

**Literate Modernity and New Cultural Adaptations:  
Colonial and Missionary Experiences and Legacies in the  
Naga Hills from 1830s-1950s**

**A thesis submitted in April 2018 to the University of Hyderabad in  
partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy in History**

**By**

**RIKU KHUTSO**

**14SHPH04**



**Department of History**

**School of Social Sciences**

**University of Hyderabad**

**(P.O) Central University, Gachibowli**

**Hyderabad -500 046**

**Telangana: India**

**2018**



## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “Literate Modernity and New Cultural Adaptations: Colonial and Missionary Experiences and Legacies in the Naga Hills from 1830s-1950s” submitted by Riku Khutso bearing Registration number 14SHPH04 in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in History is a bonafide work carried out by him under my supervision and guidance.

This thesis is free from plagiarism and has not been submitted in part or in full to this or any other University or Institution for award of any degree or diploma.

Parts related to this thesis have been

A. Published in the following publication

1. *History, Identity and Language: Tenyidie and Its Literary Networks*. Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 Vol. 18:2 February 2018 India’s Higher Education Authority UGC Approved List of Journals Serial Number 49042
2. *Shifting Democratic Experiences of Nagas*, in Jelle J. P. Wouters and Zhoto Tunyi (ed.), *Exploring Democracy in Nagaland: Tribes, Traditions and Tensions*. Kohima: Highlander Books. 2018.

B. Presented in the following conferences:

1. Presented a paper on *English Language and the Making of Colonial Urban Space* at the International Conference on ‘History of Cities in India’ organized

by the Department of History, University of Hyderabad during 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> December, 2014.

2. Presented a paper titled *Socio Political Institutions, Representation and Public Sphere* at the National Seminar, Discoursing the Shifts in the Naga Society in North-East India organized by the Centre for Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy in collaboration with the Naga Research Scholars' Forum, University of Hyderabad, 2016
3. Presented a paper titled *Forging Commonalities of 'Nation': The Role of Colonial Officials and the Early American Baptist Missionaries in the Assam Hills* at the national seminar on Reinterpreting the Idea of Nation, organized by TRACI, New Delhi, 2017

Further, the student has passed the following courses towards fulfilment of coursework requirements for PhD/ was exempted from doing coursework (recommended by Doctoral Committee) on the basis of the following courses during his M. Phil programme and the M. Phil degree was awarded:

Course Code	Name	Credits	Pass/Fail
HS 701	Historiography	4	Pass
HS 702	Historical Methods	4	Pass
HS 703	Seminar Course	4	Pass

Supervisor

Head of the Department

Dean of the School

## DECLARATION

I, Riku Khutso (Regd. No. 14SHPH04) hereby declare that this thesis titled “Literate Modernity and New Cultural Adaptations: Colonial and Missionary Experiences and Legacies in the Naga Hills from 1830s-1950s” submitted by me under the guidance and supervision of Dr. Anindita Mukhopadhyay is a bonafide research work which is also free from plagiarism. I also declare that it has not been submitted in part or full to the University or any other University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma. I hereby agree that my thesis can be deposited in Shodhganga INFLIBNET.

A report on plagiarism statistics from the University Librarian is enclosed.

**A report on plagiarism statistics from the University Librarian is enclosed.**

Date:

Signature:

Name:

Regd. No: 14SHPH04

//Countersigned//

Supervisor

Head of the Department

## **Acknowledgement**

When I was growing up, I used to dream of pursuing a Ph.D. degree someday. Many things have changed in the course of time but this aspiration remained. Today, I'm thankful to God for enabling me to submit my Ph.D. thesis in the department of History, University of Hyderabad. This research is a small endeavor to study and write about the history of North-East region, and particularly of the Nagas. With all the limitations, I sincerely hope that this thesis would prompt deeper engagement on the socio-cultural, political and economic history of the region in the near future.

It was some years ago, when I was attending a classroom lecture during the fourth semester in Masters that I developed interest in the area of history, language and public sphere. The professor who delivered the lecture was none other than my present Ph.D. supervisor, Dr. Anindita Mukhopadhyay. I had completed M.Phil. under her astute supervision and today as I submit my Ph.D. thesis, I have no words to express my gratitude, my respect and my admiration for a teacher who guides her students with great care. I have learned a lot over the years. Thank you, ma'am! It was such a privilege to have worked under you.

I'm grateful to Prof. Sanjay Subodh, the Head of Department of History for being always available and for extending all help whenever required. I express my sincere gratitude to my doctoral committee members: Dr V. J. Varghese and Dr. Bangya Bhukya, for all the valuable suggestions and research inputs they offered during our short time together. Thanks to Dr. Rajagopal for being always supportive. Thanks to all the professors for nurturing me in one way or the other during my academic pursuit in the department: Prof. Aloka Parasher Sen, Prof Attalury Murali, Prof. Rekha Pande, Prof. K. P. Rao, Dr. Rajesh, Dr. Rashmi, Dr. B. Eswara Rao and Dr. Vijaya Ramdas Mandala.

I'm also grateful to the office staffs of Department of History for always being helpful. Thanks to the staffs of Indira Gandhi Memorial Library, University of Hyderabad, from where I had written my thesis. Thanks to all the staffs of Nagaland State Archives, Kohima, Assam State Archives, National Archives of India, New Delhi, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi and Council of Baptist Churches in North-East India Archives, Guwahati. These libraries and archives had provided me with a store house of historical sources and archival materials to enable me complete my thesis. I also, thank the University Grants Commission and the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, New Delhi, for providing me research fellowship under the scheme of Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship (ST).

During the course of my research, people have supported me in different ways. I feel fortunate to have closely associated with Limakumba Walling, Prof. Ajailiu Niumai, Prof. Kham Khan Suan Hausing, and Dr. Hoinelhing Sitlhou in different ways. Rhelo Kenye and Arenla T. Ao have been always there for me. They have closely read through my chapters and made corrections, for which I cannot thank them enough. I'm also grateful to Temsurenla Ozukum and Monica Kanga for reading part of my chapters. Alem Dzuwichu has been my mentor and friend. I shall miss the discussions with Kethosilhu Meyase and Tumbenthung Humtsoe in the night canteens. This reminds me of NRSF and its core team members with whom I had the opportunity to work closely for the last couple of years. Some friends who moved out of Hyderabad continue to encourage me: Thingminao Horam, Lemtsaliba Jing and Kelevil Neikha. Thanks to Neikesano Rame, Amihe Swu, Nyan Woch, Imchasenla Longchar, Imsurenla Jamir for your friendship and support whenever I needed. Thanks to my batchmates - Thungdemo Yanthan, Rongsenzulu Jamir and Merenmeso for giving me confidence to fight my way through challenging times. Grateful to Pooja, Anand Damodaran, Saptarshi, Amrita, Aien, Chantu, Vivek, Jahnu, Nassif and all others who had encouraged me.

I'm very grateful to Dr. Venusa Tinyi and Asona for embracing me as part of their family. I will always cherish the memories we had together in Hyderabad. Not

forgetting Mr. Zajamo and Naro for being my spiritual mentor in this city and for their friendship.

I would also like to mention some of my near and dear ones for their relentless support. Uncle S. K. Kenye's home has been my transit point all throughout my studies outside. Brother Lhiwepe and family has been my generous host in Kohima. Sincere thanks to all other relatives for their prayers.

Finally, I'm forever grateful to my parents. With big hearts, they've always given me freedom and their unconditional love to pursue my dreams. Thank you, daddy and mummy! To all my siblings, thanks for your patience, love and prayers!

The love, support and encouragement in different ways have made my research and stay in Hyderabad a delightful and memorable experience!

To dearest  
Dad and Mom!



*“My grandfather received the faith on hearing the Word of God;  
My father gave me a New Testament to read the Word of God;  
I was born again through reading the Word of God;  
In America I started to study the Word of God;  
It took me 14 years to translate into Ao the Word of God;  
I started the ministry of my life teaching the Word of God;  
My whole life was spent in preaching the Word of God;  
I am still trying to obey the Word of God.”<sup>1</sup>*

---

<sup>1</sup> I. Ben Wati, who was born at the American Baptist Mission Centre, Impur in 1920 talks about how the ‘Word’ by which he was referring to the Bible had remained the plot on which his life was planted. I. Ben Wati, ‘Impur Chanu’ (Impur Child), (1920-1935), An Autobiography, p. 11-12

## **Glossary**

ABAM: Ao Baptist Arogo Mungdang

ABFMS: American Baptist Foreign Mission Society

Aksu Tax: An annual collection to entertain village guests

Amung: A reference for Genna in Ao

Bazaar: A Sanskrit term for market

Chongli: The Ao dialect that was appropriated by the missionaries and standardized.

CBCNEI: Council of Baptist Churches in North-East India

Coolie: Impressed local laborers and porters

D.C: Deputy Commissioner

Dobashi: Locals employed as interpreters by the colonial government

Genna (Menyi): A ceremonial day (s) of rest

Goanbura (GB): Government representative in the village

Kechike: A reference for house-horn in Kuzhale Chakhesang language

Khel: A kinship social group larger than a clan

Khrü: A Kuzhale Chakhesang reference for month, which also translates as ‘moon’.

Kuzhanuokhro: An ancestral tribute offered to the Kuzhami warriors by its descendants

Menopi: A Kuzhale Chakhesang reference for ‘god’

Mhechemomi/ Mhasikemomia: A reference for uneducated or “those who doesn’t know about things”

Mhekechemi/Mhakesimia: A reference for the educated or translates as “those who know about things”.

Morung: A traditional dormitory for young boys and girls. These dormitories were indigenous institutions of learning and cultural reproduction

NNC: Naga National Council formed in 1946

Pathsalas: Assamese term for schools

Potso: A Lotha reference for ‘god’

Sahib: A reverential term to address administrators and officials

SDO: Sub Divisional Officer

Teakhe Mepou: A traditional assembly of elders from the three cognate villages, analogous to a general assembly in today’s parlance.

Tenyimia: Reference for a sub-ethnic group with similar language, culture and history. Tenyimia group represent one of the largest sub-ethnic group among the Nagas

Tsungrem: Ao reference for ‘god’

Ukepenuopfu: A reference of feminine ‘god’ in Tenyidie language

UNESCO: The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

## **Content**

<i>Certificate</i>	<i>ii-iii</i>
<i>Declaration</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>Acknowledgement</i>	<i>v-vii</i>
<i>Glossary</i>	<i>x-xi</i>

## **Introduction 1-42**

- I Contextual Exposition of the Study
- II The Idea of ‘Culture’ As A Way of Life
- III A Critical Juxtaposition of Oral And Literary Cultural Systems
- IV The Production And Circulation of New ‘Orality’
- V Teleological Study of Literary Languages
- VI English Language And Formation of Public Sphere in Colonial Naga Hills
- VII Exploring Alternative Modernities in Context
- VIII A Critical Study of Theoretical Paradigms
- IX Historical Methods
- X Overview of The Thesis

## **Chapter I**

### **Initial Encounters:**

#### **A Case of Socio-Cultural and Political Impasse 43-80**

- 1.1 Early Colonial Engagements: 1830s to 1870s
- 1.2 Scale of Civilization and New Economic Categories
- 1.3 Pre-colonial Modes of Power and Prosperity
- 1.4 The Arrival of American Baptist Missionaries)
- 1.5 Collaborative beginnings
- 1.6 The mission to the Nagas
- 1.7 The colonial and missionary ‘scale of ‘civilization’

## **Chapter II**

### **The Making of ‘Literates’ and ‘Converts’:**

#### **The Sociology of Literary Language 81-137**

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Literary as an epistemological threshold
- 2.3 Educational evangelism as priority
- 2.4 The Education Policies of American Baptist Mission Under Assam Field
- 2.5 Missionaries as Linguists and Administrators as Taskmasters
- 2.6 Literacy Campaigns, Conversions and New Imaginations
- 2.7 The Intervention of Literacy And Proselytization Into The Cultural Cores
- 2.8 The New Socio-Cultural Imagination Of Missionaries, Administrators and, ‘Literates’ and ‘Converts’
- 2.9 The Emergence of a New Literate Culture

## **Chapter III**

#### **Cultural Translations and Emergence of New Social Dynamics 138-193**

- 3.1 Pedagogic Productions
- 3.2 Pedagogic Translations and Cultural Translations
- 3.3 Tuning Voices and Cultures:  
Ethnic Musical Aesthetics and the Christian Shift
- 3.4 Educational Reforms and Proactive Engagement
- 3.5 The Emergence of a Literate and a Didactic Space
- 3.6 Cultural tensions viz. ‘Non-Christians’ and ‘Converts’;  
‘Administrators’ and ‘Missionaries’
- 3.7 Understanding Cultural Difference
- 3.8 From Cultural Difference to Cultural Mimicry
- 3.9 Naga Articulation of a Composite Hybrid Identity\

## **Chapter IV**

### **The Complex Web of Interactions and Outcomes**

**194-247**

- 4.1. Institutionalizing Cultural Change
- 4.2. Old Cultures And New Obligations: Locating Early Departures
- 4.3. The Construction of a New Cultural Competition and Class Formation
- 4.4. Shifting Loyalties and Legitimacies: Authority Structures
- 4.5. Evangelizing Culture and Cultural Evangelism:  
The Phenomenon of the ‘Sacred’
- 4.6. The Question of a Double Consciousness
- 4.7. Cultural Change as a Continuous Process
- 4.8. The New Class of Nagas

## **Chapter V**

### **Different Locations of Modernity**

**248-295**

- 5.1 Critical Understanding of ‘Alternative Modernities’
- 5.2 The Problematic of Cultural Change in Modernity
- 5.3 The Idea of a Dictated Modernity
- 5.4 The Missionary Logic of a ‘Capitalist Modernity’
- 5.5 Theorizing the ‘Politics of Reverence’ as a Modern Cultural Dynamic
- 5.6 Projecting Modernity as a ‘Superior’ Cultural System
- 5.7 Locating Modernity in ‘Path-Dependence’ and ‘Capitalist Exchanges’
- 5.8 The Construction of a ‘Christian Culture’ Through Modern Trajectories
- 5.9 Modernity in New Commensalities
- 5.10 Understanding The Naga Case As A ‘Literate Modernity’

### **Conclusion**

**297-300**

## Introduction

### I Contextual Exposition of the Study

This thesis attempts to study the Naga history primarily from the socio-cultural point of view. It begins by discussing the pre-colonial village societies, the intrusion of colonial rulers since the 1830s and establishment of colonial rule, closely followed by the American Baptist Missionaries who finally succeeded in entering Naga Hills during the 1870s. The colonial occupation which lasted for over a century and active Baptist missionary evangelism which continued close to a century produced sharp socio-cultural and religious propensities distinct from the pre-colonial and ‘a-tribal’<sup>1</sup> cultural past. This colonial and missionary engagement created differential access amongst individuals, villages and communities which resulted in formation of ‘centres’ and ‘peripheries’. This thesis endeavors to locate and understand the emergence of a new sense of ‘distinction’, similar to Bourdieu’s idea<sup>2</sup>, produced through the operation of new systemic dynamics set in circulation by the colonial and missionary masters. This new sense of distinction had led to the formation of ‘class’, and thus to a new understanding of a socio-political collective.

The Nagas inhabit the hill terrain that buffer postcolonial India and Burma. Its ethnic demography covers north-western Burma and three Indian states namely Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur. The colonial ‘Naga Hills’ along with

---

<sup>1</sup> Jelle J. P. Woutters uses the term ‘pre or a-tribal’ histories ‘trans-tribal’ belongings and ‘new’ tribal formations in “The Making of Tribes: The Chang and Chakhesang in India’s Northeast”, *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 51, 1 (2017): 1–26 SAGE Publications, New Delhi, p. 2

<sup>2</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, Harvard University Press, 1984; Pierre Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital”. In J. Richardson (eds.) *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (New York, Greenwood) (1986)

Tuensang Frontier Division became part of Nagaland state since 1963.<sup>3</sup> The thesis shall primarily concentrate on the colonial ‘Naga Hills’ and discuss other spatial temporalities only as and when necessary, in order to substantiate certain arguments and add to contextual clarity.

However, the term ‘Naga’ is a referential term, which gradually turned not only into a referential self-ethnic identity but also has been eventually appropriated by Nagas themselves. One of the first cartographic reference on Nagas can be traced back to the book *Geographia* written by Egyptian astronomer and geographer Claudius Ptolemy in 150 AD who identified a geographical place in one of his maps as ‘Nanga logai’, which indicate roughly the present Naga Hills.<sup>4</sup> The term has been translated as ‘realm of the naked’.<sup>5</sup> After more than a millennium later, it was recorded in the *Buranjees* that the Ahom ruler Sukapha along with eight nobles and nine thousand men, women and children reportedly crossed the hills of Patkai range and fought with Naga villages on their way to present Assam in 1228 AD.<sup>6</sup> These were the earliest literary references made on the Nagas. After that, it was only since 1832, when the colonial rulers came in contact with the Naga villages, a consistent progression of historical recording continued along with the colonial engagements. In this way, strictly speaking, regular writing on the Nagas commenced with the official reports of military expeditions, constant surveys, and it was only later that the administrator-ethnographers developed the ethnographic writings. In the early decades of the twentieth century, colonial officials particularly J. H. Hutton and J. P. Mills had extensively produced ethnographic accounts about Naga anthropology,

---

<sup>3</sup> John Thomas, *Evangelizing the Nation: Religion and the Formation of Naga Political Identity*, Routledge, 2016

<sup>4</sup> Aglaja Stern and Peter Van Ham, *The Hidden World of the Naga: Living Traditions in Northeast India and Burma*, Prestel, University of Michigan, 2003, P. 32

<sup>5</sup> Vishier Sanyu, *A History of Nagas of Nagaland: Dynamics of oral Tradition in Village Formation*, Commonwealth Publishers, 1996, p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> E. A. Gait, *A History of Assam*, Thacker, Spink & Co., Calcutta, 1906, p. 74; *Buranjees* were genealogical records of Ahom kings.



history, culture and society.<sup>7</sup> The American Baptist Missionaries who entered Naga Hills in 1872 developed and literalized some of the local languages, extensively produced Christian literatures and primers and widely written about the Nagas in missionary reports. No doubt, these colonial and missionary engagements had given ‘certain fixity’ to the term ‘Naga’ on a people to define and represent a ‘collective identity.’<sup>8</sup>

When we talk about the precolonial past, the hills were composed of individuated village societies. Every village was an independently enclosed entity from the political point of view. As Thomas has pointed out, the pre-colonial tribal villages were more or less self-sufficient, politically independent by handling their given circumstances, culturally integrated into the ecological and material world.<sup>9</sup> Although, there are credible traces of common ethnicity, the experience of seclusion probably led to the development of independent social, political, economic practices. One obvious reason for seclusion was the internecine inter-village warfare. Like some societies, it was through the wars and also friendship treaties that the balance of power among the villages was maintained. However, unlike the feudal societies in Europe and even in the medieval and colonial India, there were less evidence of demanding regular tribute from defeated villages besides the appropriation of war booty at the time of war. In this way the extent of socio cultural sphere was limited to the village confines itself.

One of the most profound manifestation of diversity may be found in language. The Nagas basically belong to the Tibeto-Burman family of languages according to the Linguistic Survey of India.<sup>10</sup> A close observation of Naga

---

<sup>7</sup> J. H. Hutton, (Reprint by Govt. of Nagaland 2003) *The Angami Nagas*, Macmillan, London. J. H. Hutton 1921. (Reprint Govt. of Nagaland 1967); *The Sema Nagas*, Macmillan, 1921 London; J. P. Mills. 1926. (Reprint Govt. of Nagaland 2003) *The Ao Nagas*, Macmillan Publication, London. (Reprint, Govt. of Nagaland 1980) *The Lotha Nagas*, Macmillan Publication, London, 1922.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas, *Evangelising the Nation*, p. 1-2

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> G. A. Grierson, *Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol.III, Part II, 1903, p.11; Verrier Elwin, *Nagaland*, Spectrum Publication, 1997, p. 12

languages indicate that each village is a linguistic unit with pronounced dialectical configuration. This suggest, that linguistic identity is rooted in the village. In few cases, the extent of dialectical variation can be seen even among the different *khels*<sup>11</sup> within a village. Alemchiba cites the example of Sangratsü village, in which one *khel* spoke in Chungli and the other in Mongsen and slight dialectical variations also existed among the four different *khels* of Kohima village.<sup>12</sup> Even though, the Naga languages belong a close linguistic family, it would be extremely difficult to reconstruct a ‘historical language’ due to the extent of variation caused by time and circumstances. In this way, the linguistic landscape of the precolonial Naga society portray a complex situation.

Yet, while ‘the village’ was historically the locus of Naga politics, this did not preclude traces of common descent, culture, history, and subtle communication networks between village societies. Therefore, an account of the essence of Naga traditional politics should include not only inter-village polarity but also embedded cultural sensibilities.

Nevertheless, what is unique about the Naga villages is that even in this diverse conditions, there were extensive commonalities. For example, the beliefs and ritual practices associated with animism, which although was not a ‘rationalized religion’ in Geertz’s term,<sup>13</sup> manifested huge commonality. Another aspect is the religious allegiance that younger villages owe to its ancestral villages especially during festivals and agricultural cycles. These allegiance routes may be studied to locate migration routes and understand the dynamics of ancestral demographic mobility.<sup>14</sup> In fact, a form of ancestral tribute known as *kuzhanuokhru*, which was voluntarily offered to Kuzha Netho Ketsii villages by the

---

<sup>11</sup> *Khel* is basically a kinship social group larger than clan

<sup>12</sup> Alemchiba Ao, *A Brief Historical Account of Nagaland*, The Naga Institute, 1970, p. 215-216

<sup>13</sup> Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, New York, 1973, p. 173

<sup>14</sup> Some colonial officials had recorded allegiance routes of some ‘Angami’ villages in their official records. Refer Government of Nagaland File No 445, p. 13

‘children of Kuzha’ (if literally translated), to seek its ancestral blessing in return.<sup>15</sup> This tribute was religious in nature and was different from the political tribute discussed above. Evidently, most of the villages, including *Kuzha Netho Ketsii* and *Khezhakeno*, trace its ancestry ultimately towards Mikhael, which is assumed to be a major dispersion point of Nagas. In a slightly different way, as for the Lotha tribe, clan allegiance across villages has been primary to other forms of solidarities since precolonial times.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, basing on these evidences, the politically isolated experiences of Naga villages had been extensively embedded in a form of common descent, ancestry and genealogy. Therefore, even in the midst of disparity there were always nuances of historical commonalities. Nevertheless, it must be stated that such inherent networks of shared commonalities had remained culturally, politically, religiously and socially hidden as a collective consciousness was missing in the pre-colonial Naga Hills. These common traits underpinned the consciousness of the emerging collective identity of the people as the new literate culture enlarged the perceptions of the various communities of the Naga Hills, and they identified the important socio-cultural and ethnic links amongst themselves.

