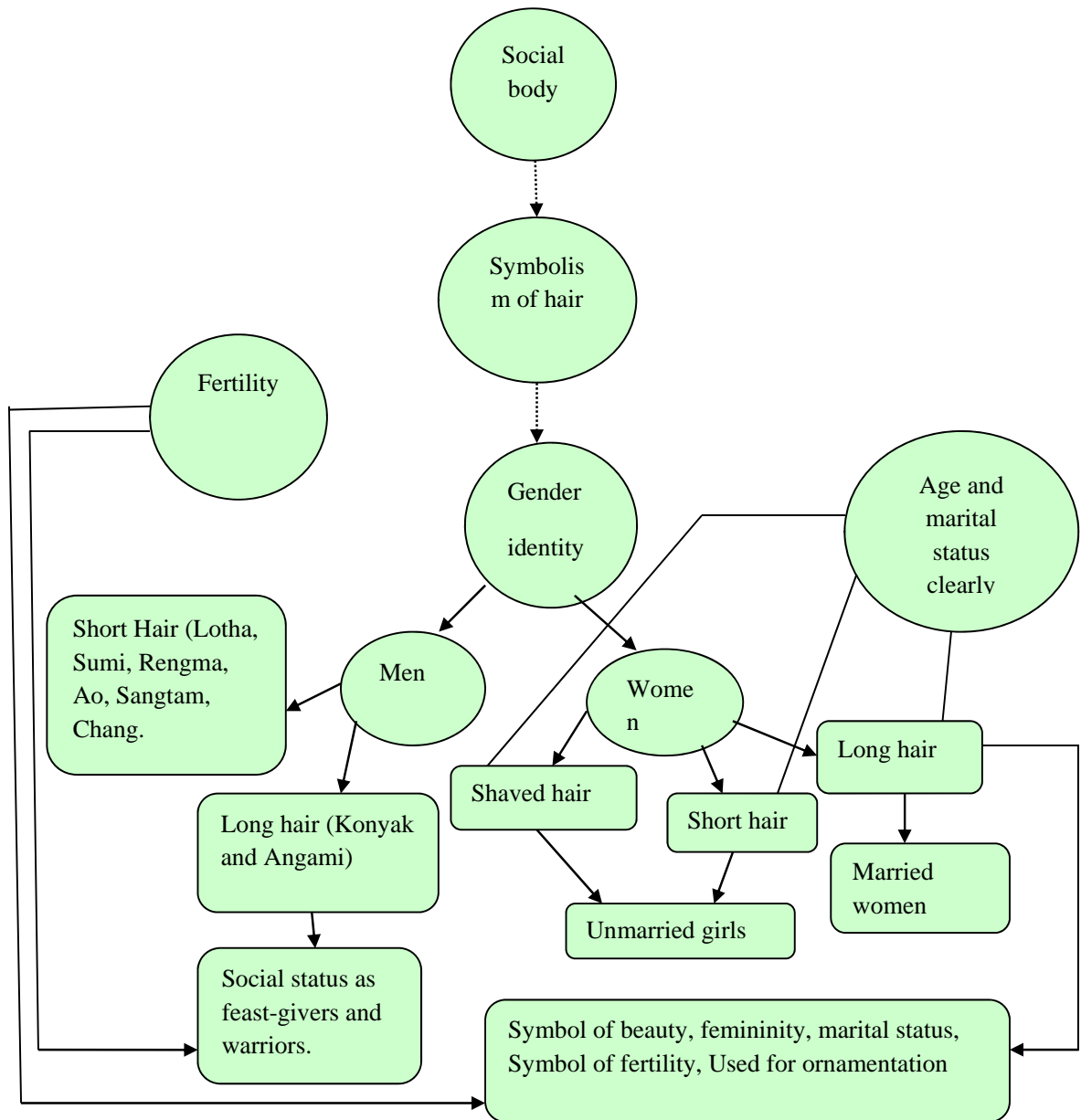


Diagram 9: Symbolism of Hair

The Nagas beautified themselves by using various types of hair ornaments. Not only that, the kind of hair ornaments used also sent out signals about their social group, social status, marital status, and the prowess of a warrior. Both men and women decorate their hair with ornaments. The Ao Naga women adorned their hair with hair accessories which had social connotations. The Ao Nagas are divided into two distinct groups the *Mongsen* and the *Chungli*. The social group identification of the woman whether she belonged to *Mongsen* or *Chungli* group could be ascertained from the hair adornment she wore. The Ao *Mongsen* women secure their hair bun in a white

hair adornment made from white cotton yarn known as *lemlangvi*, whereas the *Chungli* women secure their bun in black hair adornment made from plied fallen hair known as *kübok*. Likewise, the Angami women wear hair adornment made from fallen hair for securing hair bun known as *tsütshü*. The Ao Naga women wear a pair of spirally coiled brass hair ornament called *yongmen*. It is engraved with beautiful designs and the ornament is worn on both the upper lobe of the ears and is held in place by a band over the head. It was worn by all the Ao Naga women regardless of their social status. Wearing of this ornament was a symbolic way of demonstrating the girl attaining marriageable age. Similar brass hair ornament is also worn by the Zeliang women and the Chakhesang women.

The Sumi Naga women wear an intricately designed hair fillet called *aghu-u* interwoven from red cane and yellow orchid stalk and decorated with tufts of red dyed goat's hair. Traditionally wearing of the head fillet by a girl was a symbol of betrothal and was also worn by Sumi bride on their wedding day. The similar head fillet is worn by the Sangtam Naga women which are a symbol of betrothal. The Phom women also wear similar head fillet. They also wear fillet around their head made from brass. It was used as decoration by the wives of warriors of great distinction and commonly associated with high social status.

The Konyak men wear wooden hair pin to tie their long hair in a knot. The hair pin was ornamented at both ends with tassel of dyed goat's hair or in some decorated with miniature human heads depicting the number of human heads taken displaying the wearer's prowess. The hair pin was used only by the warriors and wealthy men and was indicative of their status.

In the olden times, the Nagas washed their hair by using beans as shampoo. The kernel of the beans was crushed and applied for cleaning hair. For keeping the hair in place, indigenous combs made from bamboo were used by the Nagas. The Konyak Nagas used jackfruit brush. Before soaps became available, bark, root, and berries of some plants were used for cleaning themselves and washing clothes. Washing hair with soaps and shampoos began only after coming in contact with modernisation. In contemporary Naga society, people spend a considerable amount of money on hair with a wide range of beauty and hair styling products.

Table 4.3: Hair ornaments and its Symbolic meanings

HAIR ORNAMENTS	SYMBOLIC MEANINGS
1. Hair adornment made from white cotton yarn.	Worn by Ao Mongsen women, symbol of social group identification.
2. Black Hair adornment made from plied fallen hair.	Worn by Chungli Ao women, symbol of social group identification.
3. Brass Hair ornament.	Symbol of girl attaining marriageable age.
4. Head Fillet.	Symbol of betrothal (Sumi Nagas).
5. Head Fillet.	Symbol of high social status worn by wives of warriors of great distinction (Phom Nagas).
6. Hair Pin.	Symbolic of high social status and worn by warriors and wealthy man.

Table 4.4: Body adornment and symbol of unmarital status

BODY ADORNMENT	SYMBOL OF MARITAL STATUS
1. Lorosü	Shawl worn by a Lotha bride.
2. Silang Nei	Clothing worn by Chang couple to demonstrate their marital status.
3. Engagement and wedding ring	Symbol of betrothal and marital status.
4. Long Hair	Symbolic of marital status.

Changing trends

Hairstyling among men and women have also evolved over the years. In today's society, men with short hair and clean-shaven faces are deemed more attractive. Long hair in women is perceived to be a feminine quality which most men preferred over short hair. Nevertheless, Naga men and women now wear a variety of hairstyles and there is no custom associated with it as was in the past. The younger generation experiments with a lot of different hairstyles and recreate and get their hair done in numerous ways. The younger generation was found to be getting a hair cut according

to the latest trends and stylistic preferences. Many felt that good hairstyle adds to an individual's personality and makes a person look more stylish. Straight hair is considered more attractive than curly hair and the research suggested that many women go to beauty parlours to get their hair straightened and to get perfectly groomed eyebrows. Most young people were found to be dyeing their hair in different colours.

The length of the hair and hair styling also had an influence on the way people made judgements about the behaviour of the person and the way they were perceived. In ancient Naga society, the Angami and the Konyak men kept their hair long which they tied it into a knot and decorated it with feathers and more elaborate ornaments. However, these beliefs have changed and in present Naga society, men with long hair are viewed negatively. There are cultural distinctions between men and women. The societal norm enforces men to have short hair and women to have long hair as it is often associated with masculinity and femininity. As it has become the norm all over the world for men to cut their hair short, the perceptions of beauty among the Nagas are also getting standardised. The majority of the men in Nagaland have short hair but there are also men with long hair. Long hair in men is seen as a sign of deviant behaviour and rebellious nature. A man with long hair is seen as defying the societal gender norms and therefore a sign of rebellion. Similarly, most men do not like very short hairstyles for women. Some respondents talked about how either their spouse or parents did not allow them to cut their hair as long hair is associated with retaining one's femininity. The study shows how the concept of hairstyling and beauty has evolved with time. The different types of traditional hairstyles and ornaments which were perceived indicators of one's social status, age and gender have become a thing of the past and how the values, beliefs of contemporary Naga society is getting assimilated with the western ideals. In today's society, hairstyling among the Naga youth is an expression of their personal identity and influenced by the trends of current times and not by cultural practices.

Symbolism of head dress

In the past, Nagas used very elaborate head dress to decorate themselves which were symbols of status and power. The head dresses had ritual and cultural significance and worn by Naga men and women on ceremonial occasions. The head dress of each of

the Naga tribes varies in terms of size, shapes and designs. Head dress of most of the Nagas are adorned with hornbill feathers; a bird revered by the Nagas and a symbol of beauty and valour. The hornbills were hunted for their tail feathers which were deemed to be expensive. One tail feather of the hornbill was treated as equivalent to the price of a *mithun* head. It was worn only by those who had earned a respectable position in the society and not by everyone. The feathers are added to the head dress only after following strict rituals prescribed by the community. The expertise of the warrior, his courage, status in the society was symbolised by the number of hornbill feathers. The number of hornbill feathers in the head dress increased with the number of heads taken; a symbol of their achievement. Hornbill feathers were allowed to be adorned to a feast-giver among some Naga tribes as symbol of his power and status. The head dress of the Ao Nagas is known as *temkhu*. The wife and daughter of the feast-giver were also entitled to wear the hornbill feather. The number of hornbill feathers signified the number of *mithun* sacrificed by her husband or father during the ceremonial feast. The hornbill feathers represented the accomplishments of the warrior and of rich men who had performed the feast of merit. *Mithun* horn was also traditionally used as adornment in head dresses among some Naga tribes as a symbol of wealth and prosperity.

As delineated above, hornbill is a bird revered by the Nagas. To express their admiration for the great hornbill a colourful warrior dance referring to the beauty of the hornbill is performed by the Zeliang Nagas. The dance is an imitation of the hornbill bird. Legend has it that, the graceful elegant flight of the hornbill bird inspired the community to create the beautiful movement of the bird in their dance. A folk song called *tükhriü-thürro lizzo* is sung by the Chakhesang Nagas. It is a song expressing high regard for the great hornbill. It talks about its graceful flight and striking beauty. The song further says it is only the valiants who are entitled to adorn themselves with its beautiful feather and not by ordinary men who are unbecoming to decorate with its spectacular feathers.

The head dress of the Ao Nagas is often elaborately decorated with long red dyed goat's hair and boar tusk to add to its grandeur. The red colour is symbolically associated with blood. The head dress is worn during festivals and ceremonies. Ritual purity and taboos were observed when making such head dresses. Deviations from the

norms were considered a bad omen and likely to bring misfortune or will give rise to colour fading from the head dress.

Among the Lotha Nagas head dress is known as *donkho* which was worn only by men. The front part of it was made with the fur of a bear which was secured by tying cotton thread or a piece of cloth at the back. The upper portion was adorned with hornbill feathers symbolising the number of heads taken. After a head-hunting expedition, a Lotha warrior if successful in beheading an enemy observed *rhamvii* (head-hunting ceremony) and gave away feast to the entire village and only then he attached the hornbill feather to his headgear as a symbol of his expertise, and great courage, and gained for himself a respectable position in the society. A Lotha warrior on succeeding to take an enemy's head for the first time added three crow feathers to his head dress. A warrior earned the right to wear the hornbill feather only after the second head-hunting ceremony. Among the Rengma Nagas, head dress made of bear's fur was worn only by a head taker.

The Konyak, Khiamniungan, Yimchungrü, Sangtam, Phom, Chang, and Pochury men wear head dresses made of woven cane and decorated with boar-tusk on each side of the coronet, bear fur, red-dyed goat's hair and hornbill feathers which are the symbol of a head taker. The Konyak head dress is in the shape of the roof of the *angh's* house and the design resembles the pattern of the bamboo wall. Among the Konyak Nagas the daughter of the *angh* enjoyed special status and had the privilege of adorning her head dress with hornbill feathers.

The Angami men wear an enormous elaborately decorated head dress of hornbill feathers called *tsüla* on ceremonial occasions. Strips of bamboo forms the structure of the head dress and decorated with tufts of cotton and hornbill feathers. The Angami men also adorn their hair with eagle's feathers. A warrior of note who has earned a respectable position in the Angami society adorns his head dress with buffalo horns and decorated with tassels of hair and dyed cane. This was not worn by everyone but had to be earned by undertaking acts of courage and bravery.

Symbolism of traditional Naga weapons

The weapons used by the Nagas include Naga spear, *daos*, cross-bow, arrow, quiver and shields. The Nagas made shields from animal hides like elephant, bear, *mithun*,

buffalo, seasoned bamboo and cane. Some of the Naga tribes like the Konyak also made fire arms like the muzzle loading guns which were used during warfare. The weapons used in head-hunting were ritually sanctified after head hunting expedition. Sharpened bamboo sticks known as *panji* were used by the Nagas which were laid on the enemy's path to cause an injury and defend themselves against an enemy. The Naga spear was used both as a hunting, and defensive weapon in head-hunting and ceremonial purpose. It consists of a wooden shaft and a pointed tip on both sides usually made of iron. The Nagas used variety of spears namely ceremonial spear, wealthy man's spear, hunting spear and multipurpose spear. The shaft of the ceremonial spears was often elaborately decorated with human hair, red-dyed goat's hair and engraved with beautiful designs than the other spear, to display the status and power of the possessor. The type of weapons carried also sent strong signals about the status and martial achievements of the person. Among the Angami Nagas, a warrior of great distinction carried spear decorated with tassels of long human hair but for a warrior of less renown, mixed pattern of red, black and white hair was used. Among the Rengma Nagas three-headed spear represents the head takers or a person succeeding in killing a tiger.

The scabbard, quiver, Naga casket worn around the hips, and shields were embellished with tassels of women's long tassels of human hair, red-dyed goat's hair hanging down as tail and decorated with various carvings like carved human head, human figures, animal figures and designs to enhance its beauty. It also symbolised the valour and status of the wearer in the society. Women's head were beheaded to use the hair for ornamentation. However, the hair of women killed by natural disasters was not used as it was considered a taboo.

The Naga men wear woven cane shin guard over the calf in between the knees and the ankles. It is woven with fine strips of cane dyed in red and white and decorated with different designs and patterns from the yellow orchid stalk. The Angamis call it *phipha* and the Aos call it *jangta*, and the Lothas call it *jori*. The Naga tribes like Khamniungan, Sangtam, Phom, Yimchungrü, and Chang wear shin guard made out from bear's skin.

Dao is a single edged machete. It is an all purpose weapon used by the Nagas for hunting, agriculture, meat cutting, wood cutting, head-hunting, etc. Similarly, *daos*

are also of various types, like ceremonial *dao*, common *dao*, *dao* used during warfare, and multipurpose *dao*. It consists of an iron blade and a wooden shaft. A ceremonial *dao* carried by Ao women in festivals and ceremonies implies her social position as affiliated to an affluent family that has performed the feast of merit. Among the Chang Nagas, the *dao* and sash were ornamented with red-dyed dog's hair which signified fire set on an enemy's village. Among the Angami Nagas, the spouse of a feast-giver was entitled to carry a symbolic ornamental iron staff.

Spear is known as *otssso* among the Lotha Nagas. Different types of *otssso* were used to different purposes namely *tanriio*, *jovemo*, *tssopelak* and *rifudung*. The head taker's spear was decorated with red-dyed goat's hair, the red colour indicating blood and for a person succeeding in killing a tiger, black colour was added which is associated with strength and courage. The shields used by the Lotha Nagas are known as *otsong* made out of animal hide. It was a type of defensive armour used during head-hunting. The shield was decorated with a symbolic representation of *Sukhingo Potsow's* blessing and protection upon them. *Sukhingo Potsow* is considered as the God of forests and animals. Red and white coloured feathers are attached to the upper part of the shield known as *tsongphen*. Among the Lotha Nagas scabbard known as *lejup* was used to hold the *dao*. It was worn at the back and tied around the waist by woven belt in either dark blue or white but for a warrior of note it was woven in red signifying his status. The ceremonial *lejup* were engraved with beautiful designs to enhance its appearance. But for weapons that were often used more emphasis was given on the functionality rather than its aesthetic value.

The Lotha warrior when going for head-hunting carried their arrows in a quiver made of cane known as *tssikyip*. It was fastened to the *lejup* (scabbard) suspended from the belt. The *tssikyip* was embellished with women's hair to make it more attractive and also signified the status of the owner. The head of the enemies taken in head-hunting was hung in a case known as *tsungkhu*, worn around the waist.