However, resemblances amidst diversity is paradoxical. Ironically, it was the colonial rulers and the American missionaries, who had initially identified these common traits and extended imperialist intervention and had thus helped to shape new cultural, historical and religious trajectories.

In the early part of the nineteenth century, the British colonial conquest reached Assam and then it continued to survey and penetrate into adjoining regions particularly the hill tracts. On one such survey expeditions, Colonel Francis Jenkins

---

<sup>15</sup> As the term suggest, it may be translated as ‘tax from the children of Kuzha’. There are legends which suggest that *Kuzha Netho Ketsii* warriors go till the plains known as *kuda* and *chumukedima* area to collect. Later, the British had appropriated this system to replicate the colonial annual revenue collection across Naga Hills, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur as ‘khezhanuokhro’ in V. K. Nuh, *The Origin of Naga*, Vision Press, Kohima, 2002 p. 36-37; Government of Nagaland, File No 456, p. 5

<sup>16</sup> Jelle J. P. Wouters, “Performing Democracy in Nagaland: Past Politics and Present Politics”, *English and Political Weekly*. Vol. 49, Issue No. 16. 2014, p. 60

and R. B. Pemberton ventured through a hill tract in 1832, where no such colonial intrusions were made before.<sup>17</sup> On noticing the indigenous communities, Jenkins on his personal capacity took the initiative to write to the American Baptist Mission Board in 1834, inviting them to come and minister Christianity to these communities. Coincidentally, the American Baptist Mission board had larger interests up their sleeve and therefore responded to the proposal positively. In 1836 the first missionaries namely Nathan Brown and O. T. Cutter, were relocated from Burma mission to Sadiya in Assam, which is located at the foothills of the Himalayas.<sup>18</sup> The frontier hill tracts of Assam were strategically located for missionaries to venture into China. Although that plan eventually couldn't succeed, their unsuccessful endeavor had retained the missionaries to focus on the hills and plains of the colonial North-East frontiers.

The American mission and the colonial rule were separate entities, nevertheless, they interacted and maintained reciprocity according to situations and needs. On many occasions, their interests converged on the subject of their common cultural 'goal' i.e. conversion and maintenance of the local communities in a Christianized way of life and culture. Such interrelationships be it consensual or obligatory conditioned by circumstances and history, had created a sort of a path dependence system and as a matter of fact, the two entities had become interdependent in their engagement with the locals throughout. The weight of their collaborative engagement to control and change the Naga village societies fell on the locals heavily and steadily the imperial and evangelical ideologies and interests translated into new 'superstructures'.<sup>19</sup> These created new religious and socio-cultural frames around the Nagas and thus altered their pre-colonial socio-cultural trajectories towards the colonial modern.

---

<sup>17</sup> Government of Nagaland, File No. 109, 1905, p. 3; B. C. Allen, *District Gazetteer of the Naga Hills*, 1905

<sup>18</sup> William Gammell, AM., *History of American Baptist Missions*, Boston, Gould, Kendall and Lincoln, 1850, p. 213

<sup>19</sup> Luke Ferretter, *Louis Althusser*, Routledge Critical Series, 2006, p. 16

The introduction of a literary culture was particularly significant in re-configuring the Naga village societies. In fact, the advent of writing in the Naga Hills by the early nineteenth century perhaps was the first step of cultural conquest. No doubt military conquest preceded in subduing the Naga village martial powers, it was cultural conquest that consolidated and perpetuated western domination. This cultural conquest significantly altered the cultural and power equations of Naga village societies. As the missionaries and the colonial rulers continued with their advances the oral cultural systems were steadily affected.

In the first place, the cultural engagement had displaced and replaced a great deal of local traditional systems and institutions. Besides other agencies, the ideological and cultural effects prompted by education and Christianity had been a constant pressure. The institutional cultural scrutiny through colonial laws and missionary moral platitudes aided the ideological and evangelical endeavors. In addition, modalities of western education imparted a scientific temper in the early literates that was essential in turning local literates against traditional practices and beliefs. This instance of questioning the present, perhaps, turned out to be a marker of modernity in Parameshwar's terms.<sup>20</sup> Significantly, it has been observed that literary experiences in the twentieth century attained an aggressive thrust compared to the preceding century as both the missionaries and colonial administrators began to collaborate and exchange mutual assistance.

However, there were basically three historical factors that phenomenally influenced the missionaries and administrators to intensify their engagement in the twentieth century. Firstly, both colonial administrators and missionaries felt the need to consolidate their occupation. Therefore, they expanded educational undertakings rigorously; secondly, the two World Wars actively involved the Nagas dominantly in the allied camps, of which one of the crucial battles of the Second World War was fought and culminated at Kohima. This brought about

---

<sup>20</sup> Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar (eds.), *Alternative Modernities*, Duke University Press, 2001, p. 13-15

structural shifts in material culture and aroused the socio-political ideals and sensibilities. Consequently, the war experiences had not only caused new social mobility as a result of massive destruction and displacement but also inclined Nagas towards new expectations and new political imaginations. Literate modernity therefore is strategic to understand how socio-political, cultural and religious formations were progressively articulated right from the start of the twentieth century.

Consequently, the colonial and missionary undertakings had produced new paradigms of ideological, moral, epistemic, religious and linguistic categories which had defined new access and new marginalities. Therefore, these technologies of conquest or ‘cultural technologies’<sup>21</sup> in Nicholas B. Dirks’ terms, astutely penetrated local systems in the process creating new collective formations. Principally, it was the missionaries, although the colonial officials had its share of arousing new consciousness and adding new appeal to some ‘old sensibilities’, who had successfully driven such socio-political and cultural formations.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, since the colonization of North-east frontier and Assam province began with the British colonial rule from 1826, a careful study of colonial engagement in Assam and particularly the Naga hills and other hills for that matter, is necessary to understand how early spatial commonalities had been negotiated by the British and subsequently the historical process of how socio-political and cultural collectives had been produced through separate colonial and missionary interventions, and in some cases through their joint undertakings.

In this chapter, it is argued that there was hierarchy but class was absent in the precolonial Naga village societies. Therefore, the historical trajectory have moved from a classless to a progressively class conscious society with colonial and

---

<sup>21</sup> Nicholas B. Dirk, Foreword, in Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge*, p. x

<sup>22</sup> Riku Khutso, “Shifting Democratic Experiences of Nagas”, in Jelle J. P. Wouters and Zhoto Tunyi (eds.), *Exploring Democracy in Nagaland: Tribes, Traditions and Tensions*, Highlander Books, Kohima, 2018 (Upcoming)

missionary encounters. Even so the shift took shape over a period of time. It is indeed interesting to locate new socio-economic hierarchies with the coming of literary culture.

Against this context, there are critical questions that surround these wide-ranging cultural changes. These also resulted in the production of multiple dilemmas related to identity, culture, religion and language. However, a conceptual and theoretical understanding of the term culture is significant to this study.

## II The Idea of Culture as a Way of Life

The discussion on the concept of culture is intricate. As Raymond Williams who had done a chronological discussion of philosophers and thinkers since the Industrial Revolution to the twentieth century in his book 'Culture and Society', stated that Culture as a term has acquired varied meanings in the span of few centuries. Originally, the word 'culture' was used as a 'noun of process' to refer tending of crops or animals, for instance.<sup>23</sup> This usage had changed only in the nineteenth century, when culture became a thing in itself.<sup>24</sup> Webster English dictionary defines Culture as the arts and other manifestation of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively and also the ideas, customs and social behavior of a particular people or society.<sup>25</sup> According to the school of cognitive anthropology or 'ethnoscience', culture is defined as a set of psychological structures by means of which individuals and groups of individuals guide their behavior.<sup>26</sup> Ward Goodenough stated that "a society's culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its

---

<sup>23</sup> Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary Of Culture And Society*, Oxford University Press (new edition), 2015, p. 49

<sup>24</sup> Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society 1780-1950*, Anchor Books, Doubleday & Company, New York, 1960, p. xiv

<sup>25</sup> Webster English Dictionary

<sup>26</sup> Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, p. 11

members.”<sup>27</sup> For Geertz, “culture is most effectively treated as a symbolic system”<sup>28</sup> He further stated that engaging on the symbolic dimensions of social action, art, religion, ideology, science, law, morality, common sense, doesn’t mean escaping the existential dilemmas of life but rather plunging into their midst to engage.<sup>29</sup> Interestingly Geertz argues that cultural analysis is an attempt to guess meanings, drawing explanatory conclusions which in a way is an attempt to map out the bodiless landscape of culture.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, one of the most comprehensive definitions on culture has been given by Raymond Williams. He explored the meaning of this new cultural paradigm by stating that first culture is a “‘general state or habit of the mind’ which is closely related to the idea of human perfection”. Secondly, Culture as “the general state of intellectual development, in a society as a whole”. Thirdly, culture is also the “general body of the arts”. Fourthly and lastly, culture had developed into “a whole way of life, material, intellectual and spiritual” by the later part of the nineteenth century.<sup>31</sup>

Similarly, Geertz in his work on ‘the Concept of Culture on the Concept of Man’, attempts to capture the cultural image of man from the anthropological perspective. Firstly he proposed that culture is best understood not as ‘complexes of concrete behavior patterns’ like customs, usages, traditions, habit clusters, etc., but importantly as a set of control mechanisms like plans, recipes, rules instructions, which were even illustrated with computers programs, to govern the behavior of man. Secondly, he argues that man is most dependent on the extra genetic factors to control and order its behavior.<sup>32</sup> Further, he stated that culture has nurtured us as ‘single species’ and continues to turn us into discreet individuals.<sup>33</sup> In that way, he concludes by saying that human nature is regularly organized, thoroughly invariant

---

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 11

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p. 17

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p. 30

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p. 20

<sup>31</sup> Williams, *Culture and Society 1780-1950*, p. xiv

<sup>32</sup> Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, p. 44

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p. 52



and as marvelously simple as Newton's universe.<sup>34</sup> By saying that, he tries to capture the essence of cultural diversity and uniqueness of each individual even within the commonness of each cultural paradigm. In this sense, culture is understood as an external apparatus to control the nature of human beings and create certain levels of commonness. He further argues that the values, ideas, actions and emotions are cultural products which are manufactured out of what he calls 'tendencies', 'dispositions' and 'capacities' by<sup>35</sup> succinctly analogizing how a material is used by man to construct a cathedral, which for him is not a mere structure in itself but a manifestation of the relation between God, man and architecture that governed the creation of the cathedral. Therefore, the cathedral is an embodiment of this spiritual relationship.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, even for Wordsworth, culture is an 'embodied spirit of a people' and 'the standard of excellence'.<sup>37</sup>

As Williams had rightly stated, the changes in our social, economic and political life had conditioned the progressive development of the word culture over the centuries to what it is today.<sup>38</sup> In the same way, the versatility of the term culture and its meanings perhaps may incline the development of culture into distinct forms and experiences at different times and circumstances. The Naga case may not be exception to this organic cultural experience. Interestingly, the cultural experiences of the precolonial, the colonial-missionary and the postcolonial which produced diverse socio, cultural, political and economic alterations might have shaped a distinct 'way of life' in the Naga society.

Nevertheless, Williams also noted how the 'organic society' of the English society was broken by the new economic forces produced by the Industrial Revolution. Considering the rapid industrial development in England, he also

---

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, p. 34

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p. 50-51

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, p. 50-51

<sup>37</sup> Williams, *Culture and Society 1780-1950*, p. 37

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, p. xv

discussed how culture responded to the new systems of production.<sup>39</sup> However, he stated that the idea of culture would be simple if it was a response to industrialism alone. He particularly argued that the development of culture in context was also a response to the social and political developments, and he cited Democracy as an instance.<sup>40</sup> More so, the idea of culture has been located within the complex and radical problems of social class that emerged as a result of the industrial revolution. Williams also noted how this new cultural experience was also a response to the progressive formation of meanings of culture, which notably affected the meaning and practice of art, as one instance. He sums up by stating that “where culture meant a state or habit of the mind, or the body of intellectual and moral activities, it means now, also, a whole way of life.”<sup>41</sup>

Although, it is noticeable that Raymond Williams and Clifford Geertz undertook slightly different views of culture, critically encompassing their ideas give a broad understanding of the term culture. Nevertheless, as Malory Nye argues, cultures and religions shaped each other,<sup>42</sup> it is pertinent to study culture in context of specific cultures. For instance, even though the American Baptist Missionaries brought Christianity to the Naga Hills, Christianity has been indigenized to local cultural systems and situations to the extent that cultural resonance with the American Baptist churches was negligible. Nevertheless, this thesis shall critically use the theoretical and conceptual paradigms discussed above along with a close examination of contextual particulars to broadly understand the definition of culture in context.

Considering the complexly layered socio-cultural and linguistic situation discussed above, the idea of a homogenous culture and identity in the pre-colonial experience is impossible. Some scholars like Joseph Thong has attempted to define

---

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, p. xvi

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p. xvi

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, p. xvi

<sup>42</sup> Malory Nye, *Religion: The Basics*, Routledge, 2008, p. 5

‘Naga culture’ as a way of life of the Nagas.<sup>43</sup> According to him, the Naga culture constituted of inherited behaviors and thoughts of forefathers, which have been passed on to succeeding generations through oral traditions and everyday practices in the form of customs, values, beliefs and conventions acquired through diverse experiences.<sup>44</sup> Raymond Williams has similarly given culture a broad meaning; it is a way of life that a particular society inhabits.<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless, it is difficult to define a regular cultural system of the ‘pre or a-tribal’<sup>46</sup> times as far as collective Naga culture is concerned. Even though there was regularity and symmetry in cultural practices, it was not homogenous. The traditional culture was enclosed and unique to individual villages. Therefore, a village signified a singular cultural entity in the past. In this sense, at the conceptual level, the cultural definition of nation may categorize these villages as ‘little nations’. However, in the absence of written sources it is difficult to give any authoritative explanation on the notions of culture in the precolonial Naga society.

However, the nature of Naga culture in the precolonial times closely revolved around agriculture, activities and events according to the count of lunar phase cycle of the moon. The reference for the calendar month in Kuzhale dialect is *khriü* which translates as the moon and the count of its phase cycle as how many *khriü*? Which means how many months? The institution of taboo closely regulated the agricultural, cultural and activity cycle, and rituals of purity and sanctification, like collective observance of *menyi* (popularly referred by the term *Genna*) which refers to the magico-religious ceremonies<sup>47</sup>, were performed in accordance to the symbolic significance and meanings ascribed to each events and activities. As the corpus of traditional knowledge and belief systems was retained in the collective memory, village folks remained well acquainted. In case of confusion or conflict,

---

<sup>43</sup> Joseph S. Thong, *Head-Hunters Culture: Historic culture of the Nagas*, Mittal Publication, p. 8

<sup>44</sup> Ibid

<sup>45</sup> Williams, *Culture and Society 1780-1950*, p. xiv

<sup>46</sup> Woutters, “The Making of Tribes”, p. 2

<sup>47</sup> Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life COPYRIGHT 2009 Cengage Learning, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/humanities/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/naga>

the elders, who could be referred to as ‘walking artefacts’, intervene. However, by and large, the institution of *morung*, which was a place for transmission of traditional knowledge, beliefs, values and cultural practices to different age sets, was a functional institution for imparting a great deal of the way of life in the villages. These institutions enable the cyclic cultural system to steadily operate.<sup>48</sup>

Moreover, it is important to further explore the communitarian perspective on culture vis-à-vis village societies like the Nagas. Jack M. Schultz stated that if a traditional community of indigenous people represent a ‘culture’, the definition of traditional culture in the sense of patterns of traits, behaviors and structures are relatively static and self-reproducing.<sup>49</sup> This perspective invokes an interesting aspect of traditional communities as these cultures to a great extent not only ‘self-reproduce’ but also regulate the cultural practices through their own internal mechanisms. As Schultz defines a community as the interactions of people, traditional culture in this sense symbolizes a common history of interaction, interpersonal socialization among individuals and groups, communication, relatively flexible behavior and modes of production.<sup>50</sup> Though, village societies like Nagas exhibit similar social and cultural capital, the modes of production in the traditional precolonial sense was rigid for some communities and relatively flexible for others. For instance, the *Tenyimia*<sup>51</sup> villages practice terrace cultivation whereas most of the northern villages practice shifting cultivation. But like Schultz argues, the concept ‘traditional’ does not mean that the communitarian societies are unchanging but rather that the dynamicity is structured in culturally meaningful

---

<sup>48</sup> Kewepfuzu Lohe, *Socio-Cultural Heritage of Kuzhami Chakhesang Nagas*, Kuzhalhu Zawe Publication, Vision Press, Pfutsero, 2010, p. 69-88

<sup>49</sup> Jack M. Schultz, *The Seminole Baptist Churches of Oklahoma*, University of Oklahoma Press, 1999, p. 4

<sup>50</sup> Ibid

<sup>51</sup> Tenyimia is a Naga sub-ethnic community comprising of over ten tribes, with common history, culture and contagious geography

ways, which enable the sustenance of identity even while experiencing circumstantial changes.<sup>52</sup>

Most of the Naga villages exhibited plasticity in formulating and upholding traditional cultural practices. As a case in point, there was an institution known as *Teakhe Mepou* which might be analogous to a general assembly in the present parlance, was an annual assembly of elders of three cognate Chakhesang villages namely Leshemi, Lasumi and Zapami where traditions and customs were reviewed.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, it has been popularly perceived that the individual is wholly subservient to community in communitarian societies. Nevertheless, the communitarian experience clearly shows that there is a strong presence of ‘the individual’ and Wouters rightly stated that the Angami and Chakhesang Naga tribes in particular had a marked ‘democratic archaeology’.<sup>54</sup> Even Butler wrote that Angami, which included the two communities mentioned above, had the ‘purest form of democracy’.<sup>55</sup> However in actual practice, the Naga individual possessed a dual essence of both the ‘individual’ and the ‘community’ and this duality defined the democratic social system.<sup>56</sup> Importantly, as popularly ascribed, the discussion on social equality is significant to cultural discourse. “Nagas are all equals” as often emphasized by A. Z. Phizo,<sup>57</sup> may appear hyperbolic in the fundamentally egalitarian sense, yet the communitarian principles produce an organic social bonding that persisted, and was deeply meaningful, alongside the socio-economic and political hierarchies that inevitably existed). This notion of equality – with

---

<sup>52</sup> Schultz, *The Seminole Baptist Churches of Oklahoma*, p. 4

<sup>53</sup> Khutso, “Shifting Democratic Experiences of Nagas” (Upcoming) 2018

<sup>54</sup> Wouters, “Performing Democracy in Nagaland”, p. 64

<sup>55</sup> John Butler, “Rough Notes on the Angami Nagas and their Language”, *Journal of Asiatic Society*, 1875, p. 314; Wouters, *Performing Democracy in Nagaland*, p. 64

<sup>56</sup> Khutso, *Shifting Democratic Experiences of Nagas*, (Upcoming)

<sup>57</sup> Pillai, Manu, S. 2017. “I’m a Naga first, a Naga second, and a Naga last”, *Livemint*, August 19. <http://www.livemint.com/Leisure/3ARYXMNwsz27unaESW5bcP/Im-a-Naga-first-a-Naga-second-and-a-Naga-last.html>

villagers following the ‘dictates of their own will’ – was the basis of Nagas’ pragmatic democratic ethos.<sup>58</sup>

To a great deal, the argument of Williams that culture is basically social in nature and therefore idea of culture is not limited to the intellectual and literate domains. Therefore, his definition of culture as a way of life gives primal credence to the social aspect.<sup>59</sup> As presented above, the Naga village cultures mostly centered on the vibrant community interactions during the pre- colonial phase. The post-colonial cultural experience therefore cannot be encapsulated within the new domains like literary and Christianity itself, but the definition of culture as a way of life must include everything that shape the behavior of the locals during different times. Further, as Williams had pointed out that one of the ongoing debates has been about the discussion of culture as “a general human development and a particular way of life, and in between works and practices of art and intelligence.”<sup>60</sup> He stated that culture is primarily associated with material production in archeology and cultural anthropology, whereas history and cultural studies primarily confine to ‘signifying and symbolic systems’.<sup>61</sup> In fact, even Geertz particularly emphasized that the semiotic approach to culture is important in locating the conceptual worlds and meanings of the past.<sup>62</sup> On the whole, Williams however argue that the discourse between material and symbolic production should be related rather than juxtaposed.<sup>63</sup> This relational position on the definition of culture offers a comprehensive perspective in understanding culture and its systems even in the Naga case.

---

<sup>58</sup> Khutso, “Shifting Democratic Experiences of Nagas”, (Upcoming); Butler, “Rough Notes on the Angami Nagas and their Language”, p. 314

<sup>59</sup> Williams, *Culture and Society 1780-1950*, p. 346

<sup>60</sup> Williams, *Keywords*, p. 53-54

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, p. 53

<sup>62</sup> Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, p. 24

<sup>63</sup> Williams, *Keywords*, p. 53

### III A Critical Juxtaposition of Oral and Literary Cultural Systems

It may be argued that any form of historical discourse is perpetual and extensive. In the process of writing history, there could be different factors and conditions that influence articulation and reordering of the past. For instance, it is vulnerable on the part of a historian to generalize facts and contextual conditions. In order to do away such historiographical propensities, a careful examination of the nuances in the historical contexts is a significant exercise. Therefore, this methodological bent is necessary on the part of a historian to bring out an objective representation of the past. Taking the legitimate case of oral societies, history writings have been affected by methodological hurdles which produced a perceptive conflict between oral and literary domains on the question of legitimacy and historicity of facts. However, the poor recognition accorded to the oral body of knowledge somehow presupposes the absence of antiquity and history prior to literary documentation. The history of North-East suffers a great deal from this literary predicament which makes the job of historians even more challenging.

Moreover, in the context of the Naga society and elsewhere, the aggressive entry of literary culture, has constantly toppled traditional cultural systems contained in oral repositories. Furthermore, the genesis of oral cultural downturn could be traced to the criminalization and denunciation of indigenous practices by the colonial rulers juxtaposed with the western laws and practices on the one hand and the condemnation by the missionaries as 'sinful' and 'evil' on the other. This is similar to the way Gibbon has separated literate civilization and 'barbarism'.<sup>64</sup> Brute categorization like that associate oral communication and tradition with characteristics of primitivism and backwardness, although both oral and literary are

---

<sup>64</sup> Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, eds. Bury (1896), vol. 1, p. 218. Cited in Rosaling Thomas, *Oral Tradition and Written Record in Classical Athens*, Cambridge University Press, 1989

common in the modern world.<sup>65</sup> Such hegemonic narratives were disseminated to the larger public aggressively through the literary medium.

If we look back at the precolonial Naga society, oral culture was an end in itself as it encapsulated the entire body of indigenous knowledge and belief systems. Indigenous practices and knowledge systems were thus preserved and passed down from generation to generation through oral means. However, one can never validate oral sources as the ultimatum as it is subject to creative expressions, cognitive dissonances and biases. But literary culture has similar proclivities, as it cannot escape ideological influences, creative factors and biases too. As a matter of fact, it is best to see both oral culture and literary culture as legitimately representing the way of life of individual societies. For instance, in the oral societies, there is a strong respect for the spoken word in which ‘peace means peace’.<sup>66</sup> Whereas, in a literate society, the written word has a more legitimate cultural imperative. Therefore, oral systems have its own paradigms of representing individual societies and its histories. In this sense, it is erroneous to categorize oral societies as inferior to any literate societies as both cultures could stand individually.<sup>67</sup>

Along with the need to study history and facts, there are also critical questions that arises vis-à-vis research on the Nagas and similar oral cultures. To begin, the extent that orality commands over societies has not been fully explored. Likewise, performative practices and folklore traditions for most of the time has been relegated under the spell of objective and factual research. Unfortunately, the continual operation of colonial legacies and tendencies of censoring traditional practices continue to plague the customs and traditions from everyday lives of locals. As a case in point, many local languages have become marginalized and old

---

<sup>65</sup> Thomas, *Oral Tradition And Written Record In Classical Athens*, 1989

<sup>66</sup> K. B. Veio Pou, *Literary Writings of Noreast India: Naga Writings in English*, Heritage Publishing House, Dimapur, 2016, p. 84

<sup>67</sup> Riku Khutso, “The Socio-Cultural Situation And The Ambiguity of Double Consciousness”, *The Morung Express*, 25 June, 2015



beliefs have been deliberately discarded by people. Primarily, this cultural situation calls for a critical scrutiny of Christianity and western education. This critical discourse hopefully would open new windows to the altered understanding of morality and ethics and its implications to the society.

The above discussion leads to the necessity to explore the shifts that had taken place in the religious domain since the nineteenth century. The traditional notion of religion and the 'rationalized religion'<sup>68</sup> as Geertz calls it, which basically represent the precolonial oral culture and the new literary culture respectively, are significant cultural markers in the case of the Naga society. The traditional religion which was constituted by an oral body of believe system was closely entwined with the way of life of the locals in villages and therefore to a great extent the traditional religion was part of communitarian culture and vice versa.<sup>69</sup> Gradually, Christianity exhumed most part of traditional religious practices and occupied its place. However, the conceptual exploration of traditional and Christianity as a 'rationalized religion' is required in order to locate the place of religion in culture. According to Geertz, a multitude of concretely defined and loosely ordered sacred entities, elaborate ritual performances and animistic images which could be associated with actual events define traditional religion.<sup>70</sup> He also mentioned that traditional religion is responsive to sufferings, bafflement and adversities.<sup>71</sup> This definition suggest that traditional religion lack a formal regularity nevertheless qualify as religious systems in its own way.<sup>72</sup>

On the other hand, rationalized religions are defined as more abstract, logically coherent and generally structured.<sup>73</sup> Geertz mentioned that the problems of meaning in traditional religious systems are implicitly and fragmentarily

---

<sup>68</sup> Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, p. 173

<sup>69</sup> Lohe, *Socio-Cultural Heritage of Kuzhami Chakhesang Nagas*, p. 69-88

<sup>70</sup> Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, p. 173

<sup>71</sup> Ibid

<sup>72</sup> Ibid

<sup>73</sup> Ibid

expressed, whereas rationalized religions offer a more inclusive formulations and induce comprehensive attitudes. In that way, rationalized religions are conceptualized as universal and essential characteristics of human existence.<sup>74</sup> As a matter of fact, the major difference between the two is that traditional religions generally associate with specific events and rationalized religions are basically abstract in nature. The nature of these two religious practices indicate that the traditional which is largely based on ‘events’ and mediated through the oral sources is more functional as compared to Christianity which is ‘abstract’ and mediated by literary sources. Therefore, traditional religion can be referred to as a functional religion in the sense of the above discussion.

Having said that, it is crucial to see the two domains or the oral and the literary as separate entities within individuated societies. In this case the need to measure the historicity and legitimacy of orality through the literary yardstick doesn’t arise. Like Walter Ong has asserted in the introduction of his book, almost all works thus far have contrasted orality with literacy and for which he had suggested otherwise.<sup>75</sup>

#### **IV The Production and Circulation of New ‘Orality’<sup>76</sup>**

The coming of the literary culture has changed the landscape of oral culture over time. This shift was expedited by the medium of print culture as literary productions and circulation gradually increased. Initially, as the access to literacy was limited to a few, the access of knowledge was also limited to the early literates. However, with the steady increase of literary consumption, the content of oral

---

<sup>74</sup> Ibid

<sup>75</sup> Walter J Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, Taylor & Francis, 2002, p. 4

<sup>76</sup> The term ‘orality’ has been basically coined to evade negative undertones associated with ‘illiteracy’ and create a positive impression of oral tradition and communication. Thomas, *Oral Tradition And Written Record In Classical Athens*

discourses across literate and non-literate spaces began to be infused with new information as new knowledge gained through print and spreading literacy were disseminated to the non-literate community members by the early educated. In a way, the circulation of information and knowledge had been reproduced in the oral spheres. As Temsula Ao has noted, there were both transitions and continuities in the contemporary literary culture and oral tradition.<sup>77</sup>

It was revealed,

*“In all fields of Christian work the printed page is an invaluable ally of the worker. For the last hundred years and more in India, the work of producing, publishing and distributing Christian books has occupied the attention of many consecrated men and women. Many of the missions and churches of India have established presses in order to print more effectively and conveniently the books which their people were writing and translating.”*<sup>78</sup>

According to reports, it was mentioned that most of the churches and mission fields had established printing presses to produce primers. In fact, it was the missionaries who were instrumental in bringing about printing presses to larger India as well.

The first evidence of printing in Indian character was made by the Jesuit missionaries in Cochin in about sixteenth century.<sup>79</sup> In the eighteenth century the Danish missionaries printed in Portuguese and later in Tamil. Later, in 1761 it was reported that a printing press belonging to the French was seized at Pondicherry and given to the missionaries. Evidently, that was how printing began in the Madras

---

<sup>77</sup> Temsula Ao, *The Ao Naga Oral Tradition*, Heritage Publishing House, Dimapur, 2012, (second edition), p xi

<sup>78</sup> A glimpse of mission and church presses in India by I. A. Crain, *The Wesley Press and Publishing House*, Mysore (First published in the National Christian Council Review, January 1942), p.1-2

<sup>79</sup> Ibid

presidency. In the Calcutta presidency, the Baptist mission press at Calcutta started by William Carey to print scriptures in Serampore produced literatures for Bengal and surrounding areas, including Khasi Hills in Assam.<sup>80</sup> Therefore, looking at the survey made by Crain, it was evident that printing presses were dominantly missionary enterprises all through the western colonial and missionary occupation.<sup>81</sup> It was also reported that these presses were evidently used for some commercial ventures besides the production of Christian literatures.<sup>82</sup>

At the theoretical level, print culture could bring about many cultural alterations. In the first place, print brought about structure in local oral languages by ‘textualizing’ it.<sup>83</sup> Such structural rigidity gradually percolated in other pertinent spheres like cultural practices, social systems and institutions and even the nature of memory, which was the mantle of oral societies. As discussed in the sixth chapter, the introduction of literary culture, and I must include print culture, brought about a moral dimension to language, as the question of ‘correctness’ and propriety progressively overwhelmed the early literates. This moral disposition also legitimized new social and cultural hierarchies. This discussion takes us to how a new ‘historical memory’, according to Pierre Nora, emerged based on a progressively ‘institutionalized sites of memory’.<sup>84</sup> By this Nora means that a great deal of memory has been conquered by history and he said that “modern memory is above all archival,” which is why he was trying to say that there is little left for actual human memory.<sup>85</sup> The entry of literary culture, print and textualization of

---

<sup>80</sup> Ibid; Anindita Ghosh takes the argument further through her book, *Power in Print: Popular Publishing and the Politics of Language and Culture in a Colonial Society-1778-1905* and showcases the significance of print in the language domination and expansion in a colonial society. Anindita Ghosh, *Power in Print: Popular Publishing and the Politics of Language and Culture in a Colonial Society, 1778-1905*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2006

<sup>81</sup> I. A. Crain, *The Wesley Press and Publishing House*, p.1-2

<sup>82</sup> Ibid

<sup>83</sup> Hoineilhing Sitlhou, *Deconstructing Colonial Ethnography: An Analysis of Missionary Writings on North East India*, Ruby Press & Co., 2017

<sup>84</sup> Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition Violence*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, (first published 2001), p.8

<sup>85</sup> Ibid

culture and oral narratives in the Naga case extensively transmitted oral memory to ‘institutionalized sites’ to make literate modernity all the more a ubiquitous phenomenon.

## V Teleological Study of Literary Languages

The literary development in the Naga Hills by the American Baptist Missionaries since the 1870s offer some perspectives to understand a great deal of historical phenomena vis-à-vis cultural transformation and modernity. In the first place, the literary development was undertaken primarily to translate and sustain evangelism. Therefore, most of the Naga languages were basically developed for specific purposes. The appropriation and literalisation of first two local languages namely ‘Chongli Ao Naga’ and ‘Angami Naga’ as a case in point. These literary languages were basically village dialects. For instance, Chongli Ao dialect was a minority dialect spoken amongst the Aos but has become the standard language post literalisation. Similarly, the Angami Naga language which was renamed as ‘tenyidie’ since 1970s was basically a dialect spoken in principally two villages which stationed the colonial administrators and American missionaries, namely Kohima and Meirema villages.<sup>86</sup> Thus, the teleological perspective of language development and standardization is a significant exercise.

Sudipta Kaviraj has done considerable theorization on language by elaborating Gramsci’s idea that language contains a certain conception of the world. According to him, there are basically two kinds of languages namely natural and conceptual.<sup>87</sup> A close reading of Kaviraj’s categorization suggest that the language

---

<sup>86</sup> Shurhodelie Liezietsu, *Tenyidie Dze*, Kolkata: Ura Academy Publication, 1992; Riku Khutso, “History, Identity and Language: Tenyidie and Its Widespread Networks”, *Lanugage in India*, ISSN 1930-2940 Vol. 18:2 February 2018, p. 40

<sup>87</sup> Sudipta Kaviraj, *The Imaginary Institution of India: Politics and Ideas*, Permanent Black, 2010, p. 140

development in the Naga Hills by the American Baptist missionaries originally was ‘conceptual’ in nature and intent. Therefore, the Naga literary languages which were basically developed by the missionaries comes under the category of ‘conceptual language’, as these languages were specifically developed for specific interest and purpose.<sup>88</sup>

In the case of *Tenyidie*, the literary factor and standardization has far reaching impact on the socio-cultural and political spheres. Regardless of the question of origin and historicity of the language, *Tenyidie* has positively impressed a renewed sense of belongingness on the *Tenyimia* people who trace common ancestry to articulate a collective identity. Although, it was possible that ancestral sensibilities and cultural symmetries, had provided favorable conditions for literary *Tenyidie* to become popular, this particular aspect of language development was significant in redefining the *Tenyimia* consciousness in the contemporary times.<sup>89</sup> Thus, there was a logic set operational by the missionaries in developing *Tenyidie* and subsequently its widespread literary circulation.

As argued in the MPhil dissertation, the development of literary vernaculars like Chongli Ao and *Tenyidie* were originally primed to negotiate a conducive cultural space for English language.<sup>90</sup> This argument had been cued by the structure of pedagogical system and educational policies designed for the Naga Hills. According to new educational policies both of the government and the missionary primary schools were in principle required to be taught in the vernaculars. However, it also mentioned that with the pedagogic progression to the secondary and higher categories, English language was designed to be the medium of instruction reducing the vernacular to the level of a minor subject, clearly indicating the politics of language.<sup>91</sup> A close observation on the logic of domination and

---

<sup>88</sup> Ibid

<sup>89</sup> Khutso, “History, Identity and Language”

<sup>90</sup> Khutso, “English Language and the Formation of Public Sphere in the Colonial Naga Hills”, M.Phil. Dissertation, Department of History, University of Hyderabad, 2013 (Unpublished)

<sup>91</sup> Government of Nagaland, Private Department (ABAM), File No. 15, 1903

evangelism suggest that although, literary vernaculars were developed and circulated, these vernaculars were used as mediums for cultural translation, evangelization, administrative control, and importantly as indispensable mediums of perpetual production and reproduction of ‘cultural goods’, which shall be critically understood as the circulation of relativized notions of norms, virtues, work, production, aesthetics in this context.<sup>92</sup> The pedagogic policies which in principle upholds a build-up to a cultural space in the form of class characterized by English language through the literary vernaculars may be assumed as a cultural signpost of a *habitus* in Bourdieu’s terms.<sup>93</sup>

The proposition of a literary cultural *habitus* [Here, I use Pierre Bourdieu’s meaning of clearly established cultural norms that constantly reproduce the socio-cultural distinctions and hierarchies] may be distinctly located by looking at the way English language along with the literary vernaculars created a public sphere during the colonial and missionary occupation of Naga Hills. Considering the heterogeneous context of Naga villages, the cultural transcendence across these rigidly individuated village spaces through cultural mediums like literary vernaculars and English language and cultural institutions like village primary schools and churches to impel new composite socio-cultural and political outcome cannot be above a systematic and logical design.

Therefore, the teleological argument on the literary development and its impact on the local societies is significantly pertinent to the understanding of profuse cultural transformation. This cultural context all the more necessitates the

---

<sup>92</sup> By Cultural Goods, Bourdieu means refers to the objectified cultural capital like pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc. that are circulated for consumption and out of which certain tastes are developed. See Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. xviii; Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital”, p. 3

<sup>93</sup> Bourdieu’s theory on *habitus* talks about how societies habituate to certain routines and reproduce practices by taking the instance of schooling and formal education. Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. xix; Tony Bennett et al, *Culture, Class, Distinction*, Routledge, 2009, p 13

invocation of literate modernity to understand the phenomena surrounding cultural change not only under colonial occupation but also perpetually.

## **VI “English Language and the Formation of Public Sphere in Colonial Naga Hills”<sup>94</sup>**

The teleological argument of literary languages in the case of the Naga Hills can be most profoundly epitomized in the new cultural experience necessitated by the prominence of English language. Going back to history, the cultural experience had shifted from discreet village socio-cultural and political system to a progressively homogenized Naga society and from mostly unintelligible linguistic cultural past to a new public sphere mediated by a common language. To understand and locate certain historical factors surrounding this phenomena, the Habermasian idea of ‘public sphere’ was critically used as a theoretical frame.

The administrators and missionaries basically operated from different hegemonic models and their collaborations were subject to situations. Nevertheless, both the missionaries and officials proactively engaged their respective discursive strategies to hegemonize the locals. In the first place, the colonial forces had aggressively and violently negotiated its space out of the complex traditional systems and launched its hegemonic dispensations. However, the entry of American Baptist Missionaries after almost half a century was phenomenally significant in cultural engagement with the locals, initially thorough development and literalisation of languages, educational endeavors like the village primary schools, evangelistic activities like church planting and standardization of local vernaculars. By the first quarter of twentieth century, government had classified the educational system into lower, upper, middle and high school categories with

---

<sup>94</sup> This was the title of the M. Phil dissertation submitted in December, 2013 at the Department of History, University of Hyderabad



structured language policies, the bilingual language policy as a case in point, and new pedagogic methods.<sup>95</sup> The dissertation argues that this new institutional frame of education was a departure point to a new epistemological and cosmological realm for Nagas. As a matter of fact, the missionaries trained students from mission primary schools and training schools, and sent these ‘literate graduates’ to different villages with a dual mission of setting up schools and establishment of churches.<sup>96</sup> Subsequently, village primary schools became the primary connectives between the diverse and discreet Naga villages on the one hand and new colonial and missionary urban spaces like Kohima, Mokokchung, Wokha in the Naga Hills district and other towns in neighboring districts of Assam. In this way, literary education enabled a space of communication.

The dissertation also looked at the history of colonial townships that emerged after the second half of the nineteenth century. Basically, colonial towns became strategic points for higher educational institutions like middle schools and later high schools, and other official settlements. As a result, these towns became the nerve-centres of new communication networks.<sup>97</sup> This new cultural experience enabled a progressively vibrant public sphere which subsequently translated into socio-political formations starting with the Naga Club formed in 1918. Gradually, these sensibilities snowballed into larger consciousness of identity and nationalism by the mid-1940s when Naga National Council was formed.

---

<sup>95</sup> Khutso, *English Language and the Formation of Public Sphere*, p. 47-51; Government of Nagaland, General Department, 1884, File No.507, p. 18, Chapter V, No. XLIV, the Language group was prescribed as Angami-Lotha Naga. But for further information refer Government of Nagaland, Appointment and Political Department, File No 62, 1922, Grierson’s language classification; Government of Nagaland, General Department, File No. 167, 1884-85; Government of Nagaland, General Department, 1884, File No.507, pp. 17; Government of Nagaland, Appointment and Political Department, 1922, File No. 62, p. 5; *Heralding Hope*, Government of Nagaland Publication, Bhabani Offset and Imaging System Pvt. Ltd. Guwahati, 2004, p. 91;

<sup>96</sup> Khutso, *English Language and the Formation of Public Sphere*, p. 69-71; Bendangyabang Ao, *History of Christianity in Nagaland: A Source Material*, Shalom Ministry Publication, 1998, p. 95

<sup>97</sup> The village entities had been networked with the colonial towns and hence the social mobility shifted towards these new settlements. In these colonial spaces, new notions of security were established—in terms of law and occupation.

Nevertheless, the political public sphere was most profoundly expressed through the literary discourses by the second quarter of the twentieth century. Literary journalism in the form of newspapers and pamphleteering enabled circulation of nationalistic ideas and percolate further to the non-literate and diffuse public. I argue that the political public sphere characterized by English language had ignited new ideological formation and revived ancestral relations and sensibilities to shape a collective Naga nationalist inclinations. When the transfer of power to India was about to take place in the early 1940s, the critical public characterized by literary production and circulation became most intense as Nagas under the banner of NNC aggressively campaigned to stay out of independent India. However, the political public sphere attained new heights when the Naga Plebiscite was organized in May 1951 under the initiative of the Naga National Council. This vibrant public sphere continued and it was under an extended political public sphere that the statehood of Nagaland was bargained and announced in 1963.

Finally, the dissertation also argues as to how a literary language as a cultural medium could subtly operate as a hegemonic force. This argument goes along with Gramsci's proposition that cultural hegemony extends primarily through authority over the norms of discursive production, reception and dissemination.<sup>98</sup> The official language act of the Nagaland Legislative Assembly in 1967 recognized English language as the official language, and also as a legitimate cultural marker of Nagas.<sup>99</sup>

This dissertation also explored some pertinent questions on modernity by presenting two modalities that Dipesh Chakrabarty presented, namely the western modality which understood modernity as 'idea of progress and the Indian modality

---

<sup>98</sup> Khutso, *English Language and the Formation of Public Sphere*, p. 114-134; Mildred Archer, "Journey to Nagaland: An Account of Six Months Spent in the Naga Hills in 1947" (Type Script) Naga Database Online.