The Konyak Nagas carried the head of the enemies in a special traditional warrior's victory basket adorned with monkey skulls, tusks of a wild boar, and hornbill feathers worn around the hips. The warrior's basket symbolised that the person has taken an enemy's head in warfare. Similarly, the Phom warriors also carry baskets adorned with painted monkey skulls. Monkey skulls signified the head of the enemies. Among

the Ao Nagas, the ceremonial basket of the warriors and ‘feast givers’ were often ornamented to symbolise the tail of *mithun* which signified wealth. The Konyak Nagas are considered as the most skilled in the craft of blacksmith among the Nagas. They produced attractive brass human figurines, guns, *daos*, weapons, utility objects, and ornaments using tools like bellows, stone hammer, and anvil.

Changing meaning and symbols

As discussed in the previous chapter, a person in Naga society achieved higher status through the practice of head-hunting and feast of merit. The person’s social status was displayed through the use of special ornaments, weapons, arts, and crafts. As the Nagas converted to Christianity, the practice of head-hunting and the “feast of merit” were discarded and, as a result, the symbol, meaning and values attached to each of these have changed overtime. It gradually lost its cultural importance. Body adornment as cultural symbols which were used to express and communicate various aspects of Naga culture has lost its significance. At present, it can be worn by anyone on ceremonial occasions and does not require a person to possess specific skills or acquired on the basis of merit as was in the past. In contemporary Naga society wearing of gold jewellery carries more significant meaning. Despite the fact that symbols have undergone a change nonetheless the function remains the same i.e as status symbols. The use of gold as ornaments among the Nagas is recent. There is growth in the demand of gold ornaments and it is a form of body adornment worn by people for its aesthetic appeal as well as because of its high perceived value. Gifting and exchanging of gold finger rings as part of the marriage ritual between the bride and the groom is practiced. Along with the symbolism attached to wearing engagement and wedding rings, it has also become a status symbol. Adoption of new cultural values has its impact on the Naga society and this has resulted in the loss of core cultural beliefs and tradition.

Body piercings

Traditionally Naga men and women pierced their ears and wore earrings which are reflective of their cultural values. Piercing of ears was about social acceptance and signs of belonging to a community. It was a socially accepted standard of beauty. Piercing of ears was a sign of manhood among the Naga men. Among Yimchungrü

Nagas, piercing of ears among young boys marked the transition from boyhood to manhood. In the past, when the victorious warriors brought back the head of the enemies in the village, the young boys were allowed to symbolically cut the head of the enemies before the heads were hung on a post. It was a way of training the young boys the art of head-hunting and letting them experience the heroic deeds of a warrior. Subsequently, young boys who have taken part in the act must get their ears pierced signifying the transition from boyhood to a warrior. The Yimchungrü Nagas also pierced the ears of the young ones to ensure obedience to the parents and elders. Even among the Chang Nagas, boys of the community pierced the helix (upper ear lobe) only after accompanying the head-hunters in a raid. Among the Rengma Nagas, the babies get their first hair cut only after their ears were pierced. Ear piercing among the Rengma Nagas was significant as it was a means to establish a mark of their group identity. In order to gain social acceptance as a full fledged member of the community, it was considered essential for babies to cut their hair and get their ear pierced. Doing this transmitted social messages about the child being a member of the social group. They also believed that their dead relatives in the “Land of the Dead” would identify them based on their piercings. According to the Rengma custom, ancestors were worshipped and great reverence was shown and this was believed to have an influence on the fate of the living. It was believed that a child born with a pit in the helix was fortunate as it was a sign of the ancestor’s favour upon the child. Among the Lotha Nagas, ear piercing of a boy and a girl child was done during *mvüchok* or naming ceremony. The ear was pierced with a sharp bamboo needle and cotton was plugged in.

In modern Naga society, the cultural values and beliefs associated with piercings have changed over time. The impact of Christianity, spread of education and modernisation are some of the factors which have led to change in their religious beliefs and practices. In present society, an earring worn by a man is restricted and not socially acceptable. Body piercings are often associated with ‘deviant behaviour’. Body piercings is an individual choice but it was found that most of the older generation are repelled by body piercings. Most parents expressed their disapproval and forbid their children from piercing. Piercings are perceived as showing disobedience and violating the norms. It is perceived as an indicative of risky behaviour.

However, with the growing popularity of body piercings in the West, and rock stars, musicians, celebrities embracing the look, body piercings have become popular among the younger generation. The practice of piercing nose, eyebrow, lips, nipple, naval, tongue among the youth is recent and not practiced in the traditional Naga society. Piercings among the youth are done for various reasons, as a means of self expressions, increase in aesthetic appeal. Among the younger generation males, it is not uncommon to see their bodies adorned in jewellery. Wearing of earrings, necklaces, rings, wristbands, is a popular trend among the young males. Expressing individuality was one of the common reasons for piercing. Today's youth are doing it as a fashion statement popularised by the western culture and not influenced by cultural practices.

Table 4.5: Human Body and Symbolic Meanings

PARTS OF HUMAN BODY	SYMBOLIC MEANINGS
Head	The 'soul substance' is believed to reside in the human head and therefore higher symbolic value is attached to it.
Hair	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shaved heads or short hair among young girls in traditional Naga society was a symbol of their age group and unmarried status. 2. Long hair in women was symbolic of their married status. 3. Konyak men and Angami men also kept their hair long and it was a symbol of fertility.
Ears	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Piercing of ears among young Yimchungrü boys marked the transition from boyhood to manhood. 2. Among the Rengma Nagas ear piercing symbolized establishment of group identity. It was also believed that their dead relatives in the 'Land of the Dead' would identify them based on their piercings.
Teeth	Symbolized teeth of their slain enemies in many arts and crafts.
Breast/ Phallus	Symbols of fertility.

Table 4.6: Symbols of Masculinity and Femininity

CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS	SYMBOLS OF MASCULINITY/FEMININITY
Head-Hunting	Symbol of masculinity
Feast of Merit	Symbol of masculinity
Tattooing	Symbol of masculinity and femininity
Ear piercing	Symbol of masculinity and femininity
Weaving	Symbol of femininity
Long Hair	Symbol of femininity
Tongpang (ear ornament)	Symbol of femininity

Tattooing

Adorning the bodies in tattoo for decorative reasons is popular across cultures. Tattoo as a body art have significance in some cultures and among some tribal communities tattoo have deeper cultural meanings attached to it. Some tattoo designs are symbolic and serve as a marker of their identity. Among the Nagas, tattooing on the face and body was practiced as a form of body adornment and was also associated with head-hunting. Tattooing was practiced by certain Naga tribes like Konyak, Ao, Phom, Yimchungrü, Chang, Sangtam, and Khiamniungan prior to Christianity. Tattoos were adorned by both men and women among the Sangtam, Yimchungru, Phom, Konyak, Chang, and Khiamnuingan tribes. The other Naga tribes like the Lotha, Sumi, Angami, Chakhesang do not tattoo their bodies. Tattoos have a lot of cultural significance and were used as cultural and status symbols. Tattoos also marked the transition of a boy into a warrior among certain Naga tribes. Tattoos were regarded as symbols of masculinity, valour, status, and also signified different life stages and fertility.

The status and power of the individual and the prowess of a warrior could be identified from the tattoos he adorned. Among the Konyak Nagas the tattoos of the warriors were signs of their achievements. Facial tattoos were symbolic of the warrior's status and it was only the person who managed to take an enemy's head was entitled to inscribe his face in tattoos. It indicated his status as a warrior. Each of the

tattoos had specific meanings and significance. Tattoos on the chest were adorned by the best and the fiercest warriors who excelled in head-hunting. It is symbolic of their accomplishments and worn as a badge of honour and indicative of their social privilege. With every successful achievement of the warrior in a head hunt, he added a tattoo to his body as a mark of his remarkable accomplishment. In the past, men who did not have tattoos were derided by the women as not man enough. Women preferred a man who displayed their masculinity through head hunting. Being a skilled head hunter increased his marriage prospect and hence a man usually went out for head-hunting before marriage. In certain tribes, tattoo patterns on a girl's body signified that she had attained marriageable age. The Konyak women also got various tattoos on their arms and legs signifying their different life stages. A woman got her legs tattooed when she was about to get married and also as part of body adornment. Tattooing at the back of the knee was a mark of a married woman among the Konyak Nagas. Tattooing among the Konyak Nagas was performed only by the wife of the *angh* (chief). To create permanent markings on the skin, an adze like instrument was used by the Nagas. Sharpened needles made from a bundle of thorns were used for pricking the skin.

Among the Ao Naga women, they adorned their bodies with tattoos to signify the coming of age. It was only the women who tattooed their bodies. Tattooing marked the transition from childhood to adulthood and was a symbol of a girl attaining marriageable age. The tattoos were inscribed on the body by a particular elderly woman which was a hereditary position. The ritual was performed in the forest and men were forbidden. Tattooing was usually done during winter months to speed up the healing process. When a girl experiences excruciating pain when tattooing, then a fowl is ritually sacrificed as an offering to propitiate malevolent spirits causing the discomfort. After getting a tattoo the girls observe food restrictions till the wound is healed. Tattooing is considered as rites-de-passage for the Ao women. It is a symbolic behaviour of initiating a young girl into womanhood. Tattoo designs and pattern adorned by the *Mongsen* and *Chungli* groups were different. Traditionally tattooing was done over a period of five years and began at the age of ten or eleven. In the first year, the legs were tattooed which was followed by tattoos on the chin, chest, and shoulders in the second year. During the third year, the girl received tattoos on her calves. Tattooing of the knees was done in the fourth year and lastly tattooing of the

wrists and stomach in the fifth year. Tattooing was a sign of womanhood and believed to increase the feminine beauty. When a girl gets her first tattoo she gains societal recognition and establishes her social group membership. Subsequently, after that, she is permitted to pierce her ears to adorn herself in the spirally coiled brass hair ornament called *yongmen*. In addition to that, she was allowed to grow her hair long which was all signs to signify the girl reaching marriageable age. In the past, it was perceived important for a woman to get a tattoo as it was seen as a sign of marriage eligibility.

Tattooing among Ao women is examined using Arnold Van Gennep’s concept of “Rites de Passage. A diagrammatic representation of the life stages of Ao women is presented below.

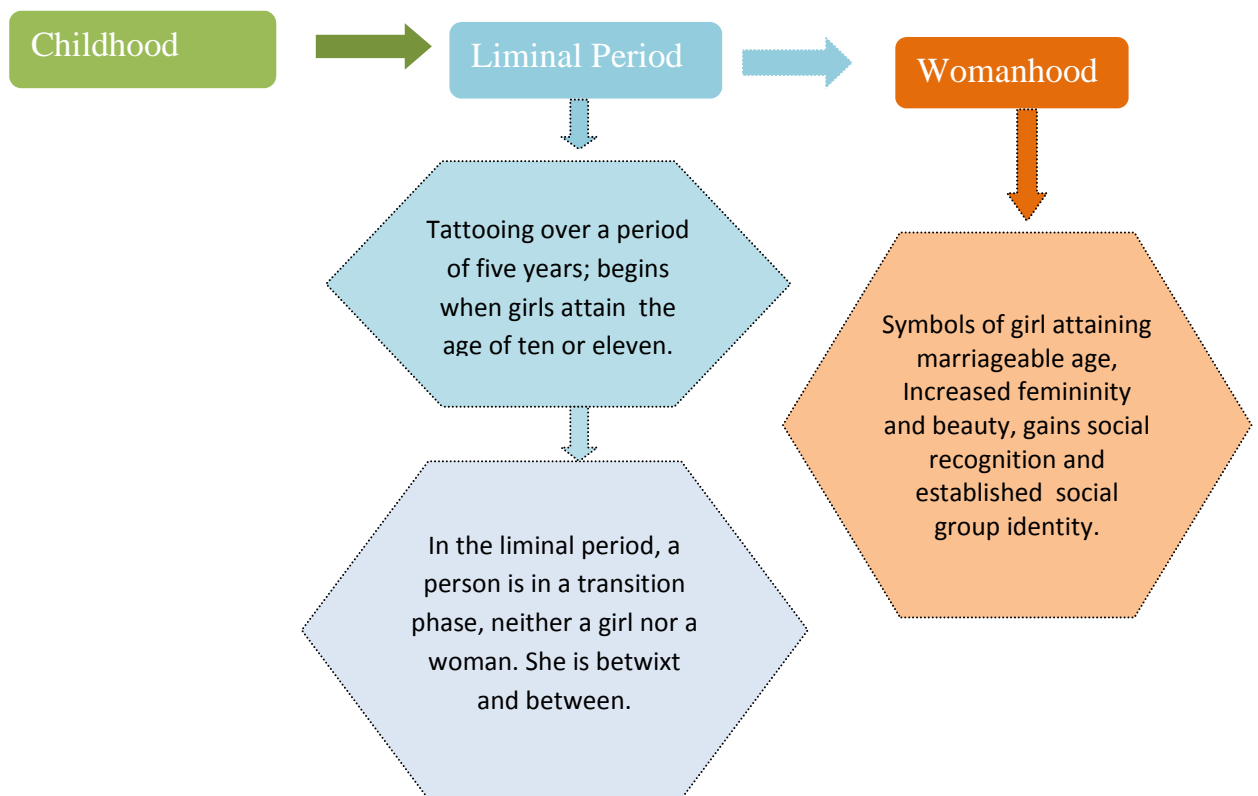


Diagram 10: Representation of different life stages (Tattooing among Ao women).

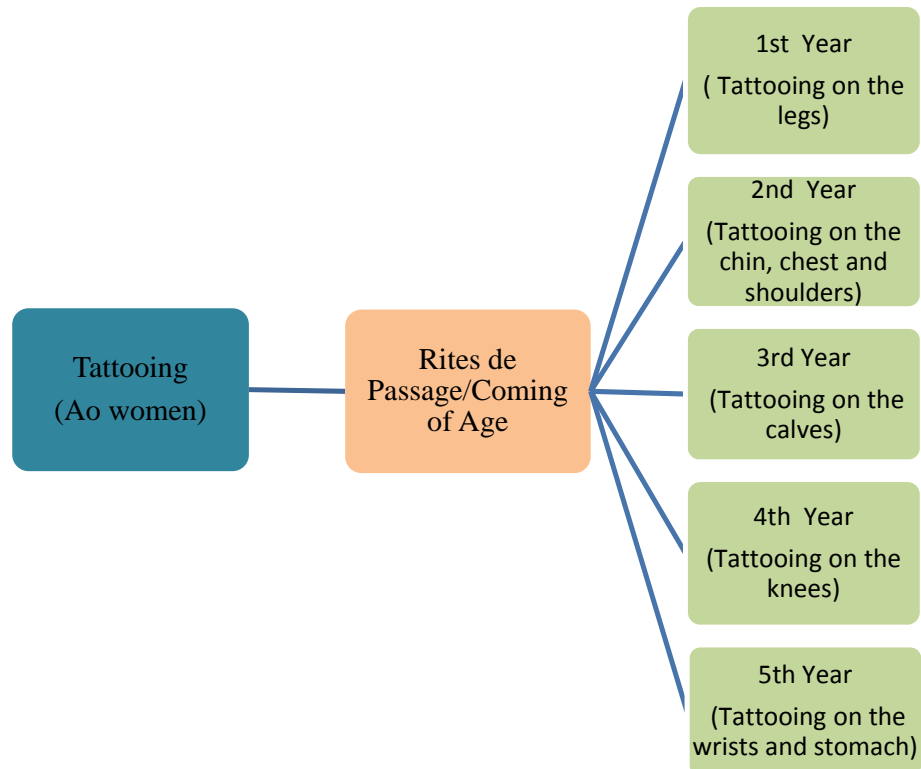


Diagram 11: Stages indicative of Rites de Passage

Tattoos inscribed on the body among the Nagas are laden with different meanings and functions. Some of the Naga tribes got their bodies tattooed to protect themselves from the evil eye. The Chang Naga women tattooed their forehead as a shield to protect themselves from being attacked by tigers. It was believed that the tattoos have protective power and was inscribed to repel the tigers and leave them unharmed. The Chang Nagas also tattooed their bodies for clan distinction. Each of the clan members could be identified based on their specific clan markings. The Sangtam women also tattooed their chin, forehead, arms, and calves. The Chang Naga men after bringing back the head of the enemy adorned their bodies in ‘V’ shaped tattoo on the chest as a symbol for their acts of valour and heroism. The Khamniungan, Yimchungrü, Phom men and certain clans of the Chang tribe adorn their bodies in chest tattoos symbolising ferocity, strength, and power of the tiger. These tattoos were referred to as ‘tiger chest’ and believed that the wearer acquires the attributes of the spirit of the tiger when slaying an enemy. Outline of human figures was inscribed on the body only by the warriors of distinction who succeeded in bringing more number of

enemy's heads. Tribes like the Yimchungrü Nagas believed that tattoos will come to aid in the 'afterlife'.

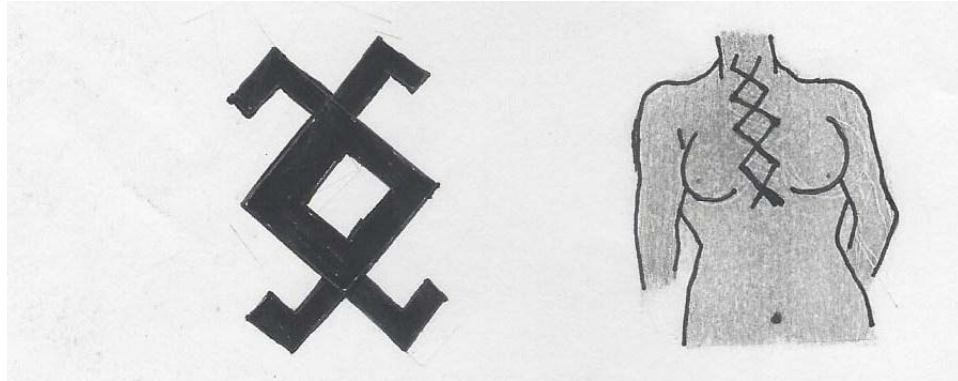


Fig 6: Forehead tattoo of Chang women

Fig 7: Chest tattoos of Ao Naga women

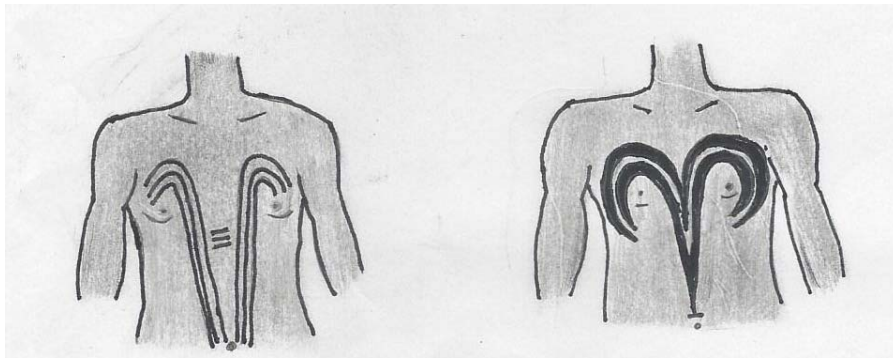


Fig 8: Chest tattoos of the Naga warrior

The traditional art of Naga tattooing was mostly connected with head-hunting culture and was an expression of their beliefs. However, this form of indigenous art has become extinct as the practice has been discarded with the coming of Christianity. The spread of Christianity brought changes in traditional beliefs and practices and began to be replaced by new Christian doctrines and principles. In present Naga context, the practice of tattooing is in opposition to Christian values. Tattooing began to be viewed as a taboo and often associated with part of the pagan culture among the older generation and was prohibited. The Nagas to show their allegiance towards the new religion discarded the practice of tattooing.

Tattooing is still practiced by the younger generation but has an altogether different meaning and not in tune with traditional cultural practice. In today's modern Naga

society the art of tattooing has been revived among the Naga youth and gaining wider acceptance because of the influence of mainstream culture. Inscribing the body in tattoos has become trendy and fashionable among the youth. The media significantly has a greater influence behind the popularity of tattoos. The increasing popularity of tattoos in the western cultures has significantly influenced the outlook of the younger generation and have gained general acceptance. There is a large number of Naga youth who adorned their bodies in tattoos. Influence of popular culture on the youth is one of the reasons why they get tattoos. The younger generation gets tattoos to make a fashion statement and look cool. Tattoos are adorned by some as an expression of their individual identity and style. The trend of getting tattoos is not just confined to men but many young girls were also found to adorn their bodies in tattoos. The tattoos that are adorned by the younger generation these days are not indigenous designs and style but more in tune with contemporary western culture. There are a few tattoo parlours in Nagaland. Becoming tattoo artists has become a career choice for some young Nagas. The research finding also suggests that efforts are being made by young Naga artists to revive the traditions of indigenous tattoo art to ensure that the tattooing traditions of the Nagas are not lost.

Based on the research it was found that there seems to be a conflict between the young and the old. Despite the resurgence in the popularity of tattoos among the younger generation, tattoos still have negative connotations and are considered as taboo among the older generation. Tattoos are not totally socially acceptable. Among the older generation, people getting tattoos are still viewed as violating the socio-cultural norms and socially deviant behaviour and against the Christian doctrine. Most parents strongly discourage their kids from getting tattoos as it is considered a sign of rebellion. Some respondents said that they did not seek permission from their parents when they decided to get tattoos for the fear of being denied the permission. Some said they were scolded by their parents after they got their tattoos.

Diagram 12 :Representation of Traditional and Modern tattooing and its associated values and beliefs.

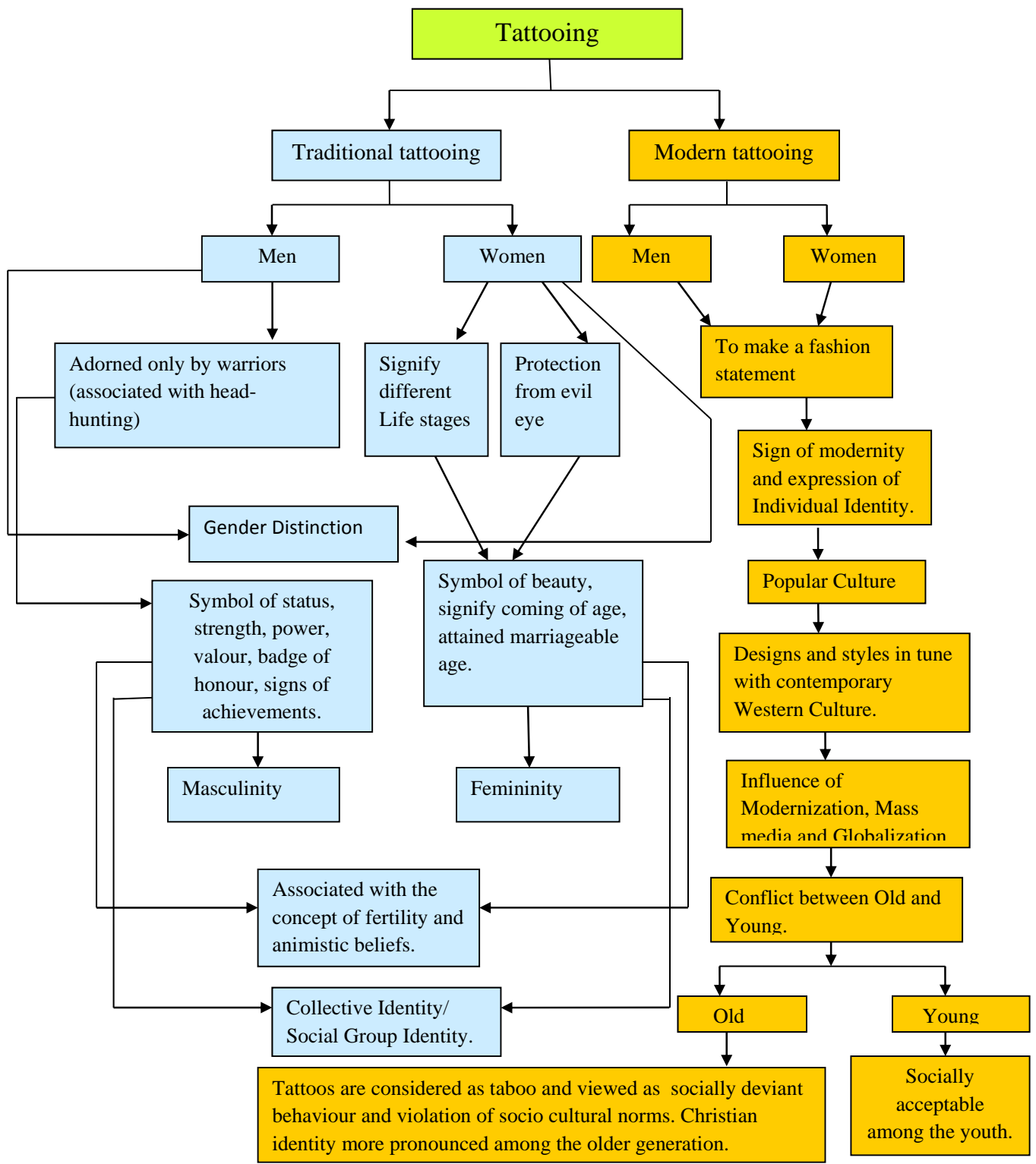




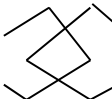


Table 4.7: Shapes and symbolism

SHAPES	SYMBOLISM
	V shaped tattoos were symbols of warrior status.
	An outline of human figure is an indication of warrior status or wealthy man.
	Circles of cowries indicate the high social status of the wearer.
	Y shaped forked wooden post signified the completed stage of feast giving.
	Tattoo design used as a shield to protect them from being attacked by tigers.

Christianity and modernisation have brought about change in the perception, the attitude among the Nagas and has shaped their social behaviour. The following cases illustrate this point. According to a respondent, people who adorn their bodies in tattoos do it in the pursuit of seeking attention from others. They draw attention to themselves to get noticed. She said our bodies belong to God and getting a tattoo is against God. She said it is okay to maintain and groom the body as it shows respect for the body but altering the body to achieve certain standards of beauty is not acceptable as the body is the ‘temple of God’ and we are interfering with God’s handiwork. Likewise, a 47-year old male respondent said that in the past tattoos was a part of the Naga culture. But that is in a different context as the Naga ancestors were animist and getting tattoos was part of their pagan practices. But now that we have embraced Christianity, as Christians, we should not have tattoos. He said that we invoke bad spirits and enforce demonic power to it through the tattoo designs. The peace sign is an occult and demonic or satanic symbol. He feels that tattoos and body piercings are of western export. Few other respondents felt that tattoos can have a negative effect and hurt their chances of getting a job. They felt that tattoos can have consequence and poses a risk at the time of job interviews. While going for job interview appearance is very important. Sometimes tattoos are not acceptable for job

interviews. It becomes an indicator of a person's lack of professionalism. The research findings suggested that few respondents said they tried to cover up their tattoos while searching for jobs.

The above statements clearly show the change in the attitude of the Nagas towards tattooing. The symbolic meanings and values linked to the concept of head-hunting have undergone change. The coming of the Christianity, modernisation, and the influence of the media has clearly altered the traditional beliefs and practices and along the process giving rise to new values and beliefs.

Notes

1. The Konyak Nagas have the custom of tattooing their faces and blackening their teeth with soot.
2. Many Nagas purchase costly jewellery despite the high prices because of the status symbol. An individual whose body is adorned in precious ornaments is often viewed as an affluent person.

CHAPTER-5

ROLE OF MEDIA IN BODY IDEALS AND MODERN CLOTHING PRACTICES AMONG THE NAGAS

Media has the power to shape consumer culture and plays a significant role in influencing the behaviour of the individuals. Media reinforces the idea that we need to look a certain way to be accepted and desirable. Media projects a standard of beauty which is completely unrealistic and unattainable. The way certain bodies are projected as being ideal has a negative impact on the body image. The representations of what an ideal body should look like often create insecurities about our bodies. It makes us believe that our body does not fit the ideal and this causes body dissatisfaction. The attempt in this chapter is to find out the influence of modernisation, globalisation and media in contemporary Naga society and how this has an impact on their lifestyle, clothing choices and perception of beauty.

Influence of media on the Naga youth

The fashion scenario in Nagaland has greatly evolved due to the influence of media. Mass media plays a significant role in changing the attitudes and behaviour of the younger generation. The field research carried out showed that almost all Naga households in urban and rural areas owned Television. In urban areas, almost all households have access to cable connections and communication technologies. The advent of cable TV in the 90s in Nagaland brought significant transformation in the Naga society. Television viewing in the 1980's was mainly a community affair, with very few households owning television sets. Most of the older respondents mentioned that they viewed television for the first time in 1982 ASIAD games. But with the introduction of cable TV, the younger generation started watching American sitcoms and got exposure to western culture and this is also one of the reasons for the influence from the west. Television viewing has become a part of many people's everyday life. The viewing of Hindi serials is also becoming popular in Nagaland.

There has been a change in the lifestyle over the years. Numerous households in urban areas own computers and laptops. Many residing in urban areas can afford at home-internet which has a significant influence on the youth. An increasingly large

number of respondents spend their time by watching Television, browsing the internet, watch movies, listen to music, and spend time on social networking site on the internet, reading magazines and books etc. The youth of the present generation are more exposed to the western media and are growing up with the influence from other cultures. They are learning about the world around them through TVs, the internet and other forms of media. Due to the spread of mass media, cultural differences that exist between societies are getting homogenized. These days youth are growing up online and this has created a wide generation gap between the older generation and the younger generation. Children of the present generation are greatly exposed to Hollywood films, Bollywood films, Korean films and this has a profound influence on their thinking pattern. Media has been a powerful tool in shaping their beliefs and values. Youth are developing western ideas and are more interested in learning about foreign cultures and abandoning their indigenous cultures. Due to the availability of the modern idea, popular culture are emulated by the Naga youth. Social networking sites are also becoming a big part in a young person's life. Due to the accessibility of internet in most homes, online shopping for apparels, shoes, accessories, perfumes, cosmetics, books, electronics, home decor and appliances are gaining popularity like any metropolitan city in India.

Fashion and its Changing Trends

The emergence of mass media has been playing a great role in shaping the attitudes, ideals, and values of the Nagas. Media dictates what is beautiful and what is not. Media influences a lot in the way we perceive ourselves. Media brainwashes our mind through advertisements and through it influence us in buying products. It tells us how we can improve on ourselves by wearing the "in" clothes, right shoes, right make-up, hairstyles and how we can become more fashionable and trendy. People are willing to spend a great deal of their money on clothes, accessories in the pursuit of attainment of beauty. Media has to a great extent shaped the ideals of the younger generation. Their concepts of beauty are also getting assimilated with the western ideals. Western ideals are more pronounced among the younger generation because of the media.

Naga culture is constantly exposed to influences from other cultures because of globalization and the influence of the media. The Nagas have undergone a major transformation over the last few years. There has been a shift in the personal style of

the people. The study revealed that due to the emergence of mass media, the youth of the present generation are imitating the trends from the west. Fashion has evolved over the years. Fashion in the 90's was mostly influenced by Hindi movies. Older respondents said that wearing of 'bell bottoms', sporting big hairdo's and dhoti pants were popular in the 90's. The youth of the present generation are heavily influenced by the popular culture and are in tune with international fashion trends. Fashion is an integral part of people's lives and there are a large number of fashion enthusiasts. One respondent stated 'fashion according to her is a serious business and she wants to have an edge over others. She follows the latest trends and she doesn't really bother of what people might think of her appearance because she knows that she is sticking by the rules of fashion.' Most college going students revealed that wearing clothes which are "out of style" and not dressing well were teased. Some tend to follow the trends strictly and there are some who do not follow the trends but instead create their own style. Fashion for many is a way of expressing their individuality. A lot of Naga youth liked wearing what's "in". Sometimes people who do not follow fashion trends and who do not pay much attention to their personal appearance are being viewed as not up-to-date. Fashion is of paramount importance to a Naga and there is a constant pressure to look good all the time. Wearing of trendy, fashionable clothes are associated with modernity and seen as more progressive whereas people wearing unfashionable clothes are perceived as old fashioned and as a sign of backwardness. The Nagas often feel pressured to get rid of outdated, old-fashioned clothes and constantly keep updating their look and wardrobe.

There are status distinctions among the Nagas in terms of income and wealth and not everyone can afford to spend lavishly on clothing, fashion and beauty products. Having limited resources can be a deterrent in their choices, however, the research findings suggested that despite poor economic background a few respondents spent a lot of money on buying trendy clothes and still dress up nicely. Few respondents felt that irrespective of the socio-economic status everyone dress the same. As humans, we have a natural tendency to want to belong to a group. As such, people follow trends to fit into what is popular. Respondents revealed that dressing up makes them feel good about themselves and boosts their self-confidence. Nagas tend to buy a lot of clothes to keep up with the latest fashion trends. They feel good about buying and feel owning new clothes will make them more fashionable and much happier and

some respondents said they would like to own high-end fashion brands. The research findings revealed that most people spent their income on buying apparel, shoes, accessories and lifestyle products to keep up with the latest trends.

Fashion constantly keeps changing and fashion trends are seasonal. With every new season comes a new fashion trend. Like the fashion trends that come in every season comes the colour trend like the bright hues for summer. The trendy colours according to a respondent were 'neon' and 'mint green' colours. She follows the colour trends and this has an influence on her purchasing decisions. Another female respondent stated that the life-span of fashion trends is brief. Sometimes by the time she makes up her mind to buy a particular item which is in trend she finds that fashion trend has gone out of style and has already passed.

The exposure to international media has a significant impact on the culture. The younger generation are emulating their fashion icons that they see through television, fashion and beauty magazines, fashion blogs, the internet. Celebrity obsession is mostly prevalent among the younger people. Celebrities are idolized and worshiped and young people emulate the celebrities and look up to them as role models. The younger generation sees images of celebrities all over the media sporting the trendiest clothes, shoes, bags, accessories, latest hairdos. The youth want to look like them and dress like the celebrities they see in the media. A lot of respondents said that they retrieve information on the latest fashion and beauty trends from the internet, fashion blogs, T.V, and magazines. For example, one respondent said that she would love to have the body type of Kim Kardashian. A female respondent said that she is inspired by the styles of fashion icons like Diane Keaton, Audrey Hepburn, Dita Von Teese, Lady Gaga and Manish Arora. Though her personal style does not resemble theirs she likes them because they have their own signature style. She feels that she is influenced by the media hype surrounding these celebrities. One female respondent aspired to have the face of Angelina Jolie and body of Rihanna. Few respondents mentioned that they read fashion blogs. Fashion blogs promote new trends and have an influence on the decision of the consumers. The influence of media is relatively less on the elderly people compared to the younger generation.

Brand consciousness

Media proliferation has increasingly exposed the Naga consumers to the standards of living and consumer culture abroad. And this has a significant influence on the consumer behaviour. Media encourage us for consumption of more goods and pushes us towards materialism. As consumers today we are constantly bombarded with advertisements through all types of media and messages encouraging us to purchase one thing or the other.

Market expansion and the penetration of branded products have contributed to the growth of fashion in Nagaland. Due to the high penetration of fashion brands in the market, there is an increased fashion consciousness amongst both men and women. In traditional Naga society the economy was largely based on agriculture but with the emergence of new economy the purchasing power of most Nagas has increased and brand consciousness is on the rise. The increase in the purchasing power has led to the rise in consumption of branded products.

Branded goods are a symbol of wealth and status. It means superior quality for some people and boosts their social status. Some of the respondents preferred branded goods because of durability. More than design aesthetics it is about brand name for some. Many shoppers valued branded products and bought from branded stores like Gravity and K.A.K. Even children these days are well informed and are aware of the various fashion brands and this can be attributed to the influence of media like television, advertisements, magazines, internet etc. Among the teenagers wearing the latest brands signifies popularity. Branded products are often equated with high status. A male respondent said that he likes wearing branded clothing. He considers it a prestige symbol. The respondent said, he can easily tell the difference when a person wears fake branded goods which he thinks looks pretty cheap. Another respondent mentioned that he has not reached the stage in life where he can afford and wear branded goods. He considers branded goods as a status symbol and to be worn by those who are well settled and have accomplished in life.