<sup>99</sup> Nagaland Legislative Assembly Resolution adopted by Nagaland Assembly 1964-70, Assembly Secretariat Kohima, Chapter I- Government Resolution (1964-1970), the Kohima Printing Press, Kohima.

which saw modernity as ‘a promise of development’.<sup>100</sup> Taking a cue from these two perspectives, the study critically looked at the (mis) construction of historical narratives and idioms, and the existing historiography which projects colonialism and missionary activities as harbingers of modernity, clearly exemplified in narratives and idioms like from ‘darkness to light’, ‘wilderness to civilization’, etc.<sup>101</sup>

## VII Exploring Alternative Modernities in Context

Nevertheless, the discussion of modernity has been for a long time popularly circulated with heavy credence to Europe because certain forms of modernity originated from there. The genuine need therefore should be to explore history by earmarking primary importance to contextual specifics and historical conditions, of course not in complete isolation, but in relation with dominant theories. In the recent times, some of the social science research which had recognized similar strand of approach have ushered a new impression about the discourse on North east. Few notable mentions could be made in this regard viz. the works of Joy Pachau, John Thomas, Tezenlo Thong, Jelle Wouters, Michael Heneise, etc.<sup>102</sup> Nevertheless, the methodological lacuna as mentioned above could be only bridged if the dominant scholars across India and elsewhere would enable a conducive space for this emerging approaches on North-east studies to get established. Provided such a liberal space for research and engagement, the oral discourses on alternative realities, supernatural encounters, spiritual realms,

---

<sup>100</sup> Khutso, English Language and the formation of Public sphere, p. 6

<sup>101</sup> Ibid

<sup>102</sup> International Conference Locating Northeast India: Human Mobility, Resource Flows, and Spatial Linkages, Department of Sociology, Tezpur University 9th-12th January, 2018, <http://www.tezu.ernet.in/event/CONCEPT-NOTE-AND-CFP.pdf>

legendary oral repositories, traditions and customs, etc., would give a better contrast to the very discourse on modernity *per se*.

The dynamic nature of societies is universal and as a result changes take places in the course of time. There could be different factors that drive the dynamicity of cultures and societies. However, since the nineteenth century, the enormity of cultural change in the Naga society has been rapidly caused by the intrusion of external cultural and political forces. One of the significant changes was the conversion of heterogeneous village societies into composite spaces in terms of territory, language, culture and identity. This transition of the oral to the literary cultural systems has been a strategic experience in not only negotiating the traditional socio-cultural structures but also has set in motion a logic of perpetual cultural change. Therefore, it is pertinent to study the extent of how literate modernity produced new socio-cultural propensities and the extent to which cultural change has been embedded within the communitarian socio-cultural dynamics.

The term modern according to Dilip Parameshwar, implies a conscious transition from the old to the new.<sup>103</sup> According to him, the visions of an infinite idea of progress of knowledge and constant improvement of moral and material life frees ‘modern’ from the spell of antiquity.<sup>104</sup> Nevertheless, he also argues that if modernity has been understood as an “attitude of questioning the present” according to him, alternative modernities question the status of that attitude today.<sup>105</sup> For him, the idea of alternative modernities originated out of the persistent and violent questioning of the present because, he states, “the present announces itself as the modern at every national and cultural site today.”<sup>106</sup> However,

---

<sup>103</sup> Parameshwar (eds.), *Alternative Modernities*, p. 6

<sup>104</sup> Ibid

<sup>105</sup> According to him, “the attitude of questioning has attained both pervasive and embattled. Pervasive because modernity has gone global and embattled because it faces irresolvable dilemmas.” Ibid, p. 13-14

<sup>106</sup> Ibid, p. 13-15

Parameshwar also argues that modernity has become a global phenomenon, multiple and no longer controlled by a ‘governing centre’ or a ‘master-narrative’ without denying the western discourse because virtually modernity has spread across from the west in term of ‘social practices’, ‘cultural forms’, ‘institutional arrangements’ and importantly as “a form of discourse that interrogates the present”, for the present cannot quite totally escape the legacies of the western discourses on the subject.<sup>107</sup> However, Parameshwar interestingly contends that the discourse on alternative modernities should ‘think with’ and ‘against the tradition’ of ideas propounded by a long list of philosophers of modernity starting with Marx and Weber to more recent ones like Habermas, Foucault and other contemporary thinkers.<sup>108</sup>

Parameshwar also makes a significant point by stating that the perspective of alternative modernities means privileging a particular angle of interrogation of the present taking into consideration a site based reading of modernity in specific cultural and national sites.<sup>109</sup> Similar to this perspective, Charles Talyor explains two kinds of modernity namely ‘acultural’ and ‘cultural’. Firstly, by acultural he means a set of culture neutral operations viewed as ‘inputs’ capable of transforming traditional societies.<sup>110</sup> This proposition looks at modernity as a cultural convergence, by which all cultures eventually end up look alike.<sup>111</sup> On the other hand Taylor proposed that cultural theory holds that modernity unfolds within specific cultural or civilizational context and that different starting points for transition to modernity leads to different outcomes.<sup>112</sup> Therefore, according to this proposition, the experience of modernity allows one to examine how “the pull of

---

<sup>107</sup> He further argues that “western discourse on modernity is a shifting, hybrid configuration consisting of different, often conflicting theories, norms, historical experience, utopic fantasies, and ideological commitments.” Ibid, p. 7

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, p. 14-15

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, p. 15

<sup>110</sup> Ibid, p. 173-196

<sup>111</sup> Ibid

<sup>112</sup> Ibid

sameness and the forces making for difference” interact under the exigencies of history and politics to produce alternative modernities in different cultural and national situations.<sup>113</sup> Drawing heavy inference from the second theory, Taylor finally concludes that modernity is multiple and not just one.<sup>114</sup> Parameshwar neatly entwines these two kinds of theories by arguing that it is important to recognize and problematize what he calls the “unavoidable dialectic” of convergence and divergence in the understanding and exploration of the idea of alternative modernities.<sup>115</sup>

Similarly, even Dipesh Chakrabarty argues that the differences produced within cultural modernity always function within a penumbra of similarities such as ‘the mystique of fashion’, ‘the anxiety of mimicry’, etc. However, he also stated that there are some common features that characterize these similarities like a mood of distance, a habit of questioning, and “an intimation of ‘marvelous’ in the midst of the ruins of our tradition, the tradition of the new.”<sup>116</sup> In other words, traditional practices recede, but are never completely forgotten. For scholars like Kaviraj, theories that define modernity purely from the indigenized point of view fall short of the theory of modernity and imply that theories of modernity are simply ignored because of their European origin.<sup>117</sup> Moreover, he also contends that there is no general theory of historical change to explain and understand change in history and strongly refutes the assumption that there is something new in the newness of modernity.<sup>118</sup> Therefore, alternative modernities in this context may be best understood from the perspective of this neat dichotomy between two dominant

---

<sup>113</sup> Ibid

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, p. 17

<sup>115</sup> Ibid

<sup>116</sup> Ibid, p. 23

<sup>117</sup> Sudipta Kaviraj, “An Outline of Revisionist Theory of Modernity”, *European Journal of Sociology / Archives Européennes de Sociologie / Europäisches Archiv für Soziologie* Vol. 46, No. 3 (2005), Cambridge University Press, p. 502

<sup>118</sup> Ibid

theoretical perspectives of convergence and divergence to expand the penumbra of debates on modernity.

This thesis is an attempt to critically understand the phenomena of modernity from the perspective of alternative modernities. It argues that the causation and experiences of modernity is multiple and not homogenous as argued by a host of scholars on the theory of modernity.<sup>119</sup> In the context of the study, the missionary and colonial experiences had produced multiple forms of modernities through the different contextual and cultural habitations. In the process of the discussion, certain theoretical perspectives have been privileged to explain and understand modernity and cultural change.

In the first place, the colonial rulers made a violent entry and subsequently fought, subdued, punished and subjected many villages. Thus, if the shift in socio-cultural and political paradigms should be understood as a form of modernity, then, this thesis argues that modernity as cultural and political paradigm could be coerced. In that line, the idea of a dictated modernity has been explored as one of the multiple forms. Significantly, the entry of the American Baptist Missionaries since early 1870s gradually introduced the logic of ‘capitalist modernity’ through the ardent efforts of the missionaries to enable the local literates and converts to attain what Perrine calls, ‘educational self-support’ and ‘religious self-support’.<sup>120</sup> The idea of a capitalist modernity can be substantiated as to how the missionaries had operated from a blueprint by systematically and functionally categorizing mission work into spiritual, intellectual, manual and industrial, right from the

---

<sup>119</sup> Sudipta Kaviraj, “Modernity and Politics in India”, *Daedalus* Vol. 129, No. 1, Multiple Modernities (Winter, 2000), The MIT Press, pp. 137-162; Kaviraj, “An Outline of Revisionist Theory of modernity”; S. N. Eisenstadt, Multiple modernities, *Daedalus*, Vol. 129, No. 1, Multiple Modernities (Winter, 2000), pp. 1-29 Published by: The MIT Press on behalf of American Academy of Arts & Sciences Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20027613>; Parameshwar (eds.) *Alternative Modernities*

<sup>120</sup> Fifth Triennial Conference held at Dibrugarh, Feb 11-19, 1899, Calcutta Baptist Mission Press, p. 39-40

beginning of engagement.<sup>121</sup> Moreover, to set in motion the logic of capitalist modernity, the colonial government and particularly the missionaries had undertaken extensive literary and educational initiatives by literalizing local languages and opening village primary schools. The pedagogic system and the educational measures under these initiatives created a new path-dependence system to determine a great deal of the nature of capitalist exchanges, professional and vocational shifts, socio-cultural and political formations. Therefore, both material and immaterial factors which resulted out of the colonial and missionary experiences built a 'superior' notion of western cultural systems into the local consciousness.

Along with such notions, the moral platitudes and evangelical piety, and the bureaucratic power the colonial administrators exude commanded a deep sense of reverence from the local subjects and converts. I call this modern cultural dynamic as a 'politics of reverence' because, these agencies and dynamics were designed by its patrons to attain their imperial and evangelical interests. These cultural dynamics progressively defined a new cultural space with new commensalities to emit manifestations of class and distinction from the non-literates and non-Christians.

However, all these modern experiences either percolated from or were directly caused by the 'literate modernity'. This thesis argues that the experience of modernity in the Naga Hills commenced with the introduction of literary tradition and it has enabled a perpetual production and operation of cultural goods and dynamics. Thus, a great deal of cultural adaptations in the Naga Hills could be traced to literacy and so, literate modernity stands out as a functional paradigm to understand transformations, changes and continuities.

---

<sup>121</sup> Baptist Missionary Review, August, 1908, p 315 & 317



## VIII A Critical Study of Theoretical Paradigms

In the process of understanding historical and contemporary socio-cultural and political phenomena, this thesis has critically explored a wide range of theories. Some of the theories that have been used or referred in passing may not necessarily belong to a singular school of thought or philosophical inclination but the insights and theoretical edges these different scholars have contributed combine to bring about different perspectives to understand a small yet complex socio-cultural and religious situation of the Nagas. The discussion in the thesis circles around a critical discussion on modernity. This thesis diverges from the proposition that modernity is a homogenous experience by arguing that there are different habitations of modernity and therefore it is subjected to multiple forms. On that line, the thesis privileges a strong contextual and individuated position to understand modernity, although in taking such a position, it doesn't negate the dominant western theoretical paradigms.

One of the theories for understanding cultural adaptations has been the theory of Peter Burke. He further develops the idea of cultural translation which was originally coined by Edward Evans-Pritchard to argue that translation implies a negotiation and exchange of ideas and modification of meanings.<sup>122</sup> This theory is relatable to the early experiences of missionaries in their attempt to transmit Christianity to the locals by appropriating the local cultural forms which resulted in indigenizing Christianity similar to the experiences of Catholic missionaries in China.<sup>123</sup> The early cultural experiences like that and the prolonged cultural interactions between local cultures with the western cultural practices necessitates the invocation of Homi Bhabha's idea of 'cultural hybridity' and also critically discuss the concept of 'cultural mimicry'.<sup>124</sup>

---

<sup>122</sup> Peter Burke and R. Po-Chia Hsia (eds), *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 9

<sup>123</sup> Ibid

<sup>124</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, Routledge, 2001

Besides other theories, the thesis overwhelmingly draws insights and inputs from Althusser's ideas that emerged out of his hermeneutic discussion of Marx and Engels. The thesis critically applies Althusser's idea of the 'logic of capital' to firstly understand the emergence of class as a result of progressive circulation of valuable cultural goods and secondly the intricate cultural politics caused by the operation of new ideological apparatuses and new material conceptions.<sup>125</sup> To understand modernity in this context, the operation of the logic of capital which was set in motion right from the start of the colonial rule, however, more intensely and intricately by the American Baptist Missionaries, when they introduced new path-dependencies, capitalistic exchanges and importantly capitalistic modernity by prevailing on the locals to produce surplus to pay annual house tax, fines and importantly 'self-support' educational and religious institutions. This capitalist logic was aggressively entrenched into local consciousness through the cultural agencies of literacy and education.

The aggressive penetration and circulation of capital steadily percolated into cultural systems for production and reproduction of cultural and capital goods. This theoretical framework of production and reproduction and amplified circulation of cultural goods is best captured by Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*.<sup>126</sup> His theory on *habitus* talks about how societies habituate to certain routines and reproduce practices by taking the instance of schooling and formal education.<sup>127</sup> This framework is essential to the understanding of class manifestations and emergence of new cultural proclivities in the Naga context.

The socio-cultural reconfiguration through education, administrative intervention, linguistic development and standardization not only of vernaculars but importantly English language and intense evangelization led to the steady formation of public sphere across the Naga Hills. As discussed in the contextual

---

<sup>125</sup> Ferreter, *Louis Althusser*, 2006

<sup>126</sup> See Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 1984

<sup>127</sup> Ibid, p. xix; Bennett et al, *Culture, Class, Distinction*, p 13

discussion of this chapter, the Naga society was discreet before colonial and missionary encounter, therefore, this socio-cultural and political transformation is vital in the discussion on modernity. A critical reference to the Habermasian idea of public sphere has been made to understand new 'spatial temporalities', demographic mobilities and socio-political formations. Basically, the notion of public sphere according to Habermas is characterized by 'openness of communication', a space outside of the state, literary exchanges, 'little publics' like clubs, associations and other bodies.<sup>128</sup> Habermas has contended that it was the 'published word' that brought about a decisive mark in the literate public sphere.<sup>129</sup>

## IX Historical Methods

The writing of the thesis depended on unconventional historical methods. Firstly, the thesis strongly focusses on the importance of historical contexts in understanding historical phenomena. However, the contextual emphasis was done with due importance given to dominant theories and of course in relation to western experiences of modernity, similar to the way Sudipta Kaviraj has argued.<sup>130</sup> However, the difference with Kaviraj's argument is that this thesis gives overwhelming emphasis to contextual conditions. In a way, this perspective enables a close observation of the changes and continuities considering the spatial temporalities of the precolonial, colonial-missionary and postcolonial experiences as it gives a vivid contrast of the shifts that took place over the course of last two centuries.

---

<sup>128</sup> Khutso, *English Language and The Formation of Public Sphere*, p. 16

<sup>129</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, Translated by, Thomas Burger with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1993. (First Print- 1989) p.16

<sup>130</sup> Kaviraj, "An Outline of Revisionist Theory of Modernity"; Kaviraj, "Modernity and Politics in India"

The idea of ‘thick description’ offer some critical inputs with regard to historical method. According to Geertz ‘thick description’ is mostly about exploring small facts to reveal large issues, ‘winks’ to epistemology by using his famous analogy on eye winking, etc.<sup>131</sup> The aim of thick description according to Geertz

*“Is to draw large conclusions from small but very densely textured facts; to support broad assertions about the role of culture in the construction of collective life by engaging them exactly with complex specifics.”*<sup>132</sup>

At the same time, Geertz also presents the danger of being imprisoned in what he calls immediacy of its own detail of a fact, used as self-validating, or prematurely validated by self. He calls it an ethnocentric disposition.<sup>133</sup> The writing of history in this thesis has been mindful of the ‘ethnocentric’ limitation.

Considering some of the above mentioned methods, it was a deliberate endeavor to originally build up arguments from an extensive range of primary sources. The wide range of sources include large archival collections including official tour diaries, government annual reports, travel accounts, ethnographic works of former colonial officials, missionaries reports, church history, etc.<sup>134</sup> This thesis has referred to narratives about lived experiences of biographies and personal accounts.

---

<sup>131</sup> Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, p. 23

<sup>132</sup> Ibid, p. 28

<sup>133</sup> Ibid, p. 24

<sup>134</sup> They were mere soldiers and bureaucrats, like Dalton, who belonged to the Bengal Regiment Staff Corps, Johnstone who began his career in the Bengal army, Woodthorpe who was commissioned in the Royal Engineers, Godwin Austen who was educated in the Sandhurst and commissioned in the Old 24th Foot, Mackenzie and Damant who were members of the Indian Civil Service.<sup>2</sup> Later, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, J. P. Mills, J. H. Hutton, and a host of them also wrote extensively as anthropologists. Elwin opines that far from criticizing the nineteenth century men for their defects, we should be astonished that under such circumstances, they collected so much information and wrote as well as they did. Verrier Elwin, ed., *Nagas in the Nineteenth Century*, Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1969, pp. 2-3

## **X Overview of The Thesis**

The first chapter deals with an introduction to the study. It started with a precise historical context of the Naga society and subsequently an attempt has been made to explore the idea of culture as a way of life. A critical discussion of oral and literary cultures in context follows. After which, the production and circulation of new orality through progressive consumption of cultural goods and its impact on socio-cultural and linguistic spheres has been explored. Revisiting the MPhil dissertation of how English language was fundamental in the formation of public sphere in the colonial Naga Hills, an attempt has been made to locate the teleological aspect of language development in the Naga Hills basically by the missionaries in order to see the logic and politics of language. This chapter also attempts to present a concise theoretical and methodological framework so as to give an overview of the entire thesis.

In the first chapter, I discuss how the initial intrusion and contact had caused a socio-cultural impasse. Soon, the aggressive process of colonial subjugation produced cultural subjugation. For instance, ‘punishment’ was imposed by the colonial regime through military action on those individuals and villages that defaulted colonial laws and institutions. Here, I talk about two kinds of colonial subjection: coercion and acceptance. Then, I discuss about the coming of American Missionaries in the mid-1830s on the invitation of officials – Captain Jenkins in particular. Subsequently, I discuss about the collaborative beginnings to expand colonial and missionary influence. Therefore, initially, missionaries operated from colonial stations. With the coming of American missionaries, who were basically invited to reach out to the hill communities like Nagas and driven by the undisclosed interest of American Mission to evangelize China, the first mission to Nagas through Bronson started in 1839, which soon failed. However, the failure of first Christian mission did not stop the missionaries and colonial rulers, who were

actively surveying the Naga Hills, to debate on the idea of ‘civilization’ of the hill people. I argue that the ‘idea of civilization’ was the hegemonic threshold to larger domination and control.

In the next chapter, I attempt to understand the missionary logic of literacy and conversion. It has been found that literacy accompanied evangelism and conversion. The production of a new ‘cultural capital’, in terms of new enablings, through literacy was fundamental to success of Christian evangelism. As a result, it has been found that the American Baptist Mission had devoted priority to ‘educational evangelism’ in the Naga Hills. Then I look at the way educational policies of the American Baptist Mission underpins the proactive educational initiatives of the missionaries. In the endeavor of educational evangelism, when the missionaries were extensively investing time and resource to literalise the local languages, the colonial officials evidently extended help as taskmasters by imposing attendance of students in missionary schools during the formative years. By the late nineteenth century, substantial progress in education was evidently made which led missionaries to conduct extensive literacy campaigns across villages. These campaigns translated into cultural capital of conversions to Christianity. As the numbers of Christian converts became substantial, the new cultural capitalism began to interfere into the local cultural specifics. These initial success prompted new socio-cultural and religious imaginations in missionaries and colonial officials alike. The material conditions of people were beginning to change based on the new forms of material advancement, new literacy and new relativized norms.

In the following chapter, I discuss about literary translations and emergence of new social dynamics. The process of literary translation and production caused a departure point for cultural transformation. I discuss the strategies, methods and contents of these literary translations. Initially, the literary productions were found to be anecdotal, catechisms, parables and importantly allegories. John Bunyan’s ‘Pilgrim’s progress’ was found to have been widely translated, circulated and

reprinted. By looking at the nature and content of these translations, I argue that cultural translations were widely taking place. I also talk about the process of ‘decontextualization’ and ‘recontextualization’ of local cultures in order to circulate and interiorize cultural goods. However, cultural translation imply certain level of exchange. As a case in point, the idea of ‘god’ was appropriated from local beliefs. Then, I discuss about the role of western church music with scores and tonic sofa in tuning local voices and cultures. By the beginning of twentieth century, it has been noticed that colonial government started to exude a new colonial zeal on education. However, with the expansion of literate space and the Christian domain, it has been noticed that the cultural space turned more and more didactic. These tensions emerged as a result of differential access of communities to the cultural goods circulated by the the missionaries and administrators, which in resulted in creation of new ‘centres’ and ‘peripheries’ within the traditional domains. Interestingly, the cultural differences created a new cultural dynamic which I call ‘politics of reverence’. This gradually resulted in shrinking resistance towards new cultural adaptations from traditional quarters and growing culture of reverence for colonial and missionary cultures. After which I briefly discuss about about cultural mimicry and the emergence of Naga hybridized voices and identities.

In the fourth chapter, which I have titled it as ‘complex web of interaction and outcomes’, I begin with how cultural change began to be institutionalized. As literacy rates and conversion rates began to progressively increase, it has been evident that new obligations were created against old practices which caused tensions within the villages. These new dispositions were in fact part of the missionary endeavor to create a new socio-cultural decorum within the new Christian domain. Moreover, even the colonial administrators had aggressively altered the traditional authority structures through appropriation and also by introducing new hybridized institutions like the ‘Dobashi’ and ‘Goanbura’. All the while, missionaries were found to be actively altering the socio-cultural systems through emotional and intellectual means, which I call ‘evangelizing culture and cultural evangelism’. These new interventions left the locals in a state of cultural

‘double consciousness.’ Nevertheless, the new cultural practices by then had become a continuous process and this had made cultural change perpetual. The new modern practices of literacy, religion and culture progressively became part of the everyday and the oral practices slowly receded to occasional practices.