Consumers are spoilt for choice because of the increased availability of consumer products in the market. There are so many variants in the market both for men and women. The rise in the level of income has led to the change in the spending pattern

of most individuals and has led to increase in the consumption of goods. The spending power of most women has also increased considerably. Clothing is not just a need or necessity for many people anymore. There has been an increase in the amount of clothes that people consume. Today's generation youth have more freedom to express their individuality through their clothing choices.

Music and fashion

The study shows that media exert a strong influence on the fashion trends among the Naga Youth. Media shapes their opinions, the way they dress, the music they listen to, and their attitude and behaviour. The music a person listens to has an effect on their personality. Music is used as a tool to express one's individuality. Music is a huge part of many people's lives. Music is an integral part of Naga youth culture and fashion in Nagaland is mostly influenced by music. A lot of Nagas have a natural talent for singing and majority of them know how to play at least one musical instrument. The Naga Youth spend a great deal of their time listening to music and popular music has a profound effect on the Naga youth. Rock music is popular and most of the youth gravitate towards heavy metal. There are many popular rock bands and rock concerts are indicative of Naga youth culture. Traditional folk music still exists but is on the decline. For the Nagas their musical sensibilities are deeply western. Western music was introduced to them through the hymns brought by the Christian missionaries.

The research findings revealed that there is a gap in musical preferences among the younger generation and the older generation. The older generation is more inclined to listening church music, Gospel. Among the youth genres of music like Punk, Alternative rock, Hip Hop, R&B, Pop, Heavy metal, Country, Gospel, Praise and Worship are found to be popular. Rock music has a huge impact on the Naga youth and lot of influences are drawn from the rock stars in terms of fashion, beauty, attitudes, lifestyle choices, the language they use etc. The youths like to dress up like their icons and the kind of music they listen to can be identified through their dressing and attitude. The Youths pay homage to their music idols by wearing music inspired clothing, accessories, hairstyles. Among the adolescents and the younger generation, the way they act and dress reflects on the kind of music they listen to. It helps create an individual as well as a group identity. People who listen to the same genre of music

dress in a similar way. Emo Punk or emotional punk became a popular trend among the Naga youths. Emo Punk drew influences mainly from punk music. The emo fashion included wearing tight fitting jeans and T-shirts, checkered belt, converse shoes, piercings, dyed black hair, layered spiky side swept bangs, heavy eye make-up, dark nail paints. Hip-Hop, style of clothing was also found to be popular among the Naga Youth. Over- sized T-shirts, Jerseys, baggy pants, baseball caps, chunky jewelry, and rings were popular among the boys. As Hebdige points out “the experience encoded in subcultures is shaped in a variety of locales (work, home, school, etc). Each of these locales imposes its own unique structure, its own rules, and meanings, its own hierarchy of values. Though these structures articulate together, they do so syntactically. They are bound together as much through difference (home v.school, school v.work, home v. Work, private v.public, etc.) as through similarity. Hebdige says that the complex interplay between the different levels of the social formation is reproduced in the experience of both dominant and subordinate groups, and this experience, in turn, becomes the ‘raw material’ which finds expressive form in culture and subculture. Now, the media plays a crucial role in defining our experience for us. They provide us with the most available categories for classifying out the social world. It is primarily through the press, television, film, etc. That experience is organized, interpreted, and made to cohere in contradiction as it were. It should hardly surprise us then, to discover that much of what finds itself encoded in subculture has already been subjected to a certain amount of prior handling by the media (Hebdige 1979).

The influence of peer group

The kind of individuals and groups we interact and socialise can have an impact on our behaviour, attitude, and the choices we make. The fashion choices of a person are greatly influenced by the peers. As adolescence spend a lot of time with their peer group, it can have a lot of influences on their choices. The young adults try to be a part of the group and try to establish group identities by conforming to similar trends and same style of clothing. The research revealed that teenagers attempted to look and dress like their peers to gain acceptance among friends. The teenagers dressed, talked and behaved like their peers to fit in the group. There is peer pressure to conform to the group norms to gain acceptance. Peer pressure plays a significant role in their choice of clothing and purchasing. Adolescence followed fashion trends and bought

fashion items which were acceptable to their peers. Among the younger generation, the clothing one wears validates their social standing in the peer group. The teenagers face with so much pressure and obsess over wanting to be ‘popular’ and look ‘cool’. Looking ‘cool’ has become the norm to gain acceptance within the peer group. They strive for attention by dressing and behaving in a certain way. They want to get noticed and seek validation from their peers. The fear of social rejection by the peers has many psychological consequences like low-self esteem, anxiety, depression. Being associated with a group and being socially accepted validates the self-worth of a person. They relied on dressing up to boost their self-worth.

The research showed that there is a sense of competition among the teenagers to dress better than their peers. The teenagers formulate their opinion about others based on their appearance and clothing. This is explained by the statement of a 19-year old respondent. She said, “she doesn’t want to hang out with a person who does not dress well.” The statement clearly reveals the perceived low status of a person who does not dress well among their peers.

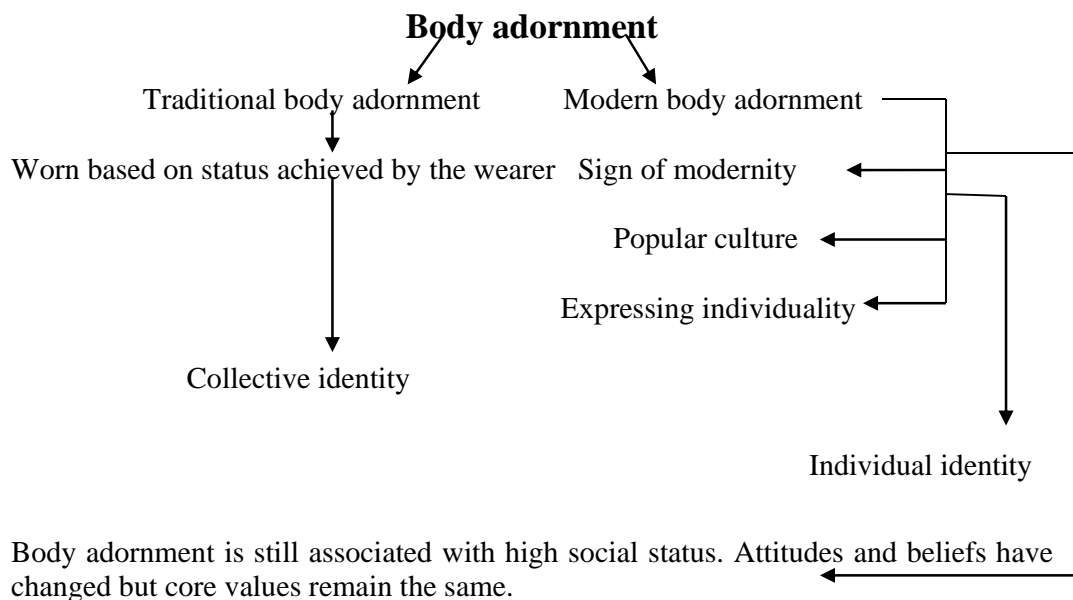


Diagram 13: Traditional vs Modern body adornment

Dress code

In a work setting, there are certain dress standards that people adhere to. Certain professions demand the use of uniforms so that they can be identifiable to their respective profession. Certain clothes are considered work inappropriate. A person cannot go to work wearing pajamas and sweat pants as it sends a signal of unprofessionalism. Similarly ripped jeans, distressed jeans, low cut tops, micro minis, revealing outfits are not considered work appropriate. If a person dresses sloppily he/she will be branded as a loser. Similarly wearing only undergarments including boxers and nighties in public places is considered indecent and inappropriate. The freedom to express oneself is curtailed in schools. All the students are obliged to wear school uniforms. All the schools in Kohima have school uniforms and this is to instill discipline among the students. In one of the renowned schools in Kohima, there is dress code even for the teachers. Some school students still keep their individuality by incorporating their own sense of style even in school uniforms. Some of the boys were found to be wearing tight-fitting pants to school.

Modesty in clothing

The Naga society expects men and women to dress in a certain way. They are expected to dress modestly. Parents enforce decency in their children from a very young age. There are not many restrictions on how a person should dress nevertheless modesty in clothing is highly prized. The research suggested that the Naga parents do not enforce strict rules upon their children. They are given the freedom to make their own clothing choices. They have the freedom to dress the way they want but one thing that most parents emphasize is to dress in a modest and decent way and raise their objection when their children dress too provocatively.

The Naga Society enforces the moral code and expects people to follow them. The societal norms expect individuals to cover certain parts of the body because of morality attached to it. Revealing of certain body parts in public places is considered indecent by most people. Girls are taught from a very young age not to draw attention to their bodies. The society dictates how a woman should dress and expects women to cover up their bodies and to reveal very little skin. Exposure of skin to a certain extent is acceptable and tolerated but too much skin on display is discouraged. Too much

cleavage on display is viewed as immodest and perceived as an attention seeking behaviour. Nudity is not permitted even among close family members except between spouses or partner. The standard of modesty for men and women however varies. A man can walk around shirtless but a woman cannot.

The way a person dresses has an influence on the way people perceive them. A person dressed modestly is viewed as a sign of good character by the Nagas. The way some people dress can sometimes be misunderstood by others and can be associated with being trashy. A few respondents felt that dressing provocatively can be misunderstood by others and attract unwanted attention. Women dressed scantily are generally perceived as easy going and to be cheap. They are being viewed as immoral and often found to be branded as a “slut”.

Women are constantly blamed for distracting men through their clothing and are subjected to shame and guilt. Some of the respondents were of the opinion that there is an increase in sexual crimes because of indecent exposure by the women. However, some respondents held the opinion that if a woman decides to wear skimpy outfit it is her choice and she has the freedom to dress the way she wants. For instance, a female respondent said that she does not have a problem baring cleavage at work. Some of her colleagues have a problem with the way she dresses and has commented on it at some instances. She said she does not get affected by their opinion. She considers them conservative, narrow-minded and ‘bostiwala’ (villager).

Depending on context and place some clothes are considered appropriate while others are regarded as inappropriate. Modesty in clothing is also expected when visiting a place of worship. Most Nagas visit church regularly on Sundays. People often go to church dressed in their Sunday best. They wear formal clothes and dress sharp on Sundays. The church does not impose any restrictions on dress and no dress code is enforced. It does not matter what a person wears in a church as long as it is decent however wearing of shorts, baseball caps, ripped jeans, flip-flops, pajamas are considered inappropriate clothing and disrespectful for the church. There are certain standards a person is expected to practice in the church. People are required to dress in a way that shows honour and reverence to God. The church expects people to strive for purity and keep their minds free from sinful thoughts and not to give in to temptation. A church leader stated that God only looks at our heart and does not look

at our outward appearance. But since people with different backgrounds and personality come together in the church, it is essential that we need to dress modestly. As a church leader people look up to her and she feels obliged to dress a certain way.

Wearing skimpily clad outfit in churches is regarded as inappropriate as it is viewed as showing disrespect to God. As Thepfulhouvi Solo notes, “Recently a very cute young girl came in for a solemn religious occasion in a Western cut and cult dress revealing bare back, bare shoulder and in embarrassingly indecent, if vulgarly costly attire for Nagas. Vain glorious and vulgarly costly dresses inside places of Worship are an affront to the House of God and to the God most High suppose to be worshipping.” If schools have the right to prescribe school uniforms, if there is any propriety in Paul’s advice for simple dress for woman attending religious occasions, surely the Church in Nagaland today has a moral responsibility to propagate solemn dress in religious Church gatherings and in the Church services. It is pure vanity if a Christian does not have the personal good sense to distinguish decent from indecent dress for solemn religious occasions. Lack of this fine sense indicates the stupidity of the person’s faith.” (2011: 292-293).

Gendered norms

Society enforces gendered norms for the people to follow. Naga men and women are expected to dress in gendered appropriate clothing. There is a marked gender distinction between how a man or woman should look and behave. Masculinity and femininity are manifested through the use of different clothing, hairstyles, behaviour. Both Naga men and women dress in a certain way to identify with their gender and those who do not conform to the gender specific clothing are being ridiculed for not being ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’ enough. Gender appropriate behaviour is ingrained in each one of us right from the time we are born. According to Workman and Beth (2009: 140) ‘Through gender role socialization, members of society learn how males and females ought to look, and therefore dress is a key factor in communication of an individual’s gender. Gender role socialization not only teaches individuals what gender- appropriate or gender inappropriate dress of others.’ Thus, clothing choices and behaviour of each individual is influenced by the society.

Butler (1990) in her study emphasizes gender as a cultural construction, and the body as a “variable boundary” that performs the cultural meanings of gender, has been central to the ongoing discussion of what constitutes a “feminine” identity. Although gender is often mistaken for a natural category or biological fact, Butler says that “the various acts of gender create the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all” (1990: 140).

The research findings suggested that a person who defied the societal standard of gender expected norms becomes an object of ridicule. The choices an individual made were constantly scrutinized by the society. There are clothes that look feminine and clothes that are masculine. Women were expected to dress more feminine and men more masculine. Individuals who deviate from gender appropriate clothing and gender-specific roles are targeted and stigmatized. A man taking a keen interest in fashion, exhibiting effeminate behavior and inclined to wear feminine clothing is branded as a sissy. Likewise a girl exhibiting boyish traits and dressing up in a boyish way is considered as a tomboy. As these people deviate from the accepted gender norm they often face discrimination. People who violated the gender specific clothing norms are teased and ridiculed. From the study, it showed that women are more attracted to men who exhibit facial masculinity. Men like women who are more feminine. Research findings suggested that most women do not like men with feminine features. Disch’s (1997: 20) notes that “Expectations for what constitutes femininity and masculinity are frequently affected by race, class, culture, and other factors. The freedom to be the kind of woman or man a person might like to be is greatly curtailed by sexism, poverty, racism, homophobia, and other cultural constraints and expectations.” Entwistle (2000) present fashion as essentially preoccupied with gender. Clothes have long been used to hide the sexual difference in its strong biological sense, at the same time to pointing up and signaling it through assumptions concerning gender in clothing codes. Fashion thus helps to reproduce gender as a form of body style, producing a complex interplay between sexed bodies and gendered identities.

The study also revealed that effeminate men or men who exhibited feminine traits were being labeled as ‘gay’. It shows how a person who does not ‘fit in’ into the socially accepted standard of ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’ are sneered at. Men and

women constantly emphasize their masculinity and femininity through their hair, clothes, and attitude. A 24-year-old male respondent said that ‘ a man has to be tough and manly. He dislikes men who are too sissy.’ Another respondent stated that God clearly differentiated between man and woman. He referred homosexuality to be a modern day phenomenon. He said the concept of lesbians, gay, transgender are of western export. He considers it to be immoral and often misleading.

Gender stereotypes are reinforced in individuals while growing up. It is interesting to note the gender specific colour preferences in men and women. How certain colours like pink is associated with girls and blue for boys. It shows how certain colours are considered more feminine or masculine. Earlier in Naga society, colours of clothing were not gender specific. The societal norms also define what a man can and cannot wear. Trousers are acceptable clothing for both Naga men and women. But for instance, if a man chooses to wear a skirt and seen in public places, he will be stared at and will be mocked at since skirt is distinctive of the female gender.

The normative standard of feminine beauty among the young Naga women is changing due to increased exposure to beauty images of women in the media. Body hair removal is considered to be the accepted social norm amongst younger women. Advertisers encourage women to remove body hair and achieve flawless skin with the help of beauty products. Hairlessness in women’s body is beginning to be seen as a desirable trait. For the majority of young Naga women hair removal in legs, arms, underarms, upper lip, eyebrows have become a beauty essential and done mainly for aesthetic reasons. A woman without body hair is perceived to be more attractive. Most male respondents said they are turned off by women with underarm hairs. As Ferrante (1988) suggests that women’s distress on producing ‘excess’ hair may be caused by their sense of having partially bridged the boundaries between femininity and masculinity, body hair being a visible characteristic that symbolically distinguishes women from men.”

Blurring of gender boundaries

The social norms define what we can or cannot wear. But when a person does not follow the socially appropriate dress norms they are seen as strange because their behaviour is not what others are expecting and hence they are often ridiculed by

others. A person who exhibits unconventional dressing style and does not conform to societal norms would typically be perceived as a weirdo. They are often considered as socially awkward because they do not fit in with society. The study revealed a blurring of gender boundaries as some youngsters were into androgynous clothing. Androgynous look was found to be 'in' among the younger generation. Dark nail paints, eyeliner was found to be popular among college going young males. However few respondents disapproved of this trend, as can be seen from the response of a 30-year-old male respondent, working as an Assistant professor in a college, who remarked, 'he is averse to men wearing make-up and feels that it is a disgrace to manhood.' Wearing of jewellery among young men is a popular trend but there is always this concern among men to sport the trend and look stylish yet not looking feminine. A 28-year-old female respondent working as an Assistant Professor in a college mentioned that she does not prohibit students from wearing clothes of their choice. She feels they have the freedom to express their individuality through clothing and rarely interferes with their choices. However, she recalled an incident where she noticed a male student wearing a pink stone studded cocktail ring. She approached the student and asked him not to wear it again as it appeared to be too girly and feminine. Some of the young males were found to be comfortable wearing nail polish, eyeliner and mascara. These fashion trends are mainly influenced by celebrities who make it look cool and more acceptable.

Age appropriate clothing

The cultural norms of Naga society expect men and women to tone down their appearance as they grow older. People are expected to dress in a certain way after reaching a certain age. There are certain age-related clothing norms. Age is evident in distinctive clothing style. The middle-aged and the older women are expected to be more covered up. The younger generation has more freedom to express themselves through their style of clothing and through the projection of their appearance. They have more liberty to push boundaries when it comes to creating their own style. For example, a young person can walk around in a crazy coloured hair, adorn the body with tattoos and piercings but if the same is done by someone older then it will be considered an age-inappropriate look. Research findings also suggest that the older people do not use clothing as a means of self-expression so much then it is asserted

by the young. As a person gets older they usually withdraw from wearing fashionable clothing and normally tone down their appearance. The dressing style and appearance of the older people are generally perceived as not worthy of attention. A 26-year-old male respondent said that when he was younger his sense of style was inspired by the Hip Hop fashion. But now that he is older he cannot wear it because according to him it is not age appropriate. He feels it would look odd and awkward on him.

Second-hand clothing

There is a great demand for second-hand clothes among the Nagas. In trying to keep up with the mainstream trends people hunt through second-hand stores. Thrift stores or second-hand clothing stores are popular with people as it offers a wide variety of clothes at a cheap price. There is no stigma associated with second-hand clothes and is socially acceptable. In modern Naga society, due to emergence of class system there is economic disparity and income gap between the low, middle, and high income group. Nevertheless second-hand clothing is popular among all sections of the society and worn by most people and not just restricted to the poor. Even affluent individuals shop for second hand clothings .

Second-hand clothing provides the consumers with good quality clothing for a very low price. Some mentioned that they prefer second-hand clothes because it fits their budget. One female respondent mentioned that when she is on a limited budget, she usually shops in second-hand stores looking for clothes which are remotely close to the trend and get a piece of clothing for a fraction of the original price. People are generally looking for great finds with cheaper prices. Few respondents held that they enjoy the experience of digging through piles of clothes in the hope of getting quality items. In this thrift stores you would see a lot of young Nagas digging on the pile of second hand clothes looking for designer labels which are hard to get hold of and which are not even available in the market which they may sometimes find it in second-hand clothing or might come across trendy stuff or remotely close to what is in trend.

Due to surge in popularity of second-hand clothes, second-hand business is thriving and many Nagas have opened up stores in Nagaland thus providing means of support and livelihood to several individuals.

Koreanization

The influence of Korean culture or the “Korean wave” hit the Nagas around late 2000. Korean style of fashion became hugely popular among the younger generation. Anything and everything which is Korean became popular. It was seen to be on the rise with youngsters emulating fashionable clothing; and the latest hairdo’s inspired by Korean popular culture. The younger generation was swayed by the new culture and this had an influence on their lifestyle and clothing choices. More and more youth tried to imitate the Korean fashion style and adapted their dress practices, style, mannerisms, attitude, and language.

The reason for the growing popularity of Korean fashion is due to the influence of Korean movies, drama series and music. Second-hand Korean clothes are also very popular and sought after due to the influence of Korean popular culture among the Naga youth. Nagas first got a glimpse of the Korean culture through Arirang TV, network based in Seoul, South Korea. Korean Tv drama and movies also began to air through the local cable network. Korean movies and Korean drama series began to gain wide popularity. It became a household staple and DVD’S flooded the market.

Korean TV drama series and movies are mostly centered on love and family and the storylines are grounded in traditional values which appealed to the masses something they could relate to. Another reason for the immense popularity of Korean movies and fashion is because of the similarities in appearances. A significant number of respondents felt that the reason they can relate to Korean culture is because of the cultural similarities and physical features. Nagaland has a Nagamese film industry of its own but Korean movies are more popular compared to Nagamese movies. Some of the Korean movies that became popular in Nagaland they are Classic, My Sassy girl, Autumn in my heart, Stairway to Heaven, Full House, A moment to remember and much more. The Korean influence was felt on other North-eastern states as well like Mizoram, Manipur, and Arunachal Pradesh.

There was growing support from the state government to promote the regional co-operation. The Government of Nagaland took the initiative to promote the Korean culture in Nagaland. There is considerable Korean fan base in Nagaland and a club known as Arirang TV Fan club which was formed on December 1st, 2007 with Theja

Meru as its President. The club organized a Korean Film Festival on February 14th, 2008 showcasing the Korean culture through the movies screened with the aim to foster ties between the Koreans and the Nagas. The club also offers learning of Korean language to its members. The Government of Nagaland in collaboration with the Arirang TV organized the Korea- India Music Festival in December 2008. Renowned Arirang TV Vj's, Arirang TV Vice-President were part of the cultural exchange program. The number of tourists from Korea coming to Nagaland has increased and Korean celebrities have made appearances during hornbill festivals as well.

Cultural assimilation brought in a new attitude and new thinking among the Naga youth. However, Koreanization did not go down well among certain sections of the older generation. The adoption of the Korean culture and the cultural changes brought by it was viewed as a threat by the older generation. They felt the youths were alienating their own Naga identity and saw it as a threat to their own culture. The older generation feared to lose their cultural and ethnic identity and as a result, parents began to make efforts to inculcate traditional values in children. At present Korean culture has somewhat died down and it is not as popular as it once was. After the Korean, now the Japanese cultural influence on the youth is growing.

Body dissatisfaction

Media idealizes the thin body and propagates the idea that thin is beautiful. Media creates unrealistic body ideals which we continuously strive to achieve. Media influences the way we see ourselves and shows us ways to strive for the perfect body image. As a consequence, body dissatisfaction has become the norm in today's modern Naga society. According to Levine and Murnen (2009); and also Hendriks (2002), exposure to media images depicting unrealistic ideals of beauty is a recognised risk factor for poor body image. And this seems to contribute to the fact that one woman out of every two is dissatisfied with her body. The beauty industry in its relentless presentation of unrealistic stereotypes creates anxiety and increasing self-consciousness about image and appearance. Products are offered as a remedy (Hamilton and Bennis: 2005) and the mass media have been conceived to operate as transmitters of cultural ideals. The media often emphasize specific characteristics of people and provide role models from which the public at large can learn. If the media

depict a slim physique as attractive, this body image may attain the status of an ideal that everyone should attempt to achieve. The attachment of social rewards to such an image will render it all the more appealing, especially to young people who seek out role models as part of the process of growing up and learning how to behave. This social learning theory of media influence posits that media 'ideals' can exert powerful effects on media audiences if they are prevalent and provide an incentive to people to emulate them (Wykes and Gunter 2005).

We all have different body shapes and sizes but instead of appreciating and accepting it people feel the pressure to be perfect and strive hard to achieve the dominant ideals of beauty. In today's world, there is so much pressure to fit into certain body standard that both Naga men and women struggle with body issues on a regular basis. Even celebrities whose bodies do not fall into the ideal standards get unfair representation in the media. The concept of body size varies across culture. In some societies being overweight are a sign of well-being and prosperity. Among the Azawagh Arabs of Niger, fatness is considered such a beautiful and desirable trait in women that girls as young as five and six years old are forcibly fattened by an appointed female authority figure within the family. The force feeding of young girls is intended to accelerate the process of sexual maturity because fatness is so closely associated womanliness: The sooner a girl has assumed the contours and curves that come with corpulence, the sooner she is considered of a marriageable age (Popenoe 2004: 44-45).

As mentioned already, through media the Naga youth are constantly surrounded by sexy images of models, actresses, celebrities, sports icons with perfect bodies. It creates an obsession and they constantly strive to achieve that standard of beauty. Viewing of idealized bodies in magazines, TV, internet which are portrayed as necessary for desirability creates body dissatisfaction. Constant exposure to mass media leads to body image disturbance. Naga men and women are constantly made to perceive their own bodies from others perception. The research study indicated how increased media exposure has led to body image dissatisfaction and why there is pressure among the younger generation Nagas to conform to what is acceptable. From the study it was found that majority of the respondents preferred thin body types and considered 'thin' to be the body ideal. Female sex appeal and attractiveness were seen to be defined by the thin body. As Victor Turner talks about the multivocality of

meanings and how a single symbol may mean different things. Similarly thinness symbolised numerous things and seen to be equated with health, happiness, desirability, confidence, high self-esteem and success. There is so much emphasis on weight loss highlighted everywhere like magazines, advertisements, TV, Internet, books that individuals continuously felt the pressure to be thin. It was observed that most individuals were found to be making an effort to lose weight. Young respondents were found to be worrying about how they look, their body shape, weight, height. Findings from the study also showed that exposure to mass media had a psychological influence on the majority of the respondents and on the younger generation. It was observed that even children are becoming obsessed with their appearance. Children as young as 10-13 years were observed to be self-conscious of their bodies. To fit into the notion of what is beautiful certain girls were observed to follow strict diets and some even starved themselves. According to Herman & Polivy (1983), 'Those women who do succeed in matching the ideal thinness expected by modern beauty standards usually do so by exercising frenetically and compulsively, implementing severely restrictive and nutritionally deficient diets, developing bizarre eating habits, and using continuous self-degradation and self-denial. Dieting has become a "Cultural requirement" for women.' Powell and Kahn (1995) in their study emphasized that Caucasian women tend to be extremely concerned with dieting, weight loss, a desire to be thin, and prefer a leaner and thin (i.e., dominant culture's ideal) body figure. 'More teenage girls than ever are affected by a compulsion to achieve for themselves a degree of thinness that they see every day in models. The striving for a perfect body image often appears alongside a desire to compete with men in a role of male identification as a compensatory object that stands in for her compromised female identity (Cussins 2001). According to Balsamo, "The body becomes...the site at which women, consciously or not, accept the meanings that circulate in popular culture about ideal body. The female body comes to serve as a site of inscription, a billboard for the dominant cultural meanings that the female body is to have in post modernity" (1996: 78). For Foucault "the body, as the site of sexual and social reproduction, is inscribed with meanings according to the needs of power. Analysing the inscriptions on the contemporary female body therefore may not only help with understanding the phenomenon of self-starvation but also reveal something about broader gender and social relations."

Bodies undergo constant evaluation and individuals who do not fit into the cultural and media ideals of beauty are victimized. People often comment on how ‘fat’ you are, or how ‘skinny’ you are and get advice on how they should try to get in shape. Obesity is seen as unattractive and undesirable among the Nagas. They are constantly reminded through media images, family, and friends that obesity is not beautiful. People generally hold unfavorable attitudes toward obese people. When a person gains weight, people instantly scrutinize their weight issue and are quick to tell them that they look fat. They are told to do something about their weight. They face societal pressure to be thin and are often pressured to lose the extra fat they have gained.

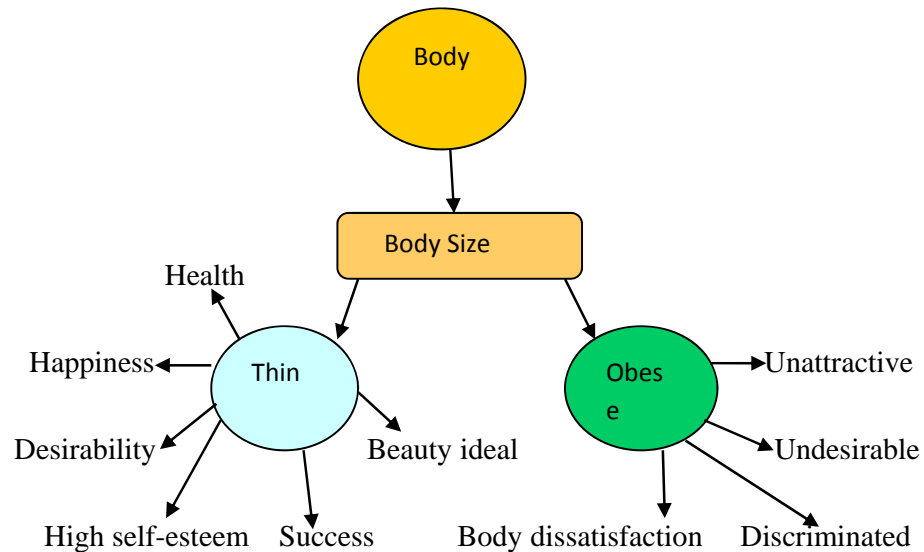


Diagram 14: Body and its Multivocal meanings

Results from the study revealed that a large number of individuals both men and women experienced body dissatisfaction. They were dissatisfied with one or the other aspect of their bodies and felt self-conscious and insecure about their bodies. The way others perceived them had an impact on the way they looked at themselves. A lot of them felt uncomfortable in their own bodies and struggled with negative body image. They struggled with insecurities about their appearance. Many respondents said they were either “too fat”, “too skinny”, “too short”, “too tall”, “have big nose”, “too dark”. One male respondent said that he is insecure and self-conscious of his nose. He dislikes it as he thinks it is big. But he said he would not consider altering it and

personally would never do cosmetic surgery. Instead, he would cover or improve his physical feature by the use of cosmetics and beauty products. Children of the present generation were also found to be increasingly conscious of appearance.

To enhance their aesthetic appeal looked for ways to build the perfect body. The Nagas spend a great deal of money and time perfecting their overall appearance. The research showed that accumulated excess body fat is considered to be unhealthy and unattractive. A bulging stomach is deemed as unattractive by both men and women. Many desired to have a flatter belly and wanted to lose the extra fat gained around the stomach. People are afraid of the stigma associated with fat people. A 27-year-old male respondent said that he did not want to put on weight because he feels that he would be judged by others if he did. The research showed that most women are afraid of being fat. A 42-year-old female respondent stated that she is conscious of her bulging belly. She said she walks a lot and that has helped her in losing weight. Another respondent stated that she would not want to put on weight as she feels clothes look better on a slimmer figure.

Being obese has social consequences. Obese people are often discriminated and stigmatized. People often ridicule and pass derogatory remarks towards an overweight person. Findings suggested that obese people experienced weight-based victimization. Obese children are often stigmatized even in schools. For example, a 28-year-old male respondent recalled that as a kid while growing up, he did not want to be seen around with his sister who was obese. He revealed that he could not bear to see his sister being teased by their peers and so stayed away. Similarly being skinny is also seen as less attractive. People normally assume skinny people to be sick and physically weak. Skinny men and women are often thought of suffering from some sort of eating disorders or substance abuse problem. As a result, people who are overweight, skinny, who have a physically disfigured body or deformed face are often stigmatized as they fall short of a perceived ideal. Since they do not fit into the cultural ideal of how a body should look like they are made to feel socially rejected. Obese, skinny people often endure teasing, name calling. They are referred to as 'elephant', 'hippo', 'pig', 'drum', 'stick'. They often experience stigma and discrimination because of their weight. They are made to feel bad about their body and the way they look. Hence they may often suffer depression and low self-esteem.

As Fallon (1990) notes, The cultural stigma attached to those who substantially deviate above implicit body weight norms often includes the attribution that these individuals have not exerted sufficient effort and self care to avoid such a condition. Likewise according to Sweeting & West (2001), Individuals who are targets of informal sanctions such as name-calling, nicknames, positive and negative remarks, teasing and ridicule are different from their peers in appearance, personality, ability, ethnicity, or some other conspicuous category

Fair skin an ideal for beauty

The Indians have an obsession with lighter skin tone. Fair skin is perceived to be the ideal despite the majority of the Indians being brown skinned. Even in advertisements, dark skinned-people are depicted and symbolised as being inferior, unsuccessful, and unattractive to the opposite sex. Dark skinned people are portrayed as being discriminated due to their skin colour and are encouraged to use skin lightening creams. There is bias towards fair skin, and lighter skin tone is symbolised to be superior and more desirable. The fairness cream market in India is growing and people spend a lot of money on skin lightening products. The media's perception of beauty could be felt even among the Nagas as there is a preference for lighter skin over darker skin tone. Fair skin is considered highly attractive and desirable quality. The majority of the respondents considered 'fair skin' as an ideal for beauty. Most of the male respondents found a woman with fair skin more desirable and appealing than a woman with dark skin tone. A 26-year-old male respondent remarked that "he prefers fair skin over dark skin because he thinks fair- skinned people looks more innocent." However, some of the respondents felt that a person can be attractive irrespective of the skin tone. Nevertheless, dark skin is perceived as an unattractive quality by most people. People often pass derogatory comments and tease a person with darker skin tone. A 25-year-old male respondent said 'He has an inferiority complex and feels insecure of his dark complexion. According to him, society has led him to the belief that fair skin is an essential ideal for beauty. Since he does not fit in that standard, he found himself being teased on many occasions. He said his friends, family and media are the reason for his low self-esteem.'

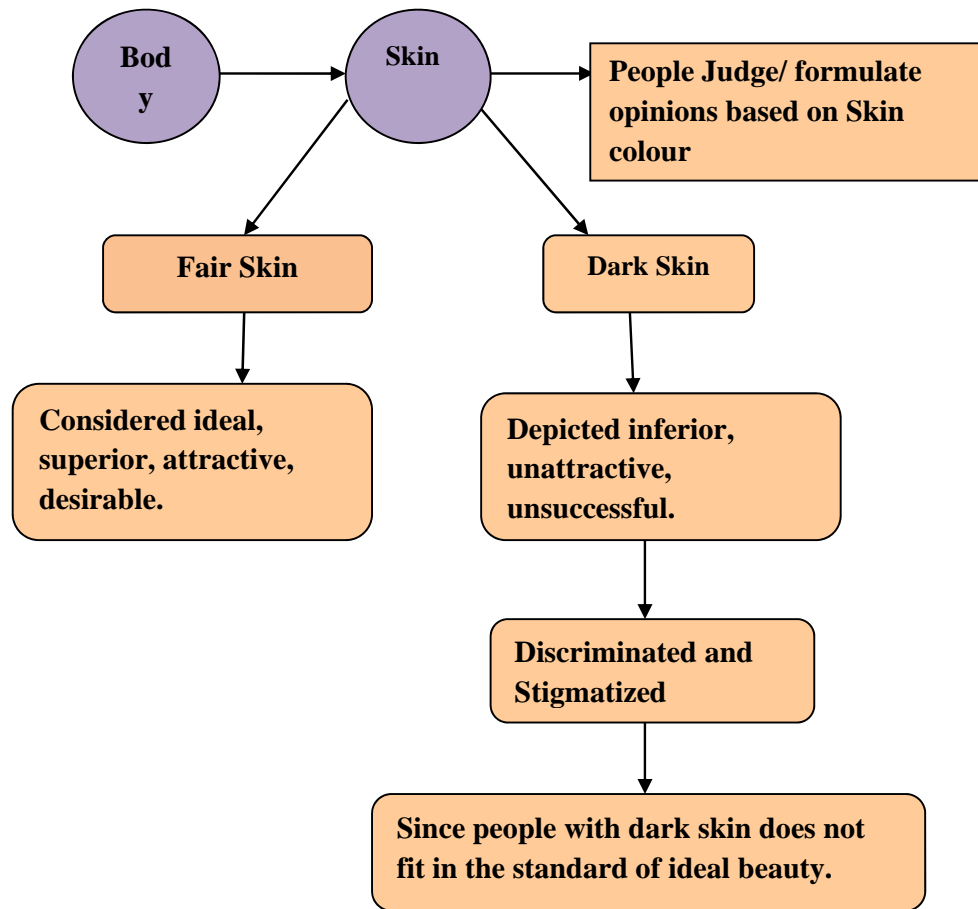


Diagram 15 : Skin colour differentiation

Appearance-based discrimination and Indian clothing

The Nagas have a strong sense of their own ethnic identity. They associate much more with being a Naga than being an Indian. Most Nagas find it difficult to identify themselves as Indians due to cultural dissimilarities and distinct physical appearance. Due to differences in appearance, people from north-east are often racially discriminated. Many Naga youth migrate to cities for education and jobs. Many respondents said they experienced racial discrimination and verbal abuse in metropolitan cities in India. They are often subjected to verbal taunts and are often called “chinky” because of their Mongoloid features. North-east women are also perceived as morally loose and sexually promiscuous. Most often Nagas feel left out from mainstream India. The north-easterners are dubbed as ‘foreigners’ and outsiders within their own country because of their ethnicity and the lack of knowledge,

ignorance on the part of the mainland Indians. They are often excluded and not treated as Indians and this is one reason why they find it hard to assimilate in mainstream India.