The chapter on ‘different locations of modernity’ deals with the complex habitation thorough which modernity operates. Looking at the historical experiences, modernity was dictated as a necessary evil and thus diverges from the first premise of Marxist’s world-view – materialist conception of forces and relations of production. Then I discuss the idea of ‘self’ to understand the missionary logic of capital viz. ‘self-support’, ‘self-affirmation’, ‘self-reliance’, ‘self-government’, as the tenets of a capitalist modernity. It has been also observed that the politics of cultural difference was essential in the perpetual operation of modernity and for that I compartmentalized two social categories in the form of ‘superior’ and ‘inferior’. This is basically the location of class that has been produced through the progressive circulation and consumption of new cultural goods over the course of time and space. I refer this new cultural gap as a modern cultural dynamic. However, even though I argue that the habitation of modernity was multiple in the case of the Nagas, literate modernity has been the most aggressive and penetrative form of colonial modernity. In fact, the earliest cultural change could be located to the introduction of alphabets and cultural adaptations progressively resulted out of literate and educational measures throughout the colonial and missionary occupation. Nevertheless, I also argue that through literate modernity, cultural change has become a continual exchange. In some sense, this research endeavors to locate modernity in socio-cultural systems.



## Chapter I

### Initial Encounters: A Case of Socio-Cultural and Political Impasse

This chapter discusses how the initial colonial intrusion and contact had impacted the Naga communities. Parallel with the aggressive process of political subjugation, cultural subjugation also happened. Political coercion took the form of ‘punishment’ through military actions: thus, force was imposed by the colonial regime on those individuals and villages that defaulted on colonial laws and institutions. However, the coming of American Missionaries in the mid-1830s on the invitation of officials – Captain Jenkins in particular<sup>1</sup> – diversified the process of Western hegemonic take over. This active missionary engagement created an all-inclusive area of proselytization to consent from within. Thus, I talk about two kinds of colonial subjection: coercion and acceptance. Acceptance was insidious. Subsequently, I discuss about the collaborative beginnings to expand colonial and missionary influence. The west exerted a religious-cultural-cum-political influence in which the church as the vanguard of an imperial agenda worked in tandem with western nations: in the Naga Hills with the British officials. Therefore, initially, missionaries operated from colonial stations. With the coming of American missionaries, who were basically invited to reach out to the hill communities like Nagas and driven by the undisclosed interest of American Mission to evangelize

---

<sup>1</sup> Gammell, *History of American Baptist Missions*, p. 212; Jenkins was referred to as the prime mover of material progress the colonial North-East frontier region. He played a crucial role in the development of industry, agriculture, exploration of natural resources, introduction of communication networks like steam ships in the Brahmaputra. Importantly, he along with David Scott, both of whom came from strong evangelical family backgrounds, were known for their initiatives to bring Christian Missionaries to the region. See Frederick S. Downs, *Christianity in North-East India: Historical Perspectives*, ISPCK, Delhi, 1983, p. 24-27.

China,<sup>2</sup> the first mission to Nagas through Bronson started in 1839, but it soon failed.<sup>3</sup> However, the failure of first Christian mission did not stop the missionaries and colonial rulers, who were actively surveying the Naga Hills, to debate on the idea of ‘civilization’ of the hill people. I argue that this was the hegemonic threshold to larger domination and control.

### 1.1 Early Colonial Engagements: 1830s to 1870s

The colonial engagement with the ‘North East’ commenced after the treaty of Yandaboo which was concluded in 1826 between the British colonial power and the Burma.<sup>4</sup> Since then the colonial state continued to negotiate a space for itself out of the heterogeneous socio-cultural and political milieu so as to hold its colonial India fort from oriental threats like Burma and China. Moreover, the then North-East frontier region also provided a strategic point to check expansion of other colonial powers. In the process, the discovery of oil and tea made the region important economically too. Starting from the second quarter of the nineteenth century, part of the north-east frontier became an important colonial holding. Meantime, extensive surveys were conducted across the region to locate natural resources and expand the colonial networks. It was in one such survey expeditions that the colonial rulers first made its foray into the Naga Hills in 1832 with Captain Jenkins and Pemberton leading a party of about 900 ‘coolies’.<sup>5</sup> This particular expedition originated from Manipur to locate a potential route through the Naga Hills for a road to connect Assam. The Chief Commissioner had said, according to his secretary,

---

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 212-213

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 216-17

<sup>4</sup> Alexander Mackenzie, *History of the Relations of the Government with the Hill Tribes of the North-East Frontier of Bengal*, Home Department Press, Calcutta, 1884, p. 176-178

<sup>5</sup> ‘Coolies’ were impressed local laborers whose services were used by the colonial officials throughout its occupation

*“When these two lines are complete there will be secure and easy communication between Golaghat and Manipur and this will tend perhaps, more than anything else, to foster the trading instincts of the ‘Angamies’. That these are not unimportant, may be gathered from the fact that 2000 passes were taken out by Nagas during the year for trading with the plains; and, although the ‘Angamies’ at present assert their intellectual superiority over the neighboring tribes by selling them powdered charcoal for gunpowder, and pice rubbed with quicksilver for rupees, just as they assert their martial superiority by slaying and plundering them, these facts show also that they are a race with keen energies both for fighting and trading, and may yet, if wisely managed, have a successful future before them”.<sup>6</sup>*

With this entry, consecutive expeditions had been dispatched year after year which resulted in intense conflict between the Naga village powers and the forces of the colonial regime. Butler, Damant and a few early colonial officials fell victims of this political conflict. However, it was reported that some of the smaller villagers had ‘unmixed delight’<sup>7</sup> on the arrival of the colonial regime because some of these villages were at the receiving end of plunders and brutal attacks from bigger villagers.

The contextual understanding of ‘acceptance’ has been found to be significant in the understanding of the processes of cultural adaptations and cultural change in the context of the study. This in turn, leads to the larger question of cultural subjectivity. As Biedelman has defined colonialism, it is a means of cultural domination with enforced social change.<sup>8</sup> As the sources indicate, there were basically two forms of subjection primarily operative in the colonial Naga society and some other hill societies of the colonial North-east frontier areas and

---

<sup>6</sup> Report on the Administration of the District of the Naga Hills, 1878-79, State Archives, Assam, p. 16-17

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 6-7

<sup>8</sup> Cited in Hoineilhing Sitlhou, *Deconstructing Colonial Ethnography*, p. xxv

perhaps even elsewhere. The first form was subjection through brute force and second was that of 'self-submission'. However, a great deal of territorial space, and later cultural, had been carved out through sheer colonial military prowess. As it shall be discussed later, the British colonial power repeatedly cited frequent raids of the hills tribes as the main reason for British aggression. Thus, as ethnic communities which valued martial valor, perhaps, the British military valor was read in cultural register by the defeated Naga communities opening the way to 'acceptance'. This dependency was exemplified by the takeover of Samaguting (Colonial reference for Chumukedima) which was located at the foot of Naga Hills. The reason for the colonial intrusion was clearly inspired by imperial interests not limited to the Naga Hills *per se* but even towards China. It also saw a strong military and administrative base on the hills overlooking Burma in the East. This was seen as another route to China and with the Burmese conquest, the Naga Hills turned into a 'frontier region',<sup>9</sup> necessary to cushion any external eventualities to its territories and assets in Colonial India. This perceptive threat eventually became reality during the World War II when Japan and its allies invaded British colonial India in 1944 and culminated in the heart of Kohima, the headquarters of Naga Hills District of Assam.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, the conquest of the Naga Hills started with the first survey party that crossed these hills in 1832. After the brief colonial vacation as a result of 'non-intervention' policy which came into effect from 1851 to 1866, the Colonial state quickly prevailed upon the Naga Hills and its inhabitants rapidly with brute force.

---

<sup>9</sup> Kekhriesituo Yhome, "*The Making of the Modern Naga Identity: A Historico-Geographical Dimension*," PhD Thesis, University of Hyderabad, 2007 (unpublished), pp. 19-20; Kekhriesituo Yhome, "Politics of Region: The Making of Nagas Identity During the Colonial and Post-Colonial Era," *Borderlands ejournal*, volume 6 number 3, 2007

[http://www.borderlands.net.au/vol6no3\\_2007/yhome\\_region.htm](http://www.borderlands.net.au/vol6no3_2007/yhome_region.htm); R.K Bijeta Sana, Exploration of Region in Colonial North-East India: Construction of "Naga Hills", *International Research Journal of Social Sciences*; ISSN 2319-3565, Vol. 2(2), 34-42, February (2013) Int. Res. J. Social Sci.

<sup>10</sup> Louis Allen, *Burma: The Longest War (1941-1945)*, J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., London, 1984, p.295.

This work underlines that through territorial conquests, the local inhabitants had been forced into colonial subjugation not only through force but also through religious-cultural forces headed by Western Imperialism and its most potent face was the Church. Still, British aggression cannot be merely explained in terms of 'self-defence'. Because of which, Kikruma, Mezoma and Khonoma villages were referred to as some of the most 'recalcitrant'<sup>11</sup> villages by colonial officials as these villages fiercely fought the Colonial forces. But besides glorifying these wars, one ought to look at the historical nuances of not necessarily wars fought but the very act of resistance put forth by local villages. Subjectivity here doesn't only mean the act of prevailing and control of a village or so; but it means the whole processes of deriving a sort of 'contract' by various means, but often through brutal means. Lipokmar Dzuvichu argues that in the logic of colonialism, coercion was justified and he cites Major WE Chambers "no rate of pay will induce any man to work as 'coolly' and the only means was by impressments of labour."<sup>12</sup>

In the case of the Naga Hills, punishment was primarily used as a way to derive the 'colonial contract' of domination. According to the available sources, such retributions were meted in the form of excessive labor, imposition of high monetary fines and in many cases by burning the entire village to ashes. An instance of punishments, according to Reid was about two Khels of Khonoma which were expelled from the village in 1910, however, were later allowed to resettle after acceding to the colonial dictum. Consequently, the officials stated, "the village is very much in its good behaviors since then".<sup>13</sup> This happened when the Kuki villages had invited the Khonoma village to overthrow the colonial rule in the early part of the twentieth century. After Khonoma villagers had confessed about this offensive plot, the colonial government decided to punish those rebellious Kuki

---

<sup>11</sup> All these villages had fought with the Colonial forces. Jelle J. P. Wouters, "The Battle of Kikruma: How a Single Village took on the British Empire", *himalmag.com /the-battle-of-kikruma/* 1851, 2015; Mackenzie, *The North-East Frontier of India*, p. 132;

<sup>12</sup> Lipokmar Dzuvichu, "'Roads and the Raj: The Politics of Road Building in The Colonial Naga Hills, 1860s to 1910s,'" *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, p. 488, 2013

<sup>13</sup> Government of Nagaland, Political Department, 1917, File No 132, p. 2

villages as well. In the process, Reid stressed that “punishment would be remitted in case of submission...”<sup>14</sup> As is evident in the official documents, punishment was a key way of disciplining the indigenous villagers both within and without the colonial territories.<sup>15</sup> In fact, the colonial rulers used this approach from the very beginning to suppress and reduce the villagers to the level of colonial ‘subjects’. In this context, it may be argued that the first level of subjection was punishment itself.

Earlier when some Kuki villages<sup>16</sup> refused to supply ‘coolies’, fines of Rs 10 were imposed as house tax per house, moreover, ‘punitive labor’ was imposed for two months and also, all the guns were confiscated.<sup>17</sup> Interestingly, even the colonial officials had admitted that such extreme punishments were exploitative in nature. According to a colonial document,

*“It must also be borne in mind that it was not intended to adhere strictly to the punishment in the case of villages submitting wholly or in part. The punishment was primarily imposed largely as a threat to induce hesitating villages to give ‘coolies’ - a measure that succeeded with the Tangkhuls, who were unanimous at first in refusing to supply recruits.”*<sup>18</sup>

In 1878-79, the district administration reported that a large supply of Naga labor was procured at four annas a day, with a prescribed quota of ‘coolies’ demanded from each village to which some reciprocated with ‘little trouble’ according to the report, while some supplied only after the political officer of the

---

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 3

<sup>15</sup> Punishment of an un-administered village, Pansha village in 1925. For more, see Government of Nagaland, Administrative Report, 1936-37, File No, 283, p. 9

<sup>16</sup> Kuki villages were located in the fringes of Naga Hills. Evidently some Kuki villages were brought by the British to settle in the foothills between Naga Hills and plains of Assam as a buffer zone to keep away Naga raids. It has been also found that these villages were in constant contact with the colonial administration of the Naga Hills. As a result, these villages were governed in more or less similar terms with the Naga villages.

<sup>17</sup> Government of Nagaland, Political Department, 1917, File No 132, p. 8

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

Naga Hills visited.<sup>19</sup> With strong resistance to colonial intrusion and also because of excessive exploitation, labor was scarce to find. The administrative report of 1878-79 also mentioned that Lothas and Rengmas made ‘sulky submission’ who obeyed orders if imposed but they were referred as much lower in the ‘scale of civilization’ than the Angamies.<sup>20</sup> So, the scale of civilization was measured by the level of obedience that the villagers reciprocated to colonial dictates. Therefore, in one of the documents, the Chief Commissioner commended Damant for successfully grappling the difficulties involved in maintaining a sufficient labor-supply and food-supply for the troops and police forces occupying Kohima. In the words of the Chief Commissioner,

*“Considering the difficulties attending this occupation in this centre of what is almost a hostile country, his success is most credible to him. It will, however, be satisfactorily to learn that he has succeeded in putting these matters on a permanently assured footing and beyond the reach of accidents” (sic).<sup>21</sup>*

## **1.2 Scale of Civilization and New Economic Categories**

In this section, I argue that initially, the East India Company officers enforced a new exchange process by pushing in more money in circulation. This process enforced money circulation followed a documented record of political submission. Such a colonial strategy was used to derive a ‘contract’ of submission from the villagers. J. C. Higgins in 1917, in a letter admitted that major part of the fines (money) were refunded to the villagers by subscribing ‘coolies’ from the villages, where the house subscription amounted to more than Rs. 40 in some

---

<sup>19</sup> Report on the Administration of the District of the Naga Hills, 1878-79, p. 9

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 7

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 16

cases.<sup>22</sup> Here, we could see a colonial logic operating under the carpet where the administrators would exact fines from the villagers and use it to pay the ‘coolies’ from the same villages. Villages that failed to provide ‘coolies’ were punished. Nominal amount were paid to these local ‘coolies’ as wages, interestingly, the same money went back to the government through imposition of house tax collected from all the households under colonial rule. Failure to meet the demands of the government resulted in multiple levels of punishments and exploitations. Here, the crafty colonial design of a cycle of dependency was created through the circulation of money as the new means of exchange. This same money circulated in a cycle through which the colonial rulers used to derive labor, discipline, and allegiance, eventually to make their ends meet. Back in the early twentieth century Rs 10 & Rs 40 were substantial amounts considering the agrarian nature of sustenance in the villages. Lipokmar Dzuvichu term this cycle as ‘wage labour capitalism’. He pointed out that local villagers were imposed house tax very much against their wishes. But they had to earn in order to pay the tax and therefore local villagers took up ‘public work’, a way of describing road building, to earn money.<sup>23</sup> In this context, one can relate to Marx, who wrote that the fundamental fact of capitalist production is ‘alienated labor’.<sup>24</sup> Colonial impression of labor, in this sense, evidently manifested the bold entry of capitalism, which by way of substantiating Marx, Althusser wrote that capitalism is a system of exploitation of certain classes of human beings by others.<sup>25</sup>

Similarly, the colonial government had created an ‘exploitative cycle’ (reproductive circuit) through the limited money that was put in circulation in the then Naga Hills and its peripheries almost throughout its occupation. Although, money had increasingly become the medium of exchange, the western capitalistic ideas were either resisted, if not nascent to the knowledge of locals. Therefore, the

---

<sup>22</sup> Government of Nagaland, Political Department, 1917, File No 132, p. 9

<sup>23</sup> Dzuvichu, “Roads and the Raj”, p. 490

<sup>24</sup> Ferretter, *Louis Althusser*, p. 24

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, p. 2



value of money was very much defined by ‘house tax’ and ‘labor wage’ almost throughout the nineteenth century. As a result, a villager had to save almost all through the year to pay house tax. Dzuvichu also cited an instance of early twentieth century about a Sangtam villager who complained: “when we were administered we had to sell our buffaloes to pay the tax”.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, this forced circulation and institutionalization of capital was essential in manufacturing colonial subjectivities and other ‘cultural goods’.

This forceful entry into the hills made the colonial and imperial power equations with the Naga communities more culturally loaded. However, side by side with sheer force, military operations also carried a cultural significance that took the form of acceptance through ‘self-submission’. Thus, the other form of subjection was through ‘self-submission’. There could be different circumstances and factors which resulted to such eventualities. As the government contemplated over the expansion of political and territorial control across the Dikhu River, it was reported that, some of those villages located across had constantly pleaded for annexation. For instance, in March 1904, a large number of Sema Chiefs met Sir Bampfylde, Chief Commissioner of Assam at Mokokchung to seek annexation.<sup>27</sup> As the British government had made it clear that with annexation comes protection, some of the weaker villages sought such military protection. In a letter from W. J. Reid, Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills addressed to the Chief Commissioner of Assam in September 1905, stated: “I presume that if we exercise control we must afford protection”<sup>28</sup> and further stated,

*“The smaller villagers regard our coming with unmixed delight; the larger villages have in some instances been rather sulky but lately they have to a certain extent accepted the inevitable and become more friendly. They are not however to be trusted and should be carefully watched for some time to*

---

<sup>26</sup> Dzuvichu, “Roads and the Raj”, p. 490

<sup>27</sup> Government of Nagaland, Political Department, 1917, File No 109, p. 1

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p. 6

*come, as they would probably attack us should they find a favorable opportunity and the introduction of an obnoxious measure or the appointment of an officer who did not understand the Naga temperament might suffice to set the hills in flames.*"<sup>29</sup>

Considering the evidences, some villages came to seek the government's protection from raids. As the colonial government forbade other villages to attack its subjects, the un-colonized villages were forced to cease interference through brutal punishments and eventually subjugated. The colonial rulers had converted disputes as thresholds to occupation and administration. For instance, Naga villages of Melomi, Primi, Phozami, Kaghami, Lapvomi and Tsikami had sought protection against the Kuki attacks. Dundas, the Sub Divisional Officer stated in his tour diary that, the mentioned villages were all rich as they had 'splendid terraced fields' and was optimistic that these villages would pay house tax 'ungrudgingly' as the 'price of protection' against the Kukis.<sup>30</sup> This functional logic which had capitalistic undertones was essential to the expansion of colonial occupation in the Naga Hills. Moreover, this somehow explains the production of loyalties to the colonial advances.

What is interesting in this historical fact is the point made by Sir Bampfylde, as to why some villages were welcoming 'British domination' over them. Although, one obvious reason was protection, the nature of new material culture laced with logic of capital began to make an impact on some Naga villages by then. Initially, the new material culture powered by money as the medium of exchange disrupted the traditional networks of trade and exchange which were mostly barter. Moreover, as recorded in the annual administrative report of 1911, wet rice cultivation had been introduced in selected Ao villages under Mokokchung sub-division and four to five Sema villages. The introduction of these new agricultural

---

<sup>29</sup> Report on the Administration of the District of the Naga Hills, 1878-79, p. 6-7

<sup>30</sup> Government of Nagaland, Tour Diary of the Sub Divisional Officer, Mokokchung, Dec. 1907, File No 448, p. 10

techniques were reported to be progressing well.<sup>31</sup> Around the same time, cash crops like potatoes were introduced in some Angami villages and was also reported successful. Taking a cue from these developments, the Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills even recommended the introduction of an experimental orchard for Indian fruits in the Naga Hills.<sup>32</sup> In the annual administrative reports of the colonial government, it was evident that government's agricultural initiatives were designed according to the climate of various places in the Naga Hills.<sup>33</sup> In this way, along with the indigenous crops, the new agricultural products began to be attached with greater value and became more integrated with larger markets of demand and supply. The report of 1923, in particular, had mentioned about experimenting crops like oranges, potatoes, lac, apples, pears, etc. in and around Kohima, Zubza, Mokokching, Yekhum, Sanis and Bhandari.<sup>34</sup> However, by then orchards were established at Gaspani, Nichuguard and Zubza.<sup>35</sup> As far as the Naga Hills was concerned, this was an important break from a totally self-sufficient agrarian economy to a capitalized economy. Here, the report of 1922-23 gave an interesting insight to a possible way of how socio-cultural and economic shifts had taken place. When, the reports of the profits made by the Mikirs of Karbi Anlong by cultivating Lac, many Naga villages expressed enthusiasm to cultivate for this commercially viable agricultural produce.<sup>36</sup> Likewise, the mode of production of most colonized villages had been altered from largely subsistence to diversified methods of cropping.

Such changes altered the very notion of value of agrarian products. It also put in an advantageous position the individuals, families, or communities and villages, who had been some of the first to profit by these new agro-based

---

<sup>31</sup> Government of Nagaland, Annual Administration Report Of The Naga Hills District 1911, p 1

<sup>32</sup> Ibid

<sup>33</sup> Government of Nagaland, General Administrative Report 1925-26, File No 354, p. 14;

<sup>34</sup> Government of Nagaland, General Administrative Report 1922-23, File No 347, p. 4; Government of Nagaland, General Administrative Report 1936-37, File No 283, p. 4

<sup>35</sup> Government of Nagaland, General Administrative Report 1925-26, File No 354, p. 14;

<sup>36</sup> Government of Nagaland, General Administrative Report 1922-23, File No 347, p. 4

techniques to produce new agricultural produce which commanded a market-oriented demand-supply logic. With new capital economy that was shaping up, locals had been compelled, if not forced, to give in and undertake the new colonial dependency cycle. These obedient Nagas were regarded as ‘good subjects’ and ‘civilized’ before by the colonial masters, which brought Nagas to the threshold of socio-cultural and economic change. In this way, certainly the materialism brought about by the colonial rule and church-backed missionaries had become dominant. I argue that these complex processes began to create a ‘class’ placed advantageously within the new colonial economic-political-religious structures, which also produced simultaneously, a new sense of ‘exclusion’: namely, the communities which resisted, lose out on the materialistic benefits which colonialism ushered into the region.

### **1.3 Pre-colonial Modes of Power and Prosperity**

As mentioned elsewhere, there were fierce competitions amongst the Naga villages in the olden times. The way warfare and ‘headhunting’<sup>37</sup> had been practiced, illuminate a certain sense of competition – a competition to secure both power and fame. These competitions had generated rivalries. The nature of such competition and rivalry, depict certain aspects of communitarian societies, especially, the Nagas in this context. Therefore, some new innovation travelled to other villages through emulation. Thus ‘new happenings’ were negotiated through the indigenous networks<sup>38</sup>. In this way, cultural changes had been brought about in pre-colonial times, also carried over into the colonial phase. The case of how Christianity had become so pervasive may be one factual indicator. Also, as discussed above, the very act of submission may be taken to explain such discursive

---

<sup>37</sup> Naga villages practice headhunting warfare in which enemy heads were taken as trophies

<sup>38</sup> By indigenous networks, I mean networks between the villages. Even when the villages were fiercely at war, there were people known as ‘diemi’ which translates as ‘intermediaries’ negotiate things between enemy villages. It was forbidden to kill such people.

formations in some communitarian societies like the Nagas. In earlier arguments of scholars, submission has been associated with material/progressive culture. These factors may have triggered the production of agricultural goods in Naga Hills for a larger market in certain villages initially.

Gradually, the villages across the colonial boundaries had to reconcile to this new reality of disrupted exchange. Keeping in mind the very nature of the Naga villages – as independent entities – competition was a norm. This spirit was sapped when the ground for competition was somehow no more equal. For instance, when any village had been ‘annexed’ it was protected against attacks. Whenever raided, the colonial government responded with brutal punishments. There were recurrent instances where whole village had been burned down as a result of retaliation by the government forces. So, it must be noted that the disruption of traditional networks, be it economic, political or social, had destabilized the indigenous institutions and systems, giving way to the colonial and missionary institutions to become dominant. In this way, it had drawn some villages, particularly the smaller and weaker villages, to seek control and annexation of the colonial rule by the early part of the twentieth century. As these villages and communities therein grew in material prosperity and development, reversing their earlier status, the ‘stronger’ villages became more open to cultural persuasion for a different orientation.

As seen above, some villages had been inviting the colonial government to annex them. Subsequent colonial annexation may be referred to as a sort of ‘self-submission’. Such instances of submission<sup>39</sup> had been evident during the late nineteenth century and early part of the twentieth century, of the colonial occupation in the Naga Hills. As discussed above, there could be varied circumstances that had propelled such acts on the part of the villagers. One obvious reason was the new material culture and the new notions of access and marginality that had been defined by it. Education in this sense could fall under the domain of

---

<sup>39</sup> Refer the case of annexation of Melomi, Sohomi, Kotisumi villages in 1907.

a new material culture. Such takes may be so because material culture, primarily, needs to be consciously grounded. But one may even contend such arguments by saying that even sight itself may determine a shift in the human consciousness.

Yet, it is important to underscore the very fact that there is a language that coordinates seeing with reception and perception. Language therefore doesn't necessarily mean merely communication but also increase of cognitive process, which operates at the level of human consciousness. The important point here is that bare literacy and access – does not imply mere formal education. Formal education had been instructed through socio-cultural institutions like churches and church sponsored schools. This had created a cultural familiarity with education and could be designated as the new popular culture. In its wakes, certain practices, or for that matter, tastes and aesthetics of the west had gradually become integral to the Naga Hills. Therefore, the understanding of subjection through this perspective may give a totally different picture of cultural change in the Naga Hills of the North East frontiers and elsewhere.

Moreover, the visible effects of such changes could influence flow of power networks. This would penetrate the levels of consciousness at the popular or non-literate levels, besides influencing the newly educated groups. By definition, literacy is about the ability of a person to read and write. This public may be informed by the local educated people in a more simplified language or had been influenced by the aesthetics of power and material. Even though, the level of consciousness may not be at par with the literate or the educated, such limitations doesn't incapacitate them from understanding the western world or the colonial and missionary spheres to some extent. Likewise, even if the popular levels may fail to comprehend the entire scheme of things, at least, they could understand the progressive symbols of the new material culture. With this, new consumption patterns seem to be taking shape since the second half of the nineteenth century.

With the passage of time cultural familiarization began to expand and complemented the efforts of the missionaries and administrators to literalize. In this sense, popular culture is not necessarily a literate space. It is more of a ‘mixed space’ as I shall argue. In a way, the literary culture had caused a sort of reverberation in the process of interaction and intercourse. Therefore, this new aspect of cultural familiarity is central to the understanding of nuances of cultural adaptation and of course, the understanding of a certain form of modernity ushered in by the colonial-missionary agendas in the Naga Hills and elsewhere. There were many shades to this confrontation of the technologically advanced western paramount power with the ethnic communities in the north-east which could be as varied as the perception of modern reads as ‘miracles’ to the infallibility of western medicine. J. H. Hutton, in the annual report of 1925-26 stated, “It is gratifying to see that the people appreciate medical treatment and frequently call for aid on the outbreak of diseases.”<sup>40</sup> Such statements makes a historian reflect on the mode of communication amongst most of the villagers. Of course, it is not right to assume that all the villagers were not literate, merely by looking at the number of colonial and missionary schools in the first quarter of the twentieth century.<sup>41</sup> Most of these primary schools were located in the villages. Interestingly, the colonial and missionary model of education in the Naga Hills was grounded on the village itself. This evidence suggest that the colonial and missionary strategy of domination and control was fostered by adapting the indigenous systems and its networks. Therefore, bare literacy had perhaps spread unevenly across many villages by then. Nevertheless, it is not wrong to assume that the older generations and people who had not entered into this new domain of learning and literacy became aware of the benefits of medicine and healthcare. Interestingly, many of the non-literate folks could use English words and terms in their speeches, which was a case of cultural familiarization.<sup>42</sup> It was also stated that until recently, specialists thought that

---

<sup>40</sup> Government of Nagaland, General Administrative Report, 1925-26, File No 354, p. 3

<sup>41</sup> Government of Nagaland, Administrative Report of 1910-11, File No 296, p.11

<sup>42</sup> My maternal grandmother in her early nineties, who never attended school, could comfortably understand and even use some simple English words during conversations. Similarly, I Ben Wati’s

literacy was transmitted only through schools. Nevertheless, Daniel A Wagner has cited that historians and anthropologists have proven that literacy is often transmitted outside of the institutions of schools, citing instances since the sixteenth century when reading the bible was mostly taught through family efforts at home.<sup>43</sup> This gives a new dimension to the understanding of literary culture itself.

Having discussed the two forms of subjectivities, it gives interesting perspectives to the understanding of shifts in different spheres. Significantly, most of these shifts – be it political, economic, social or cultural – converge in the larger scheme of cultural change. Therefore, it is argued that in order to understand cultural change, it is primarily necessary to understand the way subjectivities had been produced – it could be either coerced subjectivities, submission or both. Such perspective provide a new threshold to the larger picture of how adaptation, assimilation, mimicry and change in the levels of consciousness had come about.

#### 1.4 The Arrival of American Baptist Missionaries

Christianity evidently reached India with the coming of St. Thomas in the first century AD.<sup>44</sup> So, Christianity as a religion may be considered as an old religion even in the case of the Indian sub-continent. But it was the missionary agencies which came along with the colonial powers not only expanded Christianity's influence across the sub-continent including the North-East Frontiers, but also left drastic impact on these societies. The American missionaries' first entered India in 1810 under the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.<sup>45</sup> Downs had recorded that the Baptists of

---

aunt named Temjensola was born in 1913. According to Wati, she was 'illiterate', but she sang very well before us a few songs from memory which were instilled by the Spirit. I Ben Wati, *Impur Chanu* (Impur Child), (1920-1935), An Autobiography, p. 20

<sup>43</sup> Daniel A Wagner, *Literacy, Culture and Development*, Cambridge University Press, 1993 p. 8

<sup>44</sup> Sitlhou, *Deconstructing Colonial Ethnography*, p. 1

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p. 3



Serampore reached the North-East frontier region in 1811 to evangelize the Assamese and the Khasis (1913).<sup>46</sup> But the American Baptist Mission, to be specific, reached Assam only in the mid-1830s.<sup>47</sup> By then, the charter act of 1813 and 1833 had substantially liberalized the entry of foreign missionaries, to which the Christian missionary agencies took full advantage.<sup>48</sup> Bandyopadhyay particularly refers charter Act of 1813 as an important benchmark of the westernization of India.<sup>49</sup> These liberalized charters were followed by Macaulay's famous proclamation about the need to raise "a class of persons Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and intellect..."<sup>50</sup> which further enabled the missionaries to operate freely without confusions and official restrictions on school curriculum, pedagogic methods and impartation of religious discourses in schools. Rather, this proclamation had given affirmative push for western and evangelical nature of education across the colonial Indian sub-continent, including the Northeast frontier regions. Although, the missionaries went after imperial powers to be an arm of colonialism in many cases, the idea of mission as found in Matthew 28:19 strongly convicts Christians to go and make disciples of all nations,<sup>51</sup> which perhaps motivated the Christian missionaries to venture into different corners of the world, including Naga Hills, a region enclosed by its own geography, history and culture.

The attention of the American Mission board was first directed to the Naga Hills as mentioned in section I, page 1 of this chapter, through the agency of Captain Francis Jenkins, Commissioner of the Governor General of India for Assam.

---

<sup>46</sup> Downs, *Christianity in North-East India*, p. 87

<sup>47</sup> Gammell, *History of American Baptist Missions*, p. 212

<sup>48</sup> Sitlhou, *Deconstructing Colonial Ethnography*, p. 3

<sup>49</sup> Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, *From Plassey to Partition: A History of Modern India*, Orient Blackswan, 2004, p. 80.

<sup>50</sup> Suresh Chandra Ghosh, *The History of Education in Modern India: 1757-1998*, Orient Longman Limited, New Delhi, 2000 (1995) p. 32-33

<sup>51</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Matthew 28:19  
<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+28%3A19&version=NIV>

According to Gammell, one therefore can term this as a two-pronged western civilizational project where officials appointed by the British nation state could actively seek help from the Church organizations across Western world. In 1834 he addressed a letter to Rev. W. H. Pearce, an English Baptist missionary, and Mr. E. C. Trevelyan, an officer of the civil service at Calcutta, making known their character and condition, and requesting them to invite some of the missionaries of the American Baptists to come and settle in the country. The invitation was sent to the members of the mission at Maulmain, which was conditionally accepted and immediately commended to the favorable consideration of the Board. Interestingly, Captain Jenkins offered to contribute a thousand rupees in aid of the mission on the arrival of the first missionary and a thousand more on the establishment of a printing press. The proposal reached the board in 1835, few months after the meeting of the convention at Richmond, at a time when they had been specially directed by the body (probably the Convention) to enter every unoccupied field that should be reached out, and to extend their missionary operations as widely as possible. They were therefore prepared favorably to entertain an invitation to enter a new district, which thus emanated from a source fitted, on every account, to command their confidence and respect.<sup>52</sup>

It has been revealed that the plan to occupy Assam seemed likely to promote a nearer access to the Chinese than had hitherto been attained, under the exclusive policy at the time pursued by the imperial government. It was hoped that beneath the protection afforded by the East India Company, missionaries might join the caravans that yearly traded to the interior of China, and thus, while the jealous mandarins were excluding foreigners from the ports, they might plant Christianity in the heart of the empire. In this manner it was expected that a chain of missionary posts might be established among kindred races, commencing in Siam and stretching through the Tenasserim provinces and the Burmese empire into Assam – and thus circling the western frontiers of China with influences and agencies that

---

<sup>52</sup> Gammell, *History of American Baptist Missions*, p. 212

must sooner or later penetrate its hitherto impassable barriers.<sup>53</sup> In these circumstances, the managers determined to accept the proposal of Captain Jenkins, and immediately referred the matter to the missionaries at Maulmain for the arrangement of the details and the execution of the plan. Brown and Cutter, who had just agreed to abandon the station at Rangoon, because they admitted that it was impossible to enter China from Burma and Thailand<sup>54</sup>, were appointed to commence the mission at Sadiya – the place which was recommended as the most suitable to materialize its grand ambition of entering China. Mr. Brown who had been engaged in the study of Burman language for two years and Mr. Cutter who had considerable experience in eastern printing, reached Calcutta in 1835. They were provided with a printing press, a standing press, a hundred reams of paper and other necessary materials for printing. They received full assurance from the Board that an additional press and a complete apparatus would be shipped from America. The two missionaries used the Brahmaputra River to reach Sadiya<sup>55</sup> on 23<sup>rd</sup> of March, 1836. They were welcomed by Jenkins, who was later described as the ‘liberal benefactor and active friend’ of the American Baptist Mission in Assam.<sup>56</sup> The same year, Rev. Miles Bronson and Rev. Jacob Thomas along with their wives sailed from Boston on the 17<sup>th</sup> of October, 1836, who were appointed as new missionaries for the people of Assam. They brought the additional printing press which was promised earlier to Brown and Cutter, and full supply of all the requisite materials for printing and reached Calcutta the following April.<sup>57</sup> While sailing through the Brahmaputra to the mission base at Sadiya, Rev. Bronson fell sick, and Thomas who sailed out on a small boat to get medicine for his friend was drowned. After settling down at Sadiya for a while, Mr. Bronson and his family relocated to Jaipur in May 1838. It was another ‘principal posts’ of the East India Company in

---

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, p.212-213

<sup>54</sup> Downs, *Christianity in North-East India*, p. 98

<sup>55</sup> Sadiya is situated in the Northeastern part of Assam, four hundred miles north of Ava, and about half that distance from Yunnan, a large mart of trade within the boundaries of China.

<sup>56</sup> Gammell, *History of American Baptist Missions*, p.213

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, p.215

Assam, situated on the bank of Dibang River, a distance of about three to four days away in a southwesterly direction from Sadiya. Bronson relocated there to work with the Singphos Nagas, the people to whom he had been specially designated.<sup>58</sup> The new place Jaipur was particularly recommended to the missionaries for its proximity to the Nagas, who live in the neighboring hills. The colonial officials had been into these hills on surveys and expeditions since 1832.<sup>59</sup>

When the American Baptist Mission had been approached to undertake mission works in Assam, the move coincided with certain agendas that the Board had under consideration. As stated above, evidently, they wanted to explore the northern parts of Burma and Siam (Thai people – Thailand), and also introduce gospel to the upper provinces of China.<sup>60</sup> Therefore, the ultimate object of coming to Assam was evidently part of a larger attempt to penetrate into the South East Asian territories through it. Keeping that in mind, the mission base was established on a very strategic location known as Sadiya, a place close to the borders of China. Subsequently, the missionaries based at Sadiya made several excursions eastward, through the Shyan provinces, and reached close to the borders of China.<sup>61</sup>

However, the American missionaries gradually realized that even without entering China, they had encountered races of unbelievers, whom they referred to as ‘heathens’. Eventually, plans of expanding eastward had been abandoned when the East India Company had opened up its ports to the missionaries from all countries. As a result, China was accessed through the river routes of Burma.<sup>62</sup> Still, such reckonings were visible even in the early part of the twentieth century. Rev. Perrine, in his missionary report of 1905 stated that ‘Assam’<sup>63</sup> is strategic because of the Mongolian people bordering the Brahmaputra valley. According to him the

---

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, p.216-17

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, p.217

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, p.216

<sup>61</sup> Ibid

<sup>62</sup> Ibid

<sup>63</sup> Colonial Assam covers all the present Northeastern states except the NEFA region.

Naga mission was chiefly valuable to the American missionaries because of its strategic location and its familial relation with the whole Mongolian race.<sup>64</sup>

As the missionaries settled down at Sadiya, the lady missionaries commenced schools right away with Mrs. Brown who took charge of the boys and Mrs. Cutter for girls respectively. Their efforts flourished as the schools were well attended. It was even reported that in some places, schools were initially organized under the shades of trees or under some rude shacks, sprinkled with sand to doodle with finger in the absence of paper and books.<sup>65</sup> Meanwhile, Mr. Brown and Mr. Cutter explored the mission field and devoted most of their attention to the study of the local languages. They decided to adopt the 'Roman Character' (a reference for the Roman Script) instead of the Burmese script for the textulization and literalization of the local languages. They deliberately did not choose oriental 'alphabets' or scripts, and their decision was subsequently approved by the Board. The Roman Script was considered "advantageous in the instruction of the people" as it could bring certain form of uniformity across the ethnic communities and simplified translation efforts.<sup>66</sup> Very soon, Mr. Cutter printed a spelling book to be used in the schools and Mr. Brown worked on Assamese and in Shyan.<sup>67</sup> Much later, the general resolution was passed in the American Baptist Mission Conference of 1893 that the Roman alphabet was most suitable for the hill tribes without literary tradition.<sup>68</sup>

Major Jenkins had not only fulfilled his early promises but had also presented a large printing press to the mission and annually contributed five hundred rupees for its support. Others had helped by financial contributions and

---

<sup>64</sup> Eight Session of the American Baptist Conference, held at Gauhati, December 24, 1904 to January 1, 1905, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, 1905, p 57

<sup>65</sup> Oral teaching of scripture, prayer and hymns basically had been the earliest mode of teaching and dissemination of knowledge. One Hundred-First Annual Report of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Los Angeles, California, 1915, p 145

<sup>66</sup> Gammell, *History of American Baptist Missions*, p. 214

<sup>67</sup> Ibid

<sup>68</sup> Downs, *Christianity in North-East India*, p. 253

paying attention to missionaries' comfort, and by the establishment of commodious dwellings and other buildings for their accommodation. The missionaries had questioned if other American mission stations had received similar liberal contributions and so uniform and generous interest had been manifested by the English residents of the country. Gammell stated,

*“These gentlemen were the representatives of power that had subjugated the countries of the east, but by the humane and generous policy which they and many of their associates have adopted, both here and in ‘Birmah’ (Burma), they have smoothed the horrid front of war and disarmed conquest of its terrors – while, by their efforts on behalf of Christian missions among the people, they have more than compensated them for the loss of their former independence”.*<sup>69</sup>

While most colonial sources indicate that good support had been accorded to missionaries in setting up of missionary stations, the ecclesiastical records also reported that some of the English officers namely Jenkins, Bruce, JT Gordon, Hannay were actually benefactor of the mission.<sup>70</sup>

The American missionaries initially operated from the East India Company settlements for security and support – the case of Sadiya, the first mission station in Assam, Jaipur near Dibrugarh, Sibsagar, etc. Gradually, the missionaries expanded their mission fields, proactively literalized local languages and set out to live and work among the hill communities, the case of Miles Bronson who ventured out to live among the Nagas as an earliest example.

---

<sup>69</sup> Gammell, *History of American Baptist Missions*, p. 221

<sup>70</sup> Ibid

## 1.5 Collaborative Beginnings<sup>71</sup>

The western imperial front, relying on the institutional framework of the western church and an enthusiastic East India Company bureaucracy devised measures to introduce both political and cultural paramountcy. As noted earlier, Captain Jenkins, who was a typical example, for not only did he invite the American missionaries, but also contributed five hundred rupees for replenishing the fonts of the 'type' of the printing press, and offered five hundred more towards the support of a superintendent of the schools. He even made frequent communications directly with the American Baptist Mission Board, informing about the conditions and needs of the mission fields, recommending measures required for its growth, and along with his generous promises of aids to the field missionaries.<sup>72</sup> Thus, the missionary venture into the North-east frontiers had been to a great extent enabled by the prior presence of the colonial establishments.