The Nagas cannot identify much with mainstream Indian culture and this can be seen even in the way they dress. The Bollywood fashion trends are not very popular and do not have deep influence among the Nagas. Saree and salwar kameez is a traditional female garment which is a symbol of women's attire in India and deeply rooted in Indian culture and wearing Saree is a mark of Indianness. It is commonly worn by most Indian women both for daily wear and formal occasions. Though it is highly popular among most women throughout the country it is interesting to note that the dress habits among women from the North-East region is significantly different and stands apart. Saree is not worn by women from this part of the country. Other ethnic Indian dresses like salwar kameez are also not much in demand among the Naga women. Dhoti primarily worn by Indian men is also not popular.

As mentioned already, the Nagas are racially and culturally very different from the mainland Indians and that is one reason why they dissociate themselves from mainstream Indian culture and this can be observed from the way they dress and why Indian clothings and ideals of beauty are not popular in Nagaland.

To conclude, western influence has been very prominent among the Nagas due to the British and American Christian missionaries. Adopting western clothing, food habits, attitudes, values and following western trends and beauty ideals were seen as signs of upward social mobility and seen as a sign of modernity and progress. Anything western is equated as status symbols. As a result, the Nagas began distancing themselves from their identity as Nagas and started adopting the western identity and this has led to the loss of many Naga traditional values and belief system.

In addition to the coming of the British and introduction of Christianity and western education, the emergence of media also brought in significant transformation in Naga society. The Nagas gained exposure to the outside world through the introduction of TV, cable TV, internet, magazines, books and the media to a great extent shaped their ideas, values, beliefs, and worldview and as a result the influence of western culture increased significantly and Nagas abandoning their indigenous culture. The mixing of

Naga culture with the west and influences from other cultures through mass media and globalization has given rise to cultural diffusion and cultural hybridization. The impact of acculturation brought significant socio-cultural changes in Naga society.

The emergence of the market and the easy availability of domestic and foreign products in the market gave the Nagas an opportunity to express their individuality. However it also resulted in the creation of new ideas and values. The modern Naga society started to develop into a materialistic society and the more amounts of material goods a person can purchase and consume, the higher the status and prestige of the individual. Adorning of branded goods also became a symbol of displaying the social status of a person. The worth of a person began to be evaluated in terms of his/her material opulence.

But if we look beyond the surface and dig deeper we see the underlying structure to be the same with that of traditional Naga society. The reason why the Nagas give a lot of importance in the way they dress and their overall appearance is deeply rooted to their past cultural practices like feast of merit and head-hunting when society accorded high status body adornments to feast-givers and head hunters. Body adornments and decoration were seen as visual marker of a person's identity and this still holds true in today's modern Naga society. Decorating oneself with modern clothing, ornaments still hold a high value in Naga society and are seen as status symbols. Attitudes and beliefs have changed but core values remain the same.

Notes

1. In traditional Naga society, people belonging to similar age and gender are categorized into their respective age set. An individual belonged to a particular age set right from the birth and remained in that social category for the most part of his life. There are hierarchies between the junior and senior groups. It is equivalent to the peer group. The members of age set work together in a range of social services for the community like community farming, cleaning the villages. The peer group is known as *mulekhu* in Chakhesang dialect.
2. Various programs and events were found to be organized in the urban centres in order to promote and give a platform to the young upcoming talents from across the state in various fields like music, dance, modeling, fashion designing. ;
3. People spend on an average of 2000-4000 a month on lifestyle products. Spending pattern of some individuals was found to be comparatively higher than others. For instance, a female respondent said that she purchases whatever is trendy and spends about 4000-5000 a month on clothing accessories and cosmetics. One respondent said that she owned more than 30 pairs of shoes and some even said that they own 50 pairs of shoes.
4. Modern Naga society is not egalitarian, the society is socially stratified and we see class distinctions and economic disparity among the people.

CHAPTER-6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Body adornment and concept of beauty of the Nagas have deep symbolic meanings and are a reflection of their cultural values, beliefs, and practices. In traditional Naga society, the social status of a person, marital status, age group, social group, the prowess of a warrior, were all communicated through their clothing's, ornaments and tattoos. The head-hunting practices, the feast of merit and day to day life activities of the Nagas were depicted through these various body adornments thereby serving as manuscripts. Feast of merit is a fertility rite and its significance is that the Nagas considered that the fertility of the wealthy individual could be transmitted to the whole village through feast giving and erection of monoliths and wooden posts and thus increasing the prosperity of the feast-giver and the village. The Nagas were also head hunters. Head-hunting was practiced to acquire an individual's soul matter which was believed to benefit the possessor as well as bring fertility in the village. Naga society being agrarian, the fertility of the soil, livestock, and fertility in man were highly prized. And since the Nagas have agriculture-based economy, the rituals, festivals and ceremonies like head-hunting and the feast of merit were also closely associated with the concept of fertility. Head hunters and feast-givers had special privileges to decorate and beautify the body and garments with feathers, cowries and conch shells, boar tusk necklaces and various types of clothings and ornaments. The clothings, ornaments, and tattoos worn by the warriors and feast-givers in traditional Naga society speak of their achievements. It reveals the higher social position of the warriors and feast-givers. They were accorded high status because of the fact that they were seen as carriers and transmitters of fertility. Fertility is the main essence which underlies all aspects of Naga art and craft.

Every man in traditional Naga society aspired to be a warrior or a feast-giver because of the eminent position they occupied within the community. The ritual act of feast giving and taking an enemy's head was believed to benefit not only the feast-giver and the warrior but the village as a whole since the continuity of the village was believed to be dependent on them. The more amounts of heads taken by warriors,

higher the prestige. A men's worthiness or manliness was measured by his success in war or performing feast of merit. Men who were not successful in their pursuit were ridiculed and occupied a lower rung in the society. The Nagas believed in the concept of life after death. According to their beliefs, feast-giver and warriors were believed to occupy an honourable place and enjoy the same privileges in the afterlife as well.

Shawls are the predominant cloth among the Nagas. The shawls are worn by both young and old and the designs of the shawl are gender and age specific. There are certain shawls made exclusively for married persons. In the past, among the Nagas, a rich man adorned prestigious shawl which distinguished him from the rest of the group. The shawl symbolised pride and prestige which helped him in ascending the social ladder and was central to Naga identity. The findings suggest that red colour is predominantly used in all Naga textiles, ornaments and various forms of arts and crafts because of its symbolic association with blood. As Victor Turner in his study among the Ndembu talks about the multivocality of symbols in which he says that a single symbol may denote for numerous things. Similarly among the Nagas red colour signifies multivocality of meanings. The use of red colour conveys cultural meanings and displays different aspects of the Naga culture. Historically as Nagas were head-hunters, the use of red colour gets symbolic representation in their clothing, ornaments, and weapons. Red is the colour of "blood", "fire", "success in war", "strength", "power", "status", "masculinity", "courage" "danger", and "ritual purity".

Among the Rengma Nagas after the warriors returned from head-hunting expedition, it was considered taboo to eat with their hands because of which spoons were used. This was done to retain the blood of the enemy and preserve its soul matter. In traditional Rengma shawl, spoons are depicted as a symbolic representation of this cultural practice. The underlying social structure of the Naga society is rooted in their religion as the practice feast of merit and head-hunting in which the society accord high status clothings and body adornments to warriors and feast-givers is associated with their animistic beliefs.

Fire is also symbolically represented by the Nagas to indicate the burning of an enemy's village, which is a symbol of power and prestige. Symbol of the human head is also commonly featured in all forms of Naga art depicting the Naga custom of head-hunting. Human hair is also used extensively as an embellishment in textiles

and ornaments. Animal motifs in the form of elephants, *mithun*, hornbill, birds, cocks, tigers, monkeys, butterflies and the use of tusks, antlers, feathers, furs of different animals signify Naga's close association with nature and is a reflection of the environment in which they live. *Mithun* head is also symbolically represented in all forms of art because of its close association with fertility. Female breasts, hornbill, tiger, monkey, snake are also a symbolical representation of fertility, status, wealth, beauty, strength, courage, and bravery. Hornbill and *mithun* are the cultural icons of the Nagas revered for its beauty and as symbols of wealth and fertility. Weapons like dao, spears, arrows and shields used during warfare are also depicted in their body adornments. The extensive use of shells in Naga material culture and high value attributed to it might be an indication of Nagas being once a sea faring tribe. Cowries in Naga textiles, ornaments are an indication of higher status and also a depiction of warrior status. Ivory is also symbolic of higher status. The motifs in their clothings, body adornment, arts and crafts reflect the close association of the Nagas with these objects in their day to day life. According to Naga beliefs, the soul substance of the animals was believed to be able to be transmitted to human beings. Among certain Naga tribes, adornment of certain ornaments like chin strap made of tiger claws and tiger teeth necklaces enable the wearer to possess the characteristics of a tiger like strength, power, agility, ferociousness. These ornaments indicated high status and highly prized as it was only the skilled hunters and fierce warriors who through their acts of bravery and courage could attain it. The way the Naga society was socially structured can be seen to be reflected through all these as it symbolised a mark of their ethnic as well as their individual identity.

Naga society being patriarchal, the superiority of the male members were seen to be reflected in their traditional clothings, ornaments, weapons and various other forms of art as they were more elaborate and carried more symbolic meanings. Men in traditional Naga society were viewed as protectors of the community and therefore high status were accorded to them. A person in traditional Naga society achieved status based on merit. Every individual had an opportunity to earn his social position either based on his skills and abilities as a warrior or feast-giver or both. It is also interesting to note that women in traditional Naga society achieved higher social position through the status of their husband or father. She was made to enjoy the privileges and adorn expensively and elaborately designed clothing and body

adornments by the mere virtue of being the wife or daughter of a warrior or feast-giver. She had a subordinate role in the society and her identity was expressed through her husband or father and not of her own. The social position of the husband or father determined the designs and patterns weaved in their clothings and other body adornments thus signifying the place they occupied in the society. Men and women in the past were also expected to wear clothes that were specific to their gender, age, and status and not permitted to wear anything they liked. There was marked gender differentiation and gender norms were strictly enforced. Individuals who deviate from gender appropriate clothing and gender specific roles were targeted and stigmatized. Men in Naga society were also strictly forbidden from wearing women's clothes, as women were perceived to be the weaker sex and therefore doing so would ruin their chances in war and hunting.

Weaving is an activity carried out only by the womenfolk. Women played a significant role in the production of clothes. In traditional Naga society, there were so many restrictions imposed on weaving, spinning, dyeing clothes and manufacture of ornaments. From the study we can infer that weaving has religious significance as restrictions and taboos were observed when weaving clothes. Women were forbidden to weave clothes when their husbands were away for trade, war, hunting and fishing as a violation of the norms were believed to bring misfortune upon the husband. Spinning and dyeing of clothes were also involved with similar superstitious beliefs. Even a person involved in the process of manufacturing all these had to be ritually pure and virtuous. They were required to remain chaste and observe dietary restrictions. Rituals were performed and this was done to make it durable. There is also the superstitious cultural belief that pregnant women should abstain from dyeing clothes as it was believed to have an adverse effect on the unborn child. Menstruating women are often seen as impure and ritually unclean and are prohibited from dyeing clothes among the Ao Nagas. At present, the Naga society is losing its traditional knowledge of weaving, handicrafts due to the external factors like modernization and globalization. Nagas still make clothes but the knowledge of weaving is restricted only to few. The loss of knowledge can be attributed to the availability of readymade garments in the market. The Nagas are no longer bounded by the stringent customs that prevailed in the earlier period.

Hair in traditional Naga society is also associated with the concept of fertility. Pregnant women, feast givers were forbidden from cutting their hair short. The length of hair also signified different life stages. Among most Naga tribes, girls kept their hair short to signify their unmarried status. Head dresses of the Nagas were mostly decorated with hornbill feathers which were highly prized. One tail feather was equivalent to the prize of a *mithun* head. It was only worn by warriors of great distinction and feast-giver, his wife and daughters symbolising their high status in society. Wearing of hornbill head dress as a display of status, courage, and bravery has lost its cultural significance. In today's society, it is no longer seen as a sacred object and there are not many restrictions and worn by anyone during festivals.

The traditional practice of head-hunting is represented in various forms of Naga art. The indigenous Naga tattooing is also associated with head-hunting practices and rites de passage. Tattooing among Ao women is examined using Arnold Van Gennep's concept of "Rites de Passage. Tattooing among the Ao women was a symbol of femininity. It was rites de passage for the Ao women and considered a symbol of beauty. It symbolised a girl transitioning from childhood to adulthood and a girl attaining marriageable age and womanhood. Tattooing in Naga culture was also symbolical representation of a man's courage, strength, bravery, virility, and heroism, qualities which were greatly admired and highly prized in men. Head-hunting was also a symbol of masculinity, a highly revered quality. Men with such qualities were given high status and prestige and men lacking these qualities were ridiculed. Head-hunting has been abolished but the Nagas have retained certain aspects of their cultural tradition as victory dance or the warrior dance is still performed during festivals and ceremonies to acknowledge and preserve the indigenous Naga tradition and head-hunting symbols are still used in various forms of arts and crafts.

Traditionally Naga men and women also pierced their ears and wore earrings which are reflective of their cultural values. Piercing of ears was about social acceptance and signs of belonging to a community. It was a socially accepted standard of beauty. Piercing of ears was a sign of manhood among the Naga men.

Over a period of a century, the social structure of the Naga society underwent rapid change. The advent of the British and the introduction of Christianity within the state brought significant changes in the Naga society. The Nagas were animist by faith

before the coming of Christianity. Their life revolved around propitiating the spirits and deities. However, with the coming of the new religion, the Christian missionaries condemned and discouraged the Nagas from following the age-old practices. As a result, the new religion threatened the social fabric of the Naga society and was responsible for the loss of many Naga customs and traditions. Certain shawls and ornaments which were socially restricted to only some privileged individuals have been relaxed and have lost its cultural essence and done away with. In the present society it can be worn by anyone. Many aspects of the Naga culture were abandoned because of the new religion. The social significance of clothing, body adornment and the underlying shared values disintegrated and lost its cultural meanings. Socio-cultural changes resulted in the creation of new motifs and meanings, thus reflecting the changing times. With the adoption of the new religion, Christian values have become more pronounced in present Naga society.

Another factor responsible for bringing about cultural change is education. The Nagas had no access to education and it was only with the coming of the British that they gained exposure to western education. Education transformed the life of the Nagas and it played a significant role in changing the Naga society. At present, education has increased at a fast pace and most Nagas in the urban areas are well educated. Naga parents these days put considerable emphasis on academic achievements. Education is seen as a means to ensure better livelihood and future for their children. English is the medium of instruction in all schools and colleges. Naga society being patriarchal, in the past, women had limited access to education. However, in present society, the status of women has improved drastically. The gender gap is becoming narrower as more women have better access to education, as a result, more Naga women are entering the workforce. The family income is also supplemented by women's participation in the economy. In present Naga society, there is an equal educational opportunity for both a boy child and a girl child. There is gender equality between both men and women and there is a lot of emphasis on higher education. There has been tremendous growth in their economy. However, on the other hand, the Nagas began distancing themselves from their age-old occupation of agriculture due to the new economic opportunities brought about by education. As a result, the beliefs and rites associated with agriculture practices started declining. In order to achieve a higher position in the society, education became more important. The custom of head-

hunting and feast of merit which helped a person to elevate his status in traditional Naga society no longer became a requirement. With the establishments of schools, *morung* as a social institution where the socio-cultural norms, values, beliefs, skills in art and crafts taught to the young boys and girls also declined. This has a significant impact in the loss of traditions. The educated Nagas started adopting the western dress and western ideals of beauty, which was seen as a sign of modernity as well as asserting their new identity as a Christian.

It was also noted that in the wake of modernisation and globalization, the Nagas are going through a sea of transition and their ethnicity which is unique to them is getting assimilated with the global identity. Globalization and modernization are posing a threat to the cultural identity of the Nagas. The present generation is more inclined to conform to the modern social values and is not oriented to customs and traditions and this has an effect on the Naga society. Globalization has led to cultural uniformity which in turn is leading to the gradual decline of the customs and traditions. It has led to the standardization of the Naga cultural values. The age old customs and traditions have been replaced by new cultural values. The traditional value system in the form of myths, legends, folktales, the lore of the people, their vibrant traditional attires and ornaments, dance forms etc have been replaced by a more western outlook. Nevertheless it can be said that the way a person dresses, clothings they wear and the adornments they adorn is still seen as status symbols in modern Naga society. Clothing and body adornments are still perceived to be an indicator of a person's socio-economic status. In present Naga society a person is no longer required to be a warrior or a feast-giver as the practice has been abolished to adorn good clothes and body adornments but people are still judged about their socio-economic position based on what they wear. So it can be said that though the context has changed as Naga society has transitioned from an agrarian to modern society and there has been a transition from wearing traditional clothes to western clothings but cultural values have remained the same and there still is a continuity. The social identity of a person is still very much dependent on their appearance and how they present themselves to others. The centuries-old customs and traditions of the Nagas are not completely abandoned but still exist nevertheless the effects of modernization, globalisation is posing a challenge to the traditional value system of the Nagas.

If we look at the Naga society in the present cultural context, then we find a lot of outside influence also challenging their indigenous culture. There is strong evidence of outside factors penetrating deep within the core of the Naga traditions and bringing about socio-cultural changes within the Naga society. The changes in dress pattern and fashion became more prominent due to easy availability of clothing and fashion products in the local market. The penetration of foreign manufactured garments, industrial goods has led to the decline of wearing traditional garments. Western attires and styles are preferred over ethnic attires. In contemporary Naga society, wearing of western clothing is seen as a sign of modernity, a highly valued characteristic. There is a lot of pressure for people to be dressed in fashionable clothes, trendy shoes, and bags, and follow the latest beauty trends because of it being closely associated with modernity. People who are not dressed fashionably are perceived as old fashioned and as a sign of backwardness. Due to the expansion of the market, the Naga traditional clothings, ornaments, various forms of arts and crafts are gradually evolving to cater to the increasing demand in the market thereby resulting in the creation of new cultural meanings and traditional clothing is losing its significance. With the availability of yarn in the market, the Naga weavers began experimenting with coloured yarn resulting in new colour combinations, new designs, and patterns.

Cultural Contact with other societies has also resulted in cultural diffusion and brought about significant cultural change. Cultural diffusion has also resulted in the hybridization of Naga culture. The outside influences which the Nagas have been receiving are adopted and incorporated into their own culture. It has resulted in the creation of new ideas, values and beliefs. The rich cultural traditions and values which the Nagas have adhered to for centuries are getting diluted and degenerating along the way. The customs, values, beliefs of the Nagas are becoming increasingly culturally homogenized with the West. There is more relatedness with global identity than with ethnic identity among the youths of the present generation. The homogenization of culture and style is making everyone dress the same. Everyone is conforming to the same standards of dress and style. The Nagas are more inclined to follow the west and distance themselves from the mainstream Indian culture because of the differences in the cultural values and ways of life of Nagas. There are many cultural variations in terms of physical features, dress pattern, religion, food habits, and language that the Nagas find it hard to associate themselves with mainstream Indians.

The advancement in technology, mass media has also brought in elements of the Western Civilization, thereby changing the dynamics of the Naga society. Media has a strong influence on the fashion trends and concept of beauty among the Naga youth. Fashion has become a major part due to advances in technology and the influence of the mainstream culture among the Naga youth. The Naga Youth of the present generation are heavily influenced by popular culture and are in tune with international fashion trends and also influenced by the fashion trends from Korea, Japan, and Thailand. The Japanese fashion style is also gaining popularity among the youth. The change in the aspects of clothing and concept of beauty reveals the changes taking place in Naga society. The diagram below depicts the changes taking place in Naga society (see diagram 14).

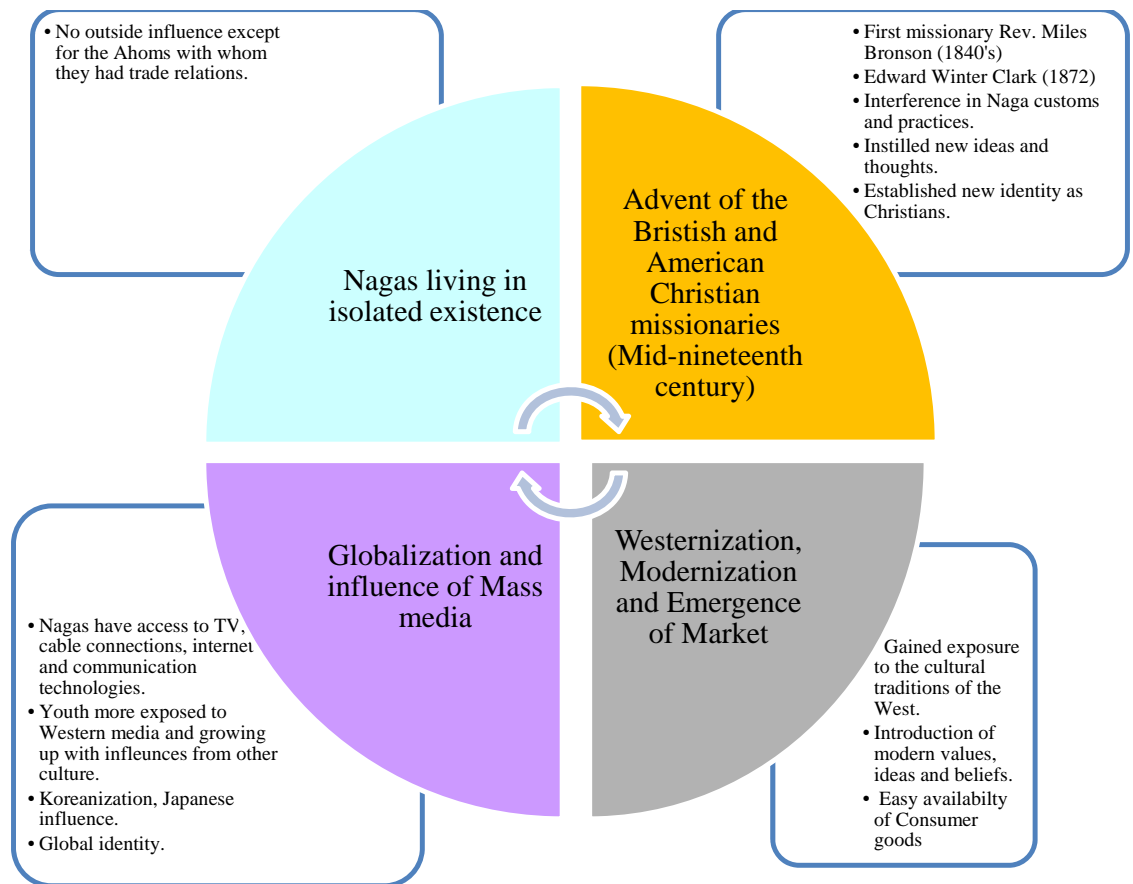


Diagram 16: The Change in Naga Society

Children of the present generation are surrounded by technological advances. Many young people are ‘tech-savvy’ and becoming overly dependent on technology.

Advancement in technology has improved their lives and they are able to connect with people from all over the world resulting in the exchange of ideas. Improved roads, advancement in communication, cross-cultural contacts has brought in a sense of awareness and consciousness among the Nagas. Due to the influence of mass media, the western ideals of beauty have become the standard in Naga culture. Due to the impact of mass media, there is a global standard of beauty which is highly influenced by the west. The media's perception of beauty could be felt even among the Nagas as there is a preference for lighter skin over darker skin tone.

Masculinity and femininity are manifested through the use of different clothing, hairstyles, behaviour. Both Naga men and women dress in a certain way to identify with their gender and those who do not conform to the gender specific clothing or ideals of beauty are being ridiculed for not being 'masculine' or 'feminine' enough. The normative standard of feminine beauty among the young Naga women is changing due to increased exposure to beauty images of women in the media. Body hair removal is considered to be the accepted social norm amongst younger women.

The field research also indicated how increased media exposure has led to body image dissatisfaction and why there is pressure among the younger generation Nagas to conform to what is acceptable. From the study it was found that majority of the respondents preferred thin body types and considered 'thin' to be the body ideal. Female sex appeal and attractiveness were seen to be defined by the thin body. Thinness was seen to be equated with health, happiness, desirability, confidence, high self-esteem and success. Bodies undergo constant evaluation and individuals who do not fit into the cultural and media ideals of beauty are victimized.

From the study it was also found that there is not much contrast and distinction between the rural and urban societies in terms of the dressing pattern. The traditional Naga attires are even not worn by the villagers on a daily basis. The changes taking place in the urban world is seen to be getting assimilated among the rural Naga societies as well. The rural areas are also coming in contact with the modern world. They are also undergoing a transition from a traditional agrarian society into modern society. The rural population now have access to good roads, electricity, television, radio, dish-tvs, mobile phones etc. Even the habits of the rural population are changing and are undergoing a major transformation. Better road connectivity has led

to the flow of goods and setting up of business establishments within the villages. The penetration of mass media even in rural areas has brought increased awareness and the rural population are also exposed to and adapting the urban lifestyles. The Naga villages are no longer an isolated unit. There is a constant cultural exchange between the rural and the urban societies. Villagers frequently visit towns and cities due to better communication and better road connectivity and these results in an exchange of ideas and values. There has been a change in the attitude of the rural youth towards agriculture as most of them are getting involved in non-agricultural activities.

The number of people living in the urban areas has increased over the decade. However we see a clear economic disparity between people living in the urban settlements and the rural societies. Due to higher levels of income, the purchasing power is more in urban areas than in rural areas. The urban population has access to better economic opportunities. There is a high rate of illiteracy among rural population whereas the urban population is more educated. The standard of living is low in villages. Differences in attitudes and behaviour exist between the rural and urban people and these are reflected in their clothing, notion of beauty etc.

Preserving cultural heritage in changing times and holding on to tradition in a fast changing world is difficult. In the past, parents and elders passed down the traditional knowledge and cultural traditions to their children and community. Parents of the present generation seldom impart knowledge of their traditional arts and crafts to their children. The focal point of many people's lives nowadays is their professional jobs. There are too many things going on in people's life and they struggle to find the work-life balance. In trying to keep up with the demands and pressure of work and personal life people have lost touch with their cultural roots. Parents rarely find time to impart cultural knowledge to their children and this has an effect on the loss of cultural traditions. Many traditional values and customs of the Nagas have been lost as the youth of the present generation do not know much about their own culture. They have very little knowledge about their own cultural traditions. However, it was observed that in the recent years there has been a conscious effort made by some of the older generation to preserve the rich cultural heritage. They felt that the youths were alienating their own Naga identity and saw it as a threat to their own culture. The research indicated that certain groups and organizations were seen to be taking

initiative and making an effort to preserve the history and culture of the Nagas and retaining their own cultural identity.

Many socio-cultural changes have taken place in Naga society because of the influence of a number of external forces like colonialism, Christianity, education, westernization, modernisation, globalization and media which have contributed to the change in the traditional values and beliefs and these have consequences on the cultural aspects of the Nagas. As the Naga tradition is closely rooted to the cultural practices of head-hunting and feast of merit, discarding it has cultural consequences and it means loss of their Naga identity. As a result, the Nagas are faced with challenges of creating a new identity for themselves. The traditional garments, concept of beauty and the socially valued qualities which served as a marker of their Naga cultural identity are dying out and seem to be getting assimilated with the global identity.

To conclude, a study on clothing, beauty and the various forms of body adornment helped us in gaining deep insight into the socio-cultural and religious practices of the Nagas and also changes taking place in Naga society thereby helping us in better understanding the society as a whole.

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GLOSSARY

<i>Aminihu-</i>	Boar tusk choker worn by Sumi warriors
<i>Amini-kedah-</i>	Apron embellished with cowries worn by Sumi men
<i>Amlakha-</i>	Sash won by Sumi warriors
<i>Angh-</i>	Hereditary chief of the Konyak Nagas
<i>Apuki-</i>	Dormitory in Sumi dialect
<i>Ariju-</i>	Boy's dormitory in Ao dialect
<i>Atsupri-</i>	Girdle worn by Pochury women
<i>Avikiyiphi-</i>	Sumi Naga shawl worn by a feast-giver and renowned warriors
<i>Chi pi khwü/ thüpi khü-</i>	An ornate shawl worn by the Chakhesang Nagas but only by rich men after performing the feast of merit
<i>Chumpo-</i>	Dormitory in Lotha dialect
<i>Dao-</i>	Machete
<i>Dobashi-</i>	Interpreters for the British
<i>Donkho-</i>	Head dress of the Lotha Nagas
<i>Ecchawoko kotsen-</i>	Traditional Lotha custom of imposing fine in the form of pig on the offenders of adultery
<i>Echü Likvü-</i>	Land of the Dead in Lotha dialect
<i>Echüli Vandamü-</i>	Spirit guarding the Land of the Dead as per the Lotha beliefs
<i>Ekhyo ekhiüng-</i>	Hero in Lotha dialect
<i>Emvü ranki-</i>	Taboo hut in Lotha dialect
<i>Fanet-</i>	Cowrie embellished shawl of the Phom Nagas
<i>Fufo-</i>	Cowrie in Lotha dialect
<i>Fufo rive-</i>	Cowrie ornamented loincloth worn by rich Lotha men or warriors
<i>Gaon bura-</i>	Government officials in charge of collection of house taxes during the British period
<i>Hanlam-</i>	Custom practiced by the Lotha Nagas whereby the bride's family demands unblemished pig from the groom's family at the time of marriage
<i>Jangta-</i>	Shin guard worn by Ao men
<i>Jori-</i>	Shin guard worn by Lotha men

<i>Khekup/ Khezi/ Khor-</i>	Ivory armlet worn by Lotha men
<i>Khel-</i>	Colony/ward
<i>Kheram-</i>	Wristband tied on the deceased person's hand to enable the soul to purchase water from the spirit guarding the Land of the Dead among the Lothas
<i>Khiaptso-</i>	Spiked brass armlet worn by Khamniungan warrior as symbol of his warrior status
<i>Kichuki-</i>	Dormitory in Angami dialect
<i>Kishüroe-</i>	Commoner in Lotha dialect
<i>Kübok-</i>	Ao Chungli women secure their bun in black hair adornment made from plied fallen hair known as kübok
<i>Langtem-</i>	Loincloth worn by Ao men
<i>Lankummulong-</i>	Conch shell necklace worn by rich Ao men
<i>Lapuchoh-</i>	Loincloth ornamented with cowries worn by Sumi men
<i>Laya-</i>	Currency made from brass disc used by the Ao Nagas
<i>Lejup-</i>	Scabbard in Lotha dialect
<i>Lemlangvi-</i>	The Ao Mongsen women secure their hair bun in a white hair adornment made from white cotton yarn known as lemlangvi
<i>Lohe-</i>	Shawl of the Angami Nagas
<i>Longpensü-</i>	Prestigious Lotha men's shawl worn by the rich men after performing the feast of merit symbolizing his social standing within the society
<i>Longritzu Lenden-</i>	A place where the souls of the deceased take bath before proceeding on its journey to the Land of the Dead according to Ao beliefs
<i>Mangkotepsü/Tsüngkot epsü-</i>	Warrior shawl of the Ao Nagas, entitled to be worn only by a warrior and rich men who have performed the feast of merit
<i>Mechongchangshi-</i>	Carnelian bead and trumpet shaped brass spike necklace worn by Ao women
<i>Mekhala-</i>	Wraparound or sarong, the traditional dress of Naga women
<i>Metsimo-</i>	Custodian of the gateway leading to the Land of the Dead according to the Angami beliefs
<i>Meyutsungba-</i>	God of Justice and God of the Land of the Dead according to the