However, there could be possibly other reasons why the American Baptist mission was invited in the first place. Rev. Jones explains by saying that India was under the aegis of a 'Christian government' whose ambition was to educate as many people it could. Yet, it was reported that resource constraints had disabled the government to introduce free and compulsory education. As a result, the government turned to the missionary organizations for cooperation and help. This peculiar situation had established a mutual relationship between the two entities.<sup>73</sup> Unlike the practices mooted elsewhere it was reported that the British officials and the American missionaries had a cordial relationship in the North-East frontier region. Evidently, printing presses were bought and maintained, moving expenses paid, church and school buildings built and orphanages supported by the colonial

---

<sup>71</sup> Sitlhou, talks about the nature of colonial and missionary relationships in the Naga Hills. According to her the relationship heavily depended on the principle of convenience and exigency. See Sitlhou, *Deconstructing Colonial Ethnography*, p. 142-143

<sup>72</sup> Downs, *Christianity in North-East India*, p. 23-27; Gammell, *History of American Baptist Missions*, p.217

<sup>73</sup> Baptist Missionary Review, August, 1908, p 308

government.<sup>74</sup> Even when the Assam mission station at Sadiya was suddenly interrupted by an insurrection of the Khamtis of the present Arunachal Pradesh in 1839, the missionaries took shelter at the cantonments of the troops at Jaipur, where they were protected by the English officers till the insurrection was quelled.<sup>75</sup> The American Baptist mission in Assam had always enjoyed the protection and the favor of the East India Company officers starting from Major Jenkins.<sup>76</sup> Some names such as Sir Charles Trevelyan, Col Jenkins, C. A. Bruce, Captain Hannay, Captain Gordon, Colonel Houghton stood out in the missionary records for their contributions towards American Baptist Mission.<sup>77</sup>

Consequent to the insurrection of Khamptis and Simphos, the movement of missionaries were restricted to a great extent. The missionaries however converted their energy towards learning several languages spoken by the people around there and subsequently prepared primers and pedagogic texts for the press. Mr. Brown soon completed the translation of the Gospel of Matthew in Assamese and in Khamti, and Mr. Cutter, having been to Calcutta for a supply of additional type, returned in April 1839 and commenced printing the books which had been prepared.<sup>78</sup> American Missionary printing presses were stationed mostly at Jaipur and Mr. Cutter continued his work from there. School books in different languages were supplied to all the numerous schools and the gospels of Matthew and John together with the Acts of the Apostles, all of which had been translated by Mr. Brown were carried through the press early in the summer of 1842.<sup>79</sup>

Even the new mission base at Jaipur had to be abandoned due to circumstances. The population of the settlement had declined since 1841 as the East

---

<sup>74</sup> The Baptist Missionary Review, April, 1936, vol. XLII, p. 161

<sup>75</sup> Gammell, *History of American Baptist Missions*, p.217-18; The East India Company had been gradually extending their sway over the country, until several of the more powerful tribes combined in an attempt to regain the independence which they had lost.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, p. 223

<sup>77</sup> The Baptist Missionary Review, April, 1936, vol. XLII, p. 161

<sup>78</sup> Gammell, *History of American Baptist Missions*, p.218

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, p. 221



India Company had withdrawn tea cultivation and moved elsewhere. In addition, this station had proved unhealthy and therefore, the missionaries had moved to Sibsagar, which became the base station of the American Baptist Mission in Assam. The missionaries were also hopeful that the tea cultivation of the East India Company at Sibsagar would be of permanent interest. With a population of eight thousand, a salubrious climate and other benefits received from the English settlement, the missionaries found it suitable to work and at the same time reach out to the tea garden laborers among the Assamese.<sup>80</sup>

By the close of 1843, the missionaries were fully established in Sibsagar, Nowgong and Guwahati.<sup>81</sup> With these new establishments, the American Mission in Assam became more or less established and it began to venture freely on its own. Initially, the missionary works principally consisted of preaching, translating and teaching. In the mission schools children and youth were specially instructed in the doctrines of the gospel.<sup>82</sup> At this new missionary base, the focus gradually tilted towards the Assamese population and its language, instead of reaching out to the Khamtis, the Singphos and the Nagas, as had been originally designed and sent by the American Baptist Mission.<sup>83</sup> The shift from the original plan was attributed to certain reasons like sickness, inaccessibility both to the Singphos and the Khamtis, as a result, the missionaries gradually reined their works to the Assamese population.<sup>84</sup> After the return from the Singpho Nagas, Mr. Bronson opened a large mission school at Nowgong with the help of Captain J. T. Gordon, an English officer. Two native Christians from Calcutta were employed as assistants in the school and this school flourished for many years.<sup>85</sup>

---

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, p.220

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, p. 222

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, p. 223

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, p. 222

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, p.220

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, p.220-21

## 1.6 The American Baptist Mission to the Nagas

It was written in the records that Nathan Brown requested home board to send missionaries for the Naga work in 1838. As a result, Mr. & Mrs. Cyrus Barker were appointed and sent to work amongst the Nagas.<sup>86</sup> However, for some reasons, these two missionaries abandoned their delegated mission and concentrated elsewhere. In January, 1840 Mr. Bronson made a second visit to the Nagas, and noting their quiet nature and an eager spirit for instruction, he immediately decided to work with Nagas, which had been considered over a long time. In the preparations to set out on this mission in the hills, English officers and residents, namely Mr. Bruce and captain Hannay contributed five hundred rupees, and two hundred and fifty respectively for the establishment of schools. In March Mr. Bronson moved his family to the hills and he immediately commenced his mission work amongst the Singpho Nagas.<sup>87</sup> Bronson had attempted to literalize the language and his wife along with Bronson's sister, who joined later, had also taught children. Few months later, Bronson and family had to abandon when he and several of his family were afflicted with severe illness. Consequently, they left the mission field and returned to Jaipur. Bronson's sister, Miss Rhoda Bronson died at Jaipur after returning from the Nagas.<sup>88</sup>

It was recorded by Bronson that he had undertaken the mission to the Nagas because of the eagerness for instruction that he could observe during his visits. This is a new insight to the discourse about the whole missionary enterprise. It has been generally assumed that the missionary efforts were only one sided – preaching the gospel. Nevertheless, looking at the experience of Miles Bronson with the Singpho, the missionary presence at Sadhya and his first visit to them had established a sort of reverential relationship over time. And perhaps, such inherent cultural

---

<sup>86</sup> Pathenpurakal J. (Ed.) *Impact of Christianity on North East*, 1984, p. 50 cited in Sithou, *Deconstructing Colonial Ethnography*, p. 25

<sup>87</sup> Gammell, *History of American Baptist Missions*, p.219

<sup>88</sup> Ibid

interactions were crucial to cultural adaptations. However, the early endeavors of the missionaries to reach out to the hill communities had failed due to sicknesses and other factors. When the Bronson's family had to retire from this mission field because of the circumstances they had experienced, Bronson was described, "He cried in the hour of retirement, have wept over the heathen world."<sup>89</sup>

P. H Moorie clearly stated that originally the mission work in Assam was designated for the Hill people rather than the people of the plains. In the first five years i.e. 1836-1840, the idea of the missionaries was to get to the 'backdoor of China' through the hills at the east end of Assam. But the turbulent state of hill people around Sadiya and Jaipur in Dibugarh<sup>90</sup> and also the discovery of other routes to China had led the abandonment of mission in the hills. Evidently, for the next thirty years, the mission works were diverted to the plains of Assam around Sibsagar, Gauhati, Nowgong and Golpara.

Since the 1840s, the American field missionaries in Assam had been affected by ill health and the missionary community had constantly appealed the home board to reinforce the Assam mission with new missionaries. Unfortunately, the Board fell into bankruptcy and was added by sectional differences which eventually led to the formation of the Missionary Union.<sup>91</sup> Soon, the Missionary Union had revived the Assam mission field with new missionaries from America. But their efforts to reach out to the hills and beyond continued to fail. Therefore, not only the ambition to reach China and south-east Asia through Assam but also even mission to the Assam hills had to be abandoned. Thus, from the mid nineteenth century onward, American Baptist mission in principle concentrated its evangelical work in the Assam plains, until Rev. E W Clark, who arrived in Assam in 1869,<sup>92</sup> made fresh attempts in 1871 by sending local evangelist Godulha along with a local

---

<sup>89</sup> Government of Nagaland, Private department (ABAM), File no 2, 1840, p. 6

<sup>90</sup> Seventh Session of the American Baptist Conference, held at Gauhati, December, 27, 1902-4<sup>th</sup> January 1903, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, p 81

<sup>91</sup> Gammell, *History of American Baptist Missions*, p. 224

<sup>92</sup> The Baptist Missionary Review, April, 1936, vol. XLII, p. 160

by the name Supongmeren, into the Naga Hills.<sup>93</sup> Clark belonged to a later batch of missionaries delegated by the Missionary Union. Gradually, he made inroads into the Naga Hills and settled at Mulungkimong since 1876 along with an Assamese evangelist named Godhula. He soon began to engage in literary work and his wife evidently started a school in 1878. This success gave a new lease of life to the mission efforts to the hill communities. By then, Tolman and Scott had started working with the Mikirs and its neighbors by then. In the west, Goddard and Keith along with other missionaries had commenced their campaign among the Garos. It was also reported that considerable attention was devoted to the immigrants in the Assam plains.<sup>94</sup> As we shall see, the success rate of the hills as compared to the Assam plains had been 'phenomenal' in the missionary parlance. Therefore, the focus of the American Baptist mission gradually relocated to the hills in reverse mode. With their entry, the strategies, agencies and institutions that had been set in motion by early missionaries had far reaching impact. Education was the mantle of this success. At the dawn of the twentieth century, the mission was expending about fourth-fifth of its resources on the hill communities which constituted less than half of the population of Assam.<sup>95</sup>

It was reported that Nagas frequented Sibsagar for trade exchanges even prior to the missionary entry. Dr. Clark who had been there for the last seven years working among the immigrant population in Sibsagar<sup>96</sup>, reportedly watched the

---

<sup>93</sup> Seventh Session of the American Baptist Conference, held at Gauhati, December, 27, 1902-4<sup>th</sup> January 1903, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, p 81; *One New Humanity: Nagaland Baptist Church Council Celebrates Platinum Jubilee 1937-2012*, Nagaland Baptist Church Council, Kohima, 2012, p. 175

<sup>94</sup> The immigrant population was estimated to be about 775844 in 1901. These immigrants were mostly workers brought to tend the tea gardens and other colonial enterprises in Assam. These laborers had come from Nepal, China, Kolarian hill people from eastern side of India, etc. See Seventh Session of the American Baptist Conference, held at Gauhati, December, 27, 1902-4<sup>th</sup> January 1903, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, p 86

<sup>95</sup> Seventh Session of the American Baptist Conference, held at Gauhati, December, 27, 1902-4<sup>th</sup> January 1903, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, p 81

<sup>96</sup> Assam Baptist Missionary Conference of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Twelfth Biennial Session, Gauhati, January 4-13, 1913, p 53

Nagas going about the town and reportedly became interested. He wrote to the Home Board, “we ought to strike somewhere for the Nagas”. Again later he wrote “we want a man for the Nagas, upon whose mountain homes our eyes daily rest. Tribe upon tribe of the Nagas are accessible to the Gospel.”<sup>97</sup> Soon, he induced Godhula who was also known as Rufus Brown, an Assamese Evangelist working with him to acquire the language of the Nagas from those living in Sibsagar.<sup>98</sup> A record mentions that Clark met a Naga named Subongmeren who belonged to Molung (Deka Haimong) village and sent Godhula along with him to the Naga Hills.<sup>99</sup> It was reported that for the first few days, Godhula was suspected to be a ‘Companyman’, which was a local reference for the Britishers, by the Molung villagers.<sup>100</sup> Godhula returned from the Naga Hills and reported a very friendly reception. Subsequently, Godhula made several trips during that winter and in 1872 left Sibsagar with his wife to settle and work amongst the Nagas.<sup>101</sup> It was mentioned that he returned to Sibsagar with nine Naga converts in November of 1872. Clark entered the Naga Hills for the first time in December of 1872 along with Godhula.<sup>102</sup> Here, it needs to be clarified that the role played by the Assamese evangelist Godhula has not been duly credited. But it was Godhula who negotiated the primary space necessary for Clark and others to enter. Initially, the colonial government and even the American Baptist Home Mission had not given permission to Clark to enter the un-administered areas considering the dangers posed by the ‘independent Naga tribes’ and moreover, the Naga Hills had come under the Inner Line Regulation of 1873, which restricted entry of foreigners into the Naga Hills.<sup>103</sup> However, Clark was determined and commented “if anything serious should befall me, occasion might be taken to forbid all missionaries going

---

<sup>97</sup> 125 Years, Jubilee Reports of Baptist Work in North East India- 1836-1961, p 44

<sup>98</sup> Victor Hugo Sword, *Baptists in Assam: A century of Missionary service 1836-1936*, p. 107

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, p. 107; 125 Years, Jubilee Reports of Baptist Work in North East India, p 44

<sup>100</sup> 125 Years, Jubilee Reports of Baptist Work in North East India, p 44

<sup>101</sup> Sword, *Baptists in Assam*, p. 107

<sup>102</sup> Ibid

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, p. 108; Downs, *Christianity in North-East India*, p. 41

into the hills about upper Assam.”<sup>104</sup> In fact, it was reported by Rev. W. E. Witter that the Executive Committee of Baptist home mission was also reluctant about Clark’s proposal.<sup>105</sup> Finally, the Executive Committee agreed to support him, which still came with much pessimism on the part of the Americans at home. To his surprise, even the Viceroy of India had granted him permission to venture beyond the protection of the English flag.<sup>106</sup> Alva Bower gave an alternative account on the coming of Clark to the Naga Hills. According to this account, it was the Nagas who had persistently requested Clark, who was then the school teacher at Sibsagar to come to the Hills and teach the children the way of knowledge. It was even reported that, after being assured of security by the villagers, Clark evidently agreed to enter the hills.<sup>107</sup> However, the version presented by Bower did not find resonance in the original American missionary documents or even colonial archival sources.

Needless to say, Clark set out to live in Molung village for a permanent mission on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1876<sup>108</sup>. He remained in the village till October of that year and eventually moved out along with the converts to start a new village known as Molungyimsen.<sup>109</sup> His wife joined him in the following year and American mission in the Ao field operated from this new Christian village for a long time.<sup>110</sup> The commencement of this new Christian village since 1876 indicate that Clark was trying to create a Christian ecosystem similar to Bordieu’s *habitus*, as discussed in the introduction chapter.<sup>111</sup> He admitted that it was difficult to maintain Christian discipline in traditional villages.<sup>112</sup> In 1885, Clark and wife were reinforced with

---

<sup>104</sup> Sword, *Baptists in Assam*, p. 108

<sup>105</sup> Ibid

<sup>106</sup> Government of Nagaland, Private Department (ABAM), 1901 File No.12, pp. 3-4; R. Lisen Ao, *A Collection of Stray Records of the American Baptist Mission Work in Naga Hills (1836-1936)*, Janambhumi Press Pvt. Ltd., Jorhat, 1987, p. 45-46

<sup>107</sup> Cited in Thomas, *Evangelizing the Nation*, p. 12

<sup>108</sup> Sword, *Baptists in Assam*, p. 108

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, p. 109

<sup>110</sup> Ibid

<sup>111</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. xix; Tony Bennett et al, *Culture, Class, Distinction*, p 13

<sup>112</sup> Sitlhou, *Deconstructing Colonial Ethnography*, p. 26

the arrival of Dr. W. S. Rivenburg and his wife and gradually new missionaries were streamlined into the Naga missionary field.<sup>113</sup>

There were basically two missionary stations under the American Baptist Mission in the Naga Hills namely Impur and Kohima. The Impur field was dedicated to the Northern tribes, primarily Aos and the communities around Mokokchung sub-division. It was also the headquarters of American Baptist mission in the Naga Hills all throughout the occupation of the American Baptist Missionaries which lasted till the 1950s. Whereas, Kohima mission station was located in the southern Naga Hills mostly inhabited by tribes like ‘Angami’, Sema, Rengma, Kacha Naga, etc. Later, Rev. W. E. Witter was sent to work with the Lotha tribe under Wokha subdivision in 1885. Interestingly, it has been found that the Missionaries chose strategic locations for their mission stations and most probably they had taken the help of colonial cartographic and ethnographic findings to execute their own strategies of engagement. Not only that, the missionaries also depended on the colonial communication networks and its services like ships, ferryboats on the rivers, trains and even motor vehicles. In one document, it was mentioned that

*“As Europeans, to live in Assam, must draw some of their supplies from other countries, so it is necessary to keep in view communication with the base of such supplies, the Brahmaputra River.”<sup>114</sup>*

No wonder, in the Northwest, Molungkimong was close to the Sibsagar subdivision which was also a prominent colonial station. While on the other hand in the south, the Samagooding, which was the only civil station of the British government in the Naga Hills, was well connected with Dhansiri River, one of the tributaries of the Brahmaputra.

---

<sup>113</sup> Sword, *Baptists in Assam*, p. 109

<sup>114</sup> Governemnt of Nagaland, File no 4, Private (ABAM), special paper on Church activity, 1871, 1896, 1940, p. 6

Thus, regular mission to the Nagas commenced since the early 1870s and expanded to different parts both within and without the colonial territory of Naga Hills. It may be observed that both colonial and missionary entities initially negotiated spaces for each other. For instance, the region where Clark first ventured in was outside of the colonial territory of Naga Hills until 1889.<sup>115</sup> Similarly, the missionaries also followed the colonial empire to all major settlements in Naga Hills like Kohima, Wokha, etc. This mutual working relationship during the initial years enabled and sustained the active American Baptist Missionary engagement with the Nagas for almost a century.

### **1.7 The Idea of ‘Civilization’ as a Hegemonic Threshold<sup>116</sup>**

To understand the logic of colonialism and evangelism, it is pertinent to locate the paradigm and frame through which imperial and evangelical interests were advanced. One such paradigm had been the question of ‘civilization’ of the local communities. European discourses about the cultural ‘other’ had termed their cultural practices as ‘savagery’, ‘uncivilized’; and they projected a situation where the local communities urgently needed an external force, more powerful than their own cultures, to save them. Edward Said pointed out that in the colonial discourses the ‘orient’ was irrational, depraved, and childlike, and he contrasted with the Europeans as rational, virtuous, mature and normal.<sup>117</sup> That’s how, the orient was viewed as a topic of learning, discovery and practice.<sup>118</sup> For Homi Bhabha such description on the orient on the basis of racial origin was a way to justify colonial conquest.<sup>119</sup> Tezenlo Thong added that in order to colonize, the colonized must be

---

<sup>115</sup> Khutso, *English Language and the Formation of Public Sphere* (Unpublished), p. 68

<sup>116</sup> Report on the administration of the district of the Naga hills, 1878-79, p. 7

<sup>117</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, Penguin Books India, 2006 (reprint), p. 40

<sup>118</sup> Ibid, p. 73

<sup>119</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 391



first ‘uncivilized’ and ‘primitivized’.<sup>120</sup> So for him, colonizing the mind, by registering in locals the perception that indigenous culture is evil and irrational, precedes the eventual “dismantling of culture, traditional communities and their values.”<sup>121</sup> Ironically, the colonial forces had to resort to violent and ‘not so civilized’ means to subdue the local villages to bring about civilization. Such military operations for conquering the ‘barbaric’ expose the hegemonic undertones and imperial interests, in this case, the Nagas were at the receiving end of this colonial take over. The missionaries had their own agenda to justify their entry and engagement with the ‘savage’. The schools had been introduced primarily with this new socio-cultural change in mind. Interestingly, the colonial missionary paradigm of engagement has been captured by Biedelman’s definition of colonialism as cultural domination with enforced social-cultural change.<sup>122</sup> So, colonial conquest and missionary evangelism penetrated into the Naga Hills on the plane of what Marx and Weber calls it ‘pre-modernity or rudeness’, which according to Kaviraj produced a falsely homogenous picture of other civilizations.<sup>123</sup>

G. M. Damant, the Political Officer of the Naga Hills summarized the year 1878-79 as a year of progress. According to him, the great event as far as the district is concerned has been the introduction of a resolute policy that it was the duty of the government to stop what the officials call ‘wholesale murder’, a colonial reference for headhunting and war culture that took place in the Naga Hills. This resolute policy against war culture was widely publicized among the tribes along with a stern warning that punishment would be inflicted upon those villages that did not comply with these orders. The administrators lamented that a lot of interventions had to be undertaken in order for them to carry out the process of ‘civilizing’ the Nagas. For that, they pointed out that an administrative sub-division

---

<sup>120</sup> Tezenlo Thong, “Thy Kingdom Come”: The Impact of Colonization and Proselytization on Religion among the Nagas, *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 45 (6): 595-609, p. 600

<sup>121</sup> Ibid

<sup>122</sup> Cited in Sitlhou, *Deconstructing Colonial Ethnography*, p. xxv

<sup>123</sup> Kaviraj, “An Outline of Revisionist Theory of modernity”, 503

was necessary in the Far East. Thus, according to the officials, administration and opening of communication networks like roads were necessary in order to civilize the tribes that inhabit around Wokha and Kohima bit by bit until they could eradicate the ‘last vestiges of murder and bloodshed’ that exist.<sup>124</sup> According to the assessment of the officials, the crimes were tenfold greater than any other ordinary district. They pointed out that murder, cattle and gun stealing were regarded as virtues.<sup>125</sup> However, with the coming of colonial laws, the legalistic take on local practices had widespread ramifications: criminalization of normative practices related to masculinity, courage and leadership ensured a sharp break from the past. This thus indicated conflict between the values espoused by the two worldviews- the indigenous was considered obsolete, inhuman, even illegal, and the paramount British power was in a position to impose its own cultural indices over the communities in the Naga Hills.

It was revealed that the shift of colonial headquarters to Kohima from Wokha had ‘immensely strengthened’ the colonial authority represented by the political officer, who could not effectively execute orders of punishment from Samaguting.<sup>126</sup> However, it was stated that even after the occupation of Kohima, the Nagas villagers were not convinced that British administrative institutions would be permanent. Thus the officials anticipated that the raids and wars would start again once they left. The officials were also confident that their presence at Kohima was able to induce restraint among the warring Naga villages in and around. The administrative report also mentioned that the government had insisted that the local ‘Angamis’ needed to refrain from ‘homicide’, ‘raiding’, and ‘dealing in slaves’.<sup>127</sup> This sense of ‘colonial guardianship’ was another justification to explain

---

<sup>124</sup> Report on the Administration of the District of the Naga Hills, 1878-79, Assam Archives, p. 13

<sup>125</sup> Ibid, p. 12

<sup>126</sup> Ibid, p. 7

<sup>127</sup> Venusa Tinyi, “The Headhunting Culture of the Nagas: Reinterpreting the Self”, *The South Asianist*, Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 83–98 | ISSN 2050-487X | [www.southasianist.ed.ac.uk](http://www.southasianist.ed.ac.uk); Report on the Administration of the District of the Naga Hills, 1878-79, Assam Archives, p. 7

the necessity of colonial presence because, the British presence itself was bringing about what they call ‘civilization’.