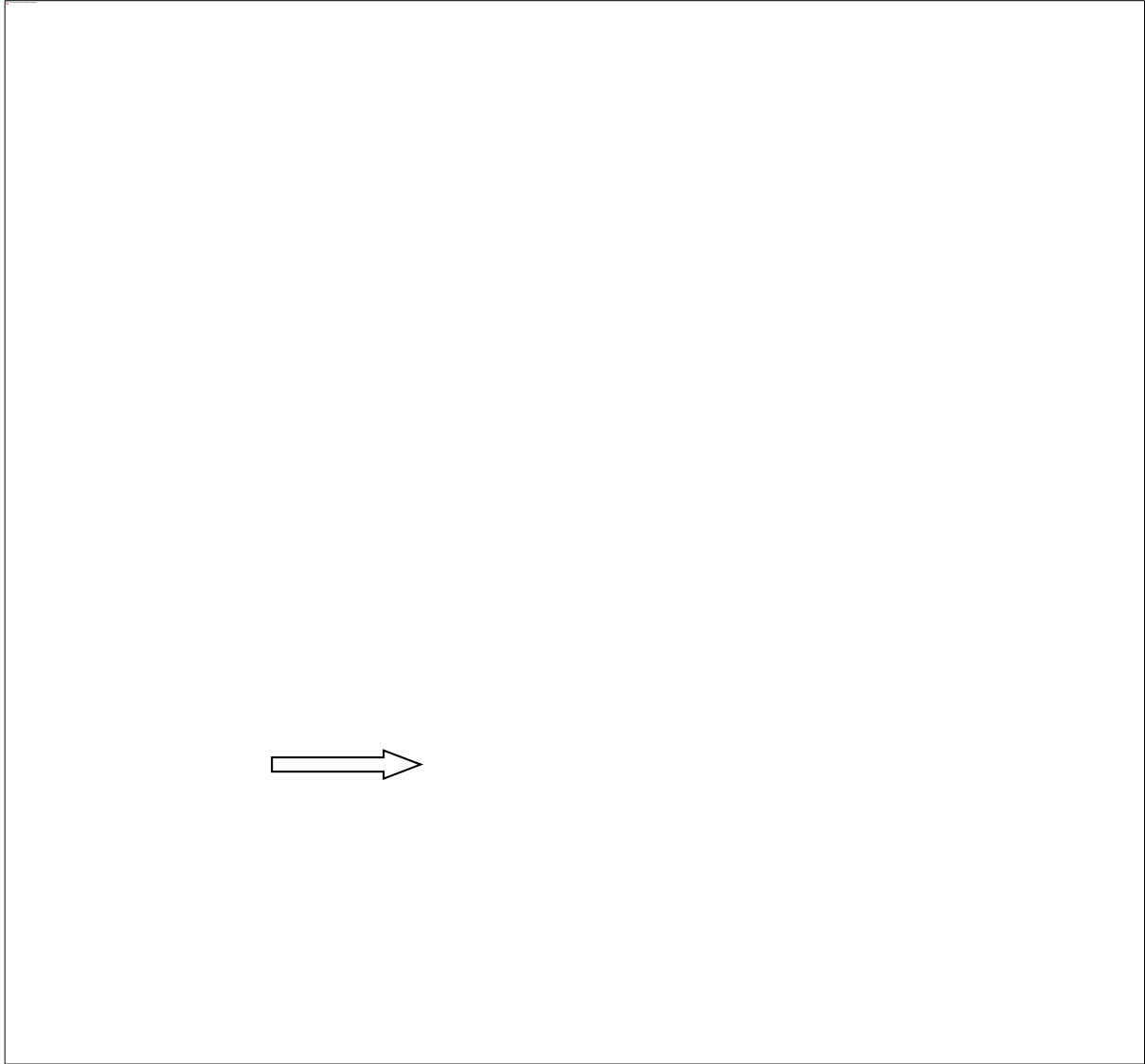
	Ao Nagas
<i>Mhenkitong-</i>	Banyan tree found in all Lotha villages where the heads of the enemies were hung when head-hunting was practiced
<i>Mithun-</i>	<i>Bos frontalis</i>
<i>Moatsü-</i>	Harvest festival celebrated by the Ao Nagas
<i>Moh nei-</i>	Cowrie embellished shawl worn by Chang warriors of great distinction
<i>Monyu-</i>	Spring festival celebrated in the month of April by the Phom tribe
<i>Morung-</i>	Dormitory
<i>Mvüchok-</i>	Naming ceremony of a child among the Lotha Nagas
<i>Naknyulem-</i>	Festival celebrated by the Chang Nagas in the month of July
<i>Ngada-</i>	Post harvest festival of the Rengma tribe celebrated in the month of November
<i>Otsso-</i>	Spear in Lotha dialect
<i>Panji-</i>	Sharpened bamboo sticks used as a weapon by the Nagas
<i>Phipha-</i>	Shin guard worn by Angami men
<i>Potsow-</i>	God in Lotha dialect
<i>Putu menden-</i>	Village council in Ao dialect
<i>Pvüti-</i>	Priest in Lotha dialect
<i>Rehuke khim-</i>	Cowrie ornamented shawl worn by rich Yimchungrü men
<i>Rensi-</i>	Dormitory in Rengma dialect
<i>Rhamvü-</i>	Head-hunting ceremony practiced by the Lotha Nagas
<i>Rikyüsü-</i>	Prestigious shawl worn by the Lotha warrior
<i>Ryütssen-</i>	Sash worn by the Lotha warriors
<i>Sekrenyi-</i>	Festival of the Angami Nagas
<i>Shibu-</i>	Boar tusk choker worn by Ao warriors
<i>Sübeti-</i>	Mekhala (wraparound) in Ao dialect
<i>Sukrunye-</i>	Festival celebrated by the Chakhesangs in the month of January
<i>Sürüm-</i>	Mekhala (wraparound) in Lotha dialect
<i>Temkhu-</i>	The head-dress of the Ao Nagas
<i>Teri phiketsu-</i>	High-status shawl of the Rengma Nagas worn only by warriors of great distinction
<i>Tipu tenem-</i>	Land of the Dead according to the Ao Nagas

<i>Tokhu emong-</i>	Post harvest festival celebrated by the Lotha Nagas
<i>Tongpang-</i>	Crystal earring worn by Ao women
<i>Tongten-</i>	Log drum in Ao dialect
<i>Tsingrangsu-</i>	An elaborately designed shawl worn by Sangtam men belonging to high social position
<i>Tsüki-</i>	Girl's dormitory in Ao dialect
<i>Tsukro-</i>	Necklace worn by Lotha women
<i>Tsula-</i>	An elaborately decorated head dress of hornbill feathers worn by the Angami men
<i>Tsungremong-</i>	Pre-harvest festival celebrated by the Ao Nagas
<i>Tsütshü-</i>	Hair adornment worn by Angami women made from fallen hair for securing hair bun
<i>Tuluni-</i>	Festival celebrated by the Sumi tribe in the month of July marking the completion of seed sowing
<i>Yimbu-</i>	Land of the Dead according to the Konyak Nagas
<i>Yongmen-</i>	Spirally coiled brass hair ornament worn by Ao women
<i>Zao chisu-</i>	Lard in Chakhesang dialect



Map : 1 India

Source: www.mapsofindia.com



Map: 2 Nagaland

Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nagaland>

Photographs



Plate 18: Mangkotepešü or Tsüngkotepešü shawl of the Ao Nagas



Plate 19: *chi pi khwü* or *thüpi khü* shawl of the Chakhesang Nagas



Plate 20: Chakhesang men wearing *chi pi khwü* or *thüpi khü* shawl

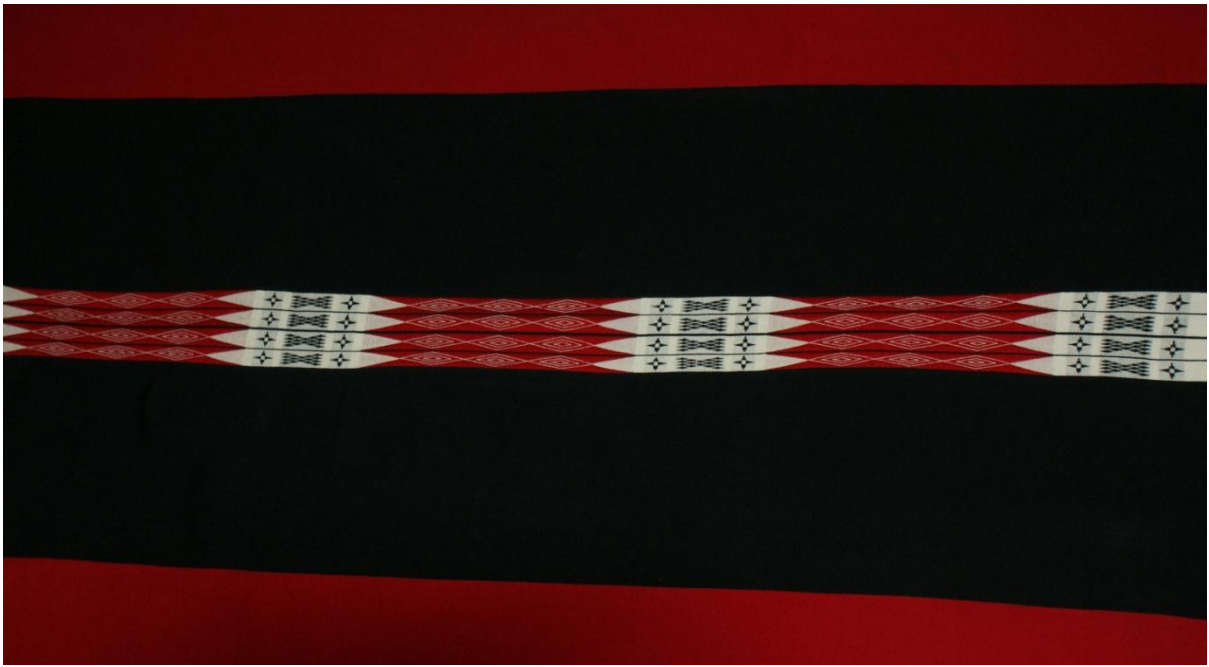


Plate 21: Traditional Shawl of the Phom women



Plate 22: Traditional shawl of the Phom men



Plate 23: A man adorned in traditional Chang shawl



Plate 24: Cowrie embellished shawl entitled to be worn only by a warrior of great distinction

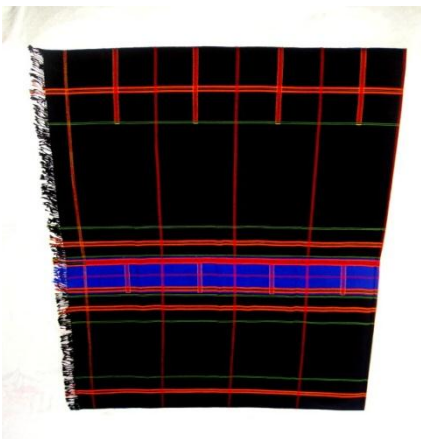


Plate 25: Different varieties of shawl and *mekhala* of Lotha Naga women



Plate 26: Traditional shawl and mekhala of Ao Naga women **Plate 27: Traditional mekhala of Phom Naga women**



Plate 28: Angami Naga women and Phom Naga woman in their traditional attires and ornaments



Plate 29: Sangtam women dressed in traditional regalia; demonstrating pounding of rice during Hornbill festival



Plate 30: Sangtam women in their traditional clothing



Plate 31: Ao Naga women in their traditional clothing and ornaments



Plate 32: An Ao Naga man wearing boar tusk choker around the neck and head dress made of hornbill feathers



Plate 33: Yimchungrü men in traditional warrior clothing and weapons



Plate 34: A man and a woman in Yimchungrü traditional attire



Plate 35: Traditional ornaments of the Lotha women



Plate 36: Varieties of ornaments of both men and women of the Phom tribe



Plate 37: A Lotha man wearing boar tusk choker around the neck and a Chakhesang man wearing flower as ear ornament



Plate 38: An Angami and Chakhesang men wearing an ear ornament made of blue jay feathers and a necklace made from berries of solanum khasianum



Plate 39: A Konyak man wearing a necklace with brass heads.



Plate 40: Naga men wearing chin strap necklace made of tiger claws and head dress decorated with boar tusk and buffalo horn.



Plate 41: Naga men wearing tiger tooth necklace and tassels of human hair as ear ornament

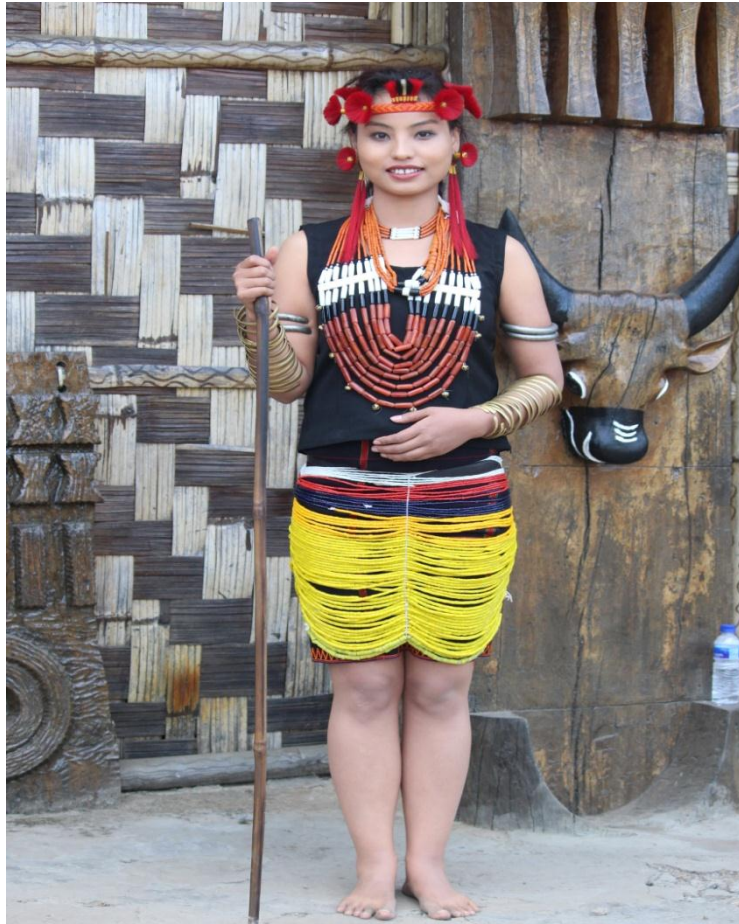


Plate 42: A Sumi damsel in her traditional attire; the broad girdle of yellow beads over the *mekhala* was a status symbol and the hair fillet symbolized betrothal



Plate 43: A Naga man adorning a round ear ornament carved from conch shell with tattoo designs.



Plate 44: Naga men wearing shin guard made out from woven cane strips and bear's skin; the man on the left drinking traditional rice beer from a *mithun*'s horn



Plate 45: Naga men in traditional hairstyle; Plate 46 : Traditional Naga Waistcoats



Plate 47 : Elaborately decorated head dress worn by Naga men



Plate 48 : Indigenous ornaments for sale during the Hornbill festival



Plate 49: A display of traditional Naga weapons; Plate 50: Head taker's basket



Plate 51: People taking part in the World War II peace rally during the Hornbill festival



Plate 52: Cultural troupes performing dances around the bonfire during the closing ceremony at the Hornbill festival



Plate 53: Tetseo sisters, a renowned folk band from Nagaland dressed in Chakhesang traditional attire at the Hornbill festival



Plate 54: Naga men and woman with tattoo inscribed on the body



Plate 55: Tattoos adorned by the younger generation in tune with mainstream culture



Plate 56



Plate 57



Plate 58

Plate 56-58: Fashion trends among the Naga youth



Plate 59: Naga bride and groom wearing western styled white wedding gowns and suits in accordance with Christian tradition

APPENDIX-I

Schedule (for household purpose)

I. Head of the household

Tribe/ caste:

II. Details of household members:

No	Name	Age	Gender	Relation with head	Education	Occupation	
						Primary	secondary

III. House:

- a) Type 1: Pucca (RCC); Type 2: Semi-pucca (Tiled/ tin roof and cement walls;
Type 3: Kutcha (hay roof& mud wall).
- b) No of rooms:
- c) Toilet facility: Yes or no
- d) Electrified: Yes or no
- e) Courtyard: Yes or no

IV. Household items:

- a) Television- colour/ black and white
- b) Computer
- c) Vehicle-two wheeler/four wheeler
- d) Refrigerator

- e) Cooking gas
- f) Furniture
- g) Any other valuable items
- V. Agricultural land (in acres): Yes or no
- VI. Which religion do you follow?
 - a) Christianity – Baptist/ Catholic/ Protestant/ Assembly of God/ Other

APPENDIX-II

Naga society has transitioned from an agrarian to modern society and a large number of Nagas nowadays live in urban areas seeking better economic opportunities. A table is presented below to show the number of Naga Government employees working in different departments.

Distribution of Naga Government employees according to status and department wise (Census 2011).

S.No	Department	Class 1	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Total	Rank
1	Administrative Training Institute	13	-	26	22	61	58
2	Agriculture	106	104	780	357	1347	11
3	Animal Husbandry & Veterinary	164	19	630	726	1539	10
4	Arts & Culture	14	22	106	76	218	41
5	Assembly Secretariat	37	12	99	66	214	42
6	Civil Secretariat	279	101	1260	731	2371	8
7	Co-operation	14	8	181	62	265	40
8	Economics & Statistics	16	38	474	76	604	22
9	Election	10	20	75	43	148	48
10	Electricity	94	152	1469	1329	3044	7
11	Employment & Craftsman Training	21	21	243	117	402	28
12	Evaluation	7	10	63	23	103	52
13	Excise	16	38	342	36	432	27
14	Fire Services	2	6	47	270	325	35

15	Fisheries	14	19	188	87	308	37
16	Forest	51	85	882	183	1201	13
17	General Administration	170	32	2317	2095	4614	5
18	Geology & mining	53	23	178	111	365	30
19	Governor's Secretariat	10	1	22	33	66	57
20	Health & Family welfare	428	52	3468	2875	6823	3
21	Higher Education	493	15	228	320	1056	15
22	Higher Technical Education	47	3	78	78	206	43
23	Home guards	14	11	163	148	336	32
24	Horticulture	30	25	174	253	482	25
25	Industries	105	66	687	347	1205	12
26	Information & public relation	11	30	433	157	631	21
27	Information technology	5	1	13	7	26	62
28	Irrigation & flood control	40	35	452	230	757	19
29	Jail & prisons	10	12	343	101	466	26
30	Judicial	37	5	151	101	294	38
31	Labour	12	7	85	51	155	46
32	Land record & survey	16	6	180	125	327	34
33	Land resource	17	8	88	29	142	49
34	Legal metrology & consumer protection	10	1	70	56	137	50
35	Lotteries	5	3	22	18	48	60
36	N.B.S.E	31	3	38	14	86	54

37	N.P.S.C	14	5	26	27	72	56
38	N.S.T	29	21	712	330	1092	14
39	PWD (Housing)	68	108	1081	1028	2285	9
40	PWD (Mechanical)	17	64	515	349	945	17
41	PWD (N.H)	26	36	197	131	390	29
42	PWD (Roads & Bridges)	151	215	2561	1783	4710	4
43	Planning & Co- ordination	26	19	97	32	174	45
44	Police	293	228	22566	2552	25639	1
45	Printing & stationary	13	9	283	30	335	33
46	Public health & engineering	75	146	1228	2637	4086	6
47	Rural development	122	48	530	254	954	16
48	S.C.E.R.T	47	23	43	38	151	47
49	S.I.R.D	10	2	15	13	40	61
50	School education	163	223	12827	2060	15273	2
51	Science & technology	5		15	5	25	63
52	Sericulture	16	12	197	90	315	36
53	Social security & welfare	11	72	458	129	670	20
54	Soil conservation	62	51	530	238	881	18
55	Supply	15	2	309	202	528	24
56	Taxes	12	13	109	83	217	41
57	Tourism	14	11	56	52	133	51
58	Transport	7	10	128	42	187	44
59	Treasury & accounts	29	25	333	148	535	23
60	Underdeveloped	13	8	36	41	98	53

	areas						
61	Urban development	33	26	115	107	281	39
62	Vigilance commission	16	7	40	18	81	55
63	Women development	7	3	40	7	57	59
64	Youth resources & sports	11	20	162	157	350	31
	Total	3707	2401	61264	23936	91308	

(Source: Directorate of Economics & Statistics)