The officials had compared Nagas with other martial communities like ‘Khasias’ who were also referred as ‘ferocious tribes’ for causing trouble around Sylhet and ‘Gauhati’ districts to explain that the Nagas were most dreadful amongst all martial communities in the region. However, the officials were confident that the spread of ‘civilizing influence’ through administrative and pacifists measures would lessen violence and attacks. Damant, the political officer of Naga Hills had been entrusted with the responsibility of improving means of communication with local villages and expand his influence across the administrative jurisdiction.<sup>128</sup> Gradually, the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam had reported that the population enumeration of various tribes dwelling under the administrative jurisdiction of Damant, was stated to be ‘useful’ and ‘valuable’ for control.<sup>129</sup> From Damant’s population enumeration, the Commissioner’s office was informed that there were more than ten distinct tribes at ‘varied stages of civilization’.<sup>130</sup> The enumeration report described some tribes like the ‘Angamis’ which numbered approximately two lakhs as ‘warlike’. These communities were wealthy because of the terrace fields and also exerted control over the weaker villages. They were termed as ‘already sufficiently civilized’, as they could produce counterfeit coins and spurious gunpowder.<sup>131</sup> Here, the reference for a community for being able to produce counterfeits as ‘sufficiently civilized’ invites questions about the very definition of civilization itself. The secretary also admitted that it would be hard to ‘weld them into law abiding community’ as they were merely a mass of ‘disconnected’ and ‘barbarous’ tribes.<sup>132</sup> But the government took generous credit for initiating the civilizing process through its military expeditions and its

---

<sup>128</sup> Report on the Administration of the District of the Naga Hills, 1878-79, Assam Archives, p. 15-16

<sup>129</sup> Ibid, p. 14

<sup>130</sup> Ibid

<sup>131</sup> Ibid

<sup>132</sup> Ibid, p. 15

determined policy to suppress raids. Moreover, its clearly visible and permanent administrative structures had in the words of Damant, managed to curb raids, massacre and murders.<sup>133</sup> Thus, officials like Damant confidently asserted that the mere British presence at Kohima was itself enough to bring about ‘immediate change in the habit of life and thought of a whole population’.<sup>134</sup> This paternalistic demeanor in the colonial officials led the chief commissioner of Assam to justify punishments exerted on the locals by colonial officials as ‘quite right’.<sup>135</sup> In that line, the chief commissioner termed the shift of colonial headquarters to Kohima as judicious and absolutely necessary for execution of colonial policy and suppression of raids.<sup>136</sup>

As the colonial establishment in Kohima began to stabilize, the officials were hopeful that the ‘wild tribes’ would soon settle down and become ‘peaceful subjects’. At the same time, they were mentally prepared that such a shift wouldn’t be easy to come about. However, they anticipated progress in ‘civilizing’ these tribes in about ten years.<sup>137</sup> Around the same time, the officials regarded the western Nagas to be ‘fairly well behaved’ for reciprocating demands in the form of providing ‘coolies’ and supplies and for coming out freely to trade at the new bazar at Kohima.<sup>138</sup> This instance in particular indicate that the idea of ‘civility’ according to the British colonial officials about the local Nagas was defined on the basis of submission to colonial authority and reciprocating to its demands. Moreover, looking at the way westerners harp on the question of civilization of nonwestern societies, it is not hard to infer that the yardstick for this measurement has been the non-conformity to their systems of culture. Like many colonial officials, he also mentioned that “the tribes which occupy it (North-Eastern) differ widely in

---

<sup>133</sup> Ibid

<sup>134</sup> Ibid

<sup>135</sup> Ibid

<sup>136</sup> Ibid

<sup>137</sup> Ibid, p. 7

<sup>138</sup> Ibid, p. 6-7

character and degrees of civilization...”<sup>139</sup> In this sense, ‘civility’ was defined within the parameters of colonial and hegemonic parameters and therefore needs to be distanced from the past colonial definitions.

Gyanendra Pandey argues that Europe had claimed ‘civilization’ from the rest of the world by supposedly conferring itself with many attributes that rest of the world never had namely capitalism, industrial revolution, military and political power; feudalism which they argue as a prerequisite to civilization; history which was symbolic of ‘self-consciousness’, etc.<sup>140</sup> This frame of civilization was perpetuated in the first place by colonizers and missionaries to the rest of the world. It was the same paradigm that was applied in the Naga Hills as visible from the above discussions. This process internalized a colonial image of moral, cultural and spiritual supremacy which according to Thong resulted in Naga a deep sense of ‘self-primitivization’, ‘self-negation’ and ‘self-alienation’.<sup>141</sup> As cited by Thomas, when the new settlers or intruders came and encountered the native Americans, it was reported that the ‘natives’ were structurally enclosed into binaries like ‘good and evil’, ‘god and satan’ ‘civilized and savage’, which consequently resulted in immediate construction of the ‘natives’ as the ‘other’ – an embodiment of all negatives, and therefore required to be conquered, disciplined and converted.<sup>142</sup> Gradually, “the new settlers took away their lands, rights, outlawed their customs and ceremonial practices and made them illegal residents in their own land.”<sup>143</sup> In that light, the colonial and missionary idea of civilization became a threshold to larger processes of hegemonic conquest and socio-cultural take over, beginning with the epistemic succession in the making of the ‘literates’ and the ‘converts’. In this chapter, therefore, I have shown with evidence that the colonial administration and, later, the missionaries, singled out specific communities located within the

---

<sup>139</sup> Gammell, *History of American Baptist Missions*, p. 211

<sup>140</sup> Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition Violence*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, (first published 2001), p. 7

<sup>141</sup> Thong, “Thy Kingdom Come, p. 601

<sup>142</sup> Thomas, *Evangelising the Nation*, p. 14

<sup>143</sup> Ibid

Naga Hills, and extended the lure of material and spiritual advancement to the 'deserving' members of these communities. The political, social and cultural implications of this strategy was to produce within the core of Naga identity an indigenous model of 'modern change', a possible transformation that would create a new identity open to great possibilities of advancement – cultural, spiritual, and economic. This was the wedge driven between the initially thin divide between the 'converts' and the 'traditional', and which would subsequently increasingly deepen the rift between these two categories, making the 'modern' both acceptable and full of the promise progress and development. In comparison the space of the 'traditional' would shrink.

## Chapter II

### The Making of ‘Literates’ and ‘Converts’: The Sociology of Literary Language

R. S. Sharma in his book, *India’s Ancient Past*, writes that “people are not civilized unless they know how to write.”<sup>1</sup> This statement may be problematic to some scholars in the sense that it connotes the ‘natural’ superiority of ‘written’ cultures over ‘oral’ cultures. Therefore though Sharma was writing about the precolonial India’s past, his basic assumption of the technology of writing a culturally dominant, apparent. He argued that different forms of contemporary writings and languages had been the heritage of the ancient scripts. As a matter of fact, writing was developed quite early in ancient India. For instance, the Harappan culture had used a pictographic script evident in their seals however it has not been deciphered so far. Decipherable writings in India according to Sharma dated back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC with the Ashokan Inscriptions and the emergence of Sanskrit by the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC.<sup>2</sup> Literary culture has been a major cultural marker of progress, mode of communication, economic exchange, etc. of civilization. In fact, as evident from the instances, most of the early major civilizations had literary tradition, be it the Chinese, Sumerian, Harappan, etc. Therefore, this fact raises pertinent questions as to whether writings had been more than symbols?

Walter G Ong in his book ‘Orality and Literacy’ partially answers to this question with the statement that “writing is a technology.”<sup>3</sup> And going by his

---

<sup>1</sup> R. S. Sharma, *India’s Ancient Past*, Oxford University Press, 2005 (twenty second impression 2016), p 1

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p 14

<sup>3</sup> Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 2002

assertion, writing was one of the most powerful developments in the history of mankind, which, according to him, had altered the course of history of different civilizations. To fully agree with Sharma is difficult but he was partly right in his take on writing and civilization. The post Indus case in India had been no exception.

Literacy in simple can be defined as the mental ability to read and write, nevertheless, Wagner stated that it is hard to define literacy in individuals and demarcate within particular societies, as it has emotional and political meanings as well.<sup>4</sup> It is political because Wagner added, in the first place, literacy which was basically an imperial cultural, was introduced by the colonizers including the missionaries who went all out to civilize what they referred as the ‘uncivilized’, ‘illiterate’ and ‘savage’. This makes the introduction and definition of literacy political, cultural and moral.<sup>5</sup> UNESCO has given a more precise definition of literacy by referring to a person who

*“Has acquired the knowledge and skills in reading and writing which enable him to engage effectively in all those activities in which literacy is normally assumed in his culture or group”.*<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, the some of these definitions were too advanced to capture the essence of literacy in the Naga society which commenced in the second half of the nineteenth century. However, the political, cultural and moral dimensions of literacy are profoundly visible amongst the early literates, and importantly this literacy translated to conversion to Christianity which makes literacy cultural oriented. Alexander Luria who had made extensive research on the impact of literacy in Russia was quoted saying that there is a “great divide” between the cognitive worlds of literates and non-literates, which was concurred by other psychologists and anthropologists.<sup>7</sup> Even Walter Ong argues that writing

---

<sup>4</sup> Wagner, *Literacy, Culture and Development*, p. 2

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 6

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 2

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 7



restructures consciousness.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, the acquisition of new cognitive skills doesn't necessarily mean that literacy is all positive.

The introduction of this tradition of written culture to the Nagas in the late nineteenth century had both positive and negative outcomes. As a consequence, the sad reality of moving away from their oral traditions and resources unfortunately had taken a toll on their own indigenous knowledge systems and practices. But orality did not completely cease to exist. In fact, oral culture grew in parallel with the literary over the centuries. Likewise, the negotiation between the oral and the literary has been ongoing and most probably would continue indefinitely. As oral traditions had been the 'way of life' for most oral societies, the practices exist in the daily lives of the people as pointed out by Veio Pou in his book 'Literary Writings of North east India'.<sup>9</sup> In this sense, the literary and the oral traditions does relay well together. This dual-existence may shed some interesting perspectives to the way shifts take place in societies. This might also compel scholars to revisit the idea of 'total shifts' that are popularly associated with advanced colonial powers vis-à-vis a sharp break from the oral to the literary culture. Looking at the sociology of language of the Nagas in particular, and perhaps even of other ethnic communities, it may be observed that language of power possessed a 'paternalistic' nature. These languages of power, it was assumed, displaced the local languages; however, these displacements were not total as local languages held their own in communications within ethnic groups, but were marginalized. In the recent times, it's become progressively democratic, nevertheless, such cultural underpinnings are still very strong. The degree of language variation in Naga villages has been extraordinary as no village in absolute terms speak the exact dialect. Orality has created such linguistic and perhaps even cultural fluidity.

After the arrival of the colonial powers and the missionaries, the socio-linguistic and economic topography had undergone a massive shift. In this chapter,

---

<sup>8</sup> Ong, *Literacy and Orality*, p. 77

<sup>9</sup> Pou, *Literary Writings of Noreast India*, 2016

I attempt to understand the missionary logic of literacy and conversion. It has been found that literacy accompanied evangelism and conversion. The production of a new cultural capital through literacy was fundamental to success of Christian evangelism. As a result, it has been found that the American Baptist Mission had devoted priority to ‘educational evangelism’ in the Naga Hills. Then, I look at the way educational policies of the American Baptist Mission underpins the proactive educational initiatives of the missionaries. In the endeavor of educational evangelism, when the missionaries were extensively investing time and resource to literalize the local languages, the colonial officials evidently extended help as taskmasters by imposing attendance of students in missionary schools during the formative years. By the late nineteenth century, substantial progress in education was evidently made which led missionaries to conduct extensive literacy campaigns across villages. These campaigns translated into cultural capital of conversions to Christianity. As the numbers of Christian converts became substantial, the new cultural capitalism began to interfere with the local cultures. These initial success stories prompted new socio-cultural and religious imaginations in missionaries and colonial officials alike. The material conditions of people were beginning to change under the impact of these policies based on the new forms of material advancement, new faith, new literacy and new norms.

## **2.1 Literacy as an Epistemological Threshold**

Going through the archival sources and looking at the cultural shifts that had taken place in the colonial Naga Hills, the principal agendas for the introduction of literary culture were political and evangelical in nature. As was evident, the colonial rulers were using a very irregular form of literalized ‘Angami dialect’ (because, the Angamis were one of the first tribes to come in contact with the British forces), for administrative purposes even prior to the missionary design of literacy

in the Naga Hills.<sup>10</sup> This piece of evidence has made a strong historical case for the way conquest was advanced in the imperial colonies as to the way indigenous languages had been appropriated and intended for imperialism reflects the political praxis of assimilation for the purpose of domination. This argument makes more sense against the backdrop of a renewed commitment for administrative control of the Naga Hills after the Non Intervention Policy of Lord Dalhousie which was promulgated in 1851 and infinitely abandoned in 1866.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, as we shall discuss in this chapter, appropriating and assimilating the cultural tenets of the ‘subjects’ was instrumental in securing colonial and missionary interest in these hills.

Although, the colonial administrators and American missionaries simultaneously ventured into the Naga Hills in the 1830s, the missionaries had to abandon their first mission. Then, the second attempt happened after thirty years later when Rev. E. W. Clark entered into the fringes of Naga Hills proper from Sibsagar. By then, the Colonial government was struggling to negotiate a political space after its reentry into the Naga villages. Therefore, the entry of the missionaries had benefitted the colonial officials in pacifying and containing local hostility through its cultural, religious and literary engagements with the locals. Whereas, the colonial government had only resorted to brutal suppression through military and violent means. As a result, the missionaries proved more capable of winning over the hearts of the locals. No doubt it was evangelism which consolidated the interests of the missionaries, literary culture and literacy enabled missionaries to put across the evangelical ideas in the first place. Thus, the logic of literacy became significant to secure missionary agendas. John Thomas states that in imparting reading and writing, which the locals had ardently desired, the missionaries on the other hand used such opportunity to initiate a complete

---

<sup>10</sup> Khutso, *English Language and the Formation of Public Sphere* (Unpublilshed), p. 59

<sup>11</sup> Government of Nagaland, File No. 168, 1864; Mackenzie, *The North-East Frontiers of India*, p.116-118

reordering of their selves.<sup>12</sup> It was also popularly believed that a sort of ‘dissenters’ salvation’ was associated with literacy, by which it means, if literacy was acquired everything else would be added, including conversion to Christianity.<sup>13</sup> The missionaries strongly believed that if they could impart education to the locals, everything associated with modernity, civilization and Christianity would be added. In this way, the case in the Naga Hills shows that introduction of literary culture preceded evangelism. This strategic design of the American mission materialized well in favor of the proponents as well as the protectors of the colonial state. Interestingly, the colonial government unofficially acknowledged the help of missionaries and so rendered financial aid to mission schools and patronized publication of most of Christian literatures from the government presses for free.<sup>14</sup>

After good amount of time and effort, ‘*Congli*’ and ‘*Angami*’ (*Tenyidie*) dialects were successfully literalized. Subsequently, the bible, Christian texts and the 3Rs were translated into these first two vernaculars and published. Along with the pedagogic works, primary schools were simultaneously set up in villages and basic education was imparted. The management of these activities by the missionaries was phenomenal in some sense. As they succeeded in the introduction and currency of western formal education in an oral society, perhaps, the literalization and standardization of select vernaculars alongside the English language had reduced the administrative toils of the colonial officials enormously. This administrative convenience as a result of missionary works defined the core of their mutual-dependency relationship. As a matter of fact, the American Baptist Mission and the Colonial government were basically two separate entities. But aside differences, they maintained a relationship on mutual terms and exchange which exhibited more or less like a single entity in some spheres. However, the fact

---

<sup>12</sup> Thomas, *Evangelizing the Nation*, p. 7

<sup>13</sup> Williams, *Culture and Society 1780-1950*, p. 136

<sup>14</sup> Refer Government of Nagaland, Assam Secretariat Department, Home A, August 1904, File No. 518, p. 7

remains that both the entities had their respective objectives and agendas in literalizing the Naga languages and textualizing its cultures.

Moreover, looking at what William Gammell had written in the preface to his book 'History of American Missions' who had referred to the missionary activities as enterprises, stated "...the progress of the enterprise for which that organization was called into being."<sup>15</sup> This gives a westerner's perspective to the missionary activities and proselytizing processes in the Naga Hills which suggested that missionary activities had been primarily intended to derive certain kind of benefit. Here, benefit may be understood as the outcome of literacy and evangelism. Gammell also alluded that missions had brought about 'benefits' to the history and condition of countries in which they are planted.<sup>16</sup> Going by this view, the material conditions in the villages had been altered through the cultural interventions of literacy and evangelism. Thus, it began to concur with the premise of Marx and Engels, that the material conditions in which people live determine every aspect of their lives, including their ideas.<sup>17</sup> With a new material condition created by literacy, the lives of the literates evidently was beginning to alter. Although, the logic of literacy became the threshold to engage with the locals by the administrators and missionaries, the historical reason as to why the missionaries had primarily taken up literacy and education for evangelical work needs to be further clarified. A great deal of such cultural phenomenon may be located from etic and emic perspectives. Firstly, the etic perspective by which literacy may be understood to have the same meaning and cultural functions for individuals or cultural groups like picture matching, reading instructions, etc.<sup>18</sup> Whereas, an emic perspective understands literacy in terms of meanings, social functions and skills that enters societies through literacy.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Gammell, *History of American Baptist Missions*, p. i

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. ii

<sup>17</sup> Ferreter, *Louis Althusser*, 2006

<sup>18</sup> Wagner, *Literacy, Culture and Development*, p. 4

<sup>19</sup> Ibid

By all means, the medium of literacy was indispensable to evangelism in the Naga Hills. Downs stated that by giving educational responsibility, the government had given the missionaries “an instrument of influence far more powerful than any other type of Christian activity.”<sup>20</sup> Visvanathan argues that education constituted the basis of *prepaeratio evangelica*, which translates as preparation for the gospel.<sup>21</sup>

## 2.2 Educational Evangelism as Priority

In the report of American Baptist Foreign Mission Society on Assam, intriguingly, two words ‘educational’ and ‘evangelistic’ had been colloquially used as titles of reports. The title definitely suggest the significance and the centrality it had borne on the American Mission work in Assam.<sup>22</sup> The missionaries believed in a philosophy that the Christian church had a divine commission for the work on education which may be found in Matthew 28:19, as cited it the previous chapter. Therefore, they believed in the ‘great commission’ to teach the new converts, which is a fundamental principle in Christianity. The missionary interpretation for which was the development of human character and building of civilization. According to the Board of Missionary cooperation, the missionaries had a threefold ministry objective. First to induce the acceptance of the ‘truth’ as the guiding principles of life. Second, lead men to commit openly and avowedly to the adherence of the truth. Thirdly, lead steadily into the clear comprehension and understanding of the ‘truth’.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, according to the Charter of the church on education, it stressed that a fine balance should be maintained for the command to evangelize, to baptize

---

<sup>20</sup> Downs, *Christianity in North-East India*, p. 75-76

<sup>21</sup> Cited in in Sitlhou, *Deconstructing Colonial Ethnography*, p. 72

<sup>22</sup> One Hundred-Twenty Fourth Annual Report of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, 1938, New York, Judson Press Philadelphia p 28

<sup>23</sup> Second Survey of Fields and Work of the Northern Baptist Convention, Board of Missionary Cooperation, New York, Judson Press, Philadelphia, p 92

and to educate. The charter made it clear that baptism without evangelism would lead to sacerdotalism – a belief that propitiatory sacrifices for sin require the intervention of a priest; education to the exclusion of evangelism leads to dead formalism of the Church; finally evangelism without education leads to fanaticism.<sup>24</sup> These ‘fundamental principles’ had been formulated to guide the missionaries in their educational evangelism. Therefore, it may be argued that education was for evangelism and vice versa.

The objective of Christian missionary education became clear through a document of 1915 in which it laid out the principles in great detail. The first statement made it clear that Christian education occupies an indispensable place in larger scheme of evangelizing the world. While making it clear that schools are direct and conscious evangelistic agencies, the primary educational aim had been to develop a strong Christian community with adequately trained leadership and an intelligent and responsible community.<sup>25</sup> In this sense, education was strategically important to achieve its central purpose of building a literate space in order to advance evangelism. The one-hundred-first annual report of ABFMS even proposed for organization of schools of all grades including kindergartens, primary, high and normal schools, vocational schools, colleges, Bible schools, and theological institutions<sup>26</sup> and even suggested that the standard for curriculum and instruction were in conformity with government directives and the standards set by the missionary educational associations.<sup>27</sup> While the missionaries in their policy to associate with the government were in principle resolved, it was made clear that such association should not in any way compromise the ‘Christian character’ of their work in schools.<sup>28</sup> The missionaries had made conscious effort to create an

---

<sup>24</sup> Ibid

<sup>25</sup> One Hundred-First Annual Report of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Los Angeles, California, 1915, p 17

<sup>26</sup> Ibid

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p 18

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p 19

environment in schools that Christian influence would reverberate to their homes.<sup>29</sup> This has been lucidly acknowledged in the 125 years jubilee report of Baptist work in North East India which states

*“The introduction of Christianity would have been a difficult task without the participation of young people. In many cases, the lives of the young people have been first touched by the love of God... some of them called their parents and the other heathen...many followed their footsteps.”*<sup>30</sup>

At the close of the nineteenth century, when Rev. Rivenburg had gone to Impur to replace Rev. Clark and wife as they had to evade the rains due to ill health, he reported that the training school at Impur had sent out 60 trained teachers in 1899 to villages as teacher-cum-evangelist.<sup>31</sup> Around the same time, Rev. Perrine had reported that “it is a significant fact in view of what the Union says on the subject of education that nearly all of baptisms have come out of the schools and the school work.”<sup>32</sup> He further confirmed that the villages where there were Christians without schools had been conspicuous by the absence of converts.<sup>33</sup> This revelation is crucial as it shows the true nature of education in these hills. Schools in this sense had been evangelizing institutions. We could see that the missionaries had associated schools with proselytization itself. In this sense, the missionary education had dual objectives as mentioned above.<sup>34</sup> Perrine had reported that the missionaries could not travel to villages for lack of funds and it was the educated local evangelists who would travel in their place.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, these teachers had been sent to different villages to teach and to preach.<sup>36</sup> The evangelizing role of the

---

<sup>29</sup> Ibid

<sup>30</sup> 125 Years, Jubilee Reports of Baptist Work in North East India, p 9

<sup>31</sup> Sixth Session of the American Baptist Conference, held at Gauhati, December 22-31, 1900, Gauhati Mission Press, 1901, p 36

<sup>32</sup> Fifth Triennial Conference held at Dibrugarh, Feb 11-19, 1899, Calcutta Baptist Mission Press, p 41

<sup>33</sup> Ibid

<sup>34</sup> Ibid

<sup>35</sup> Ibid

<sup>36</sup> Khutso, *English Language and the Formation of Public Sphere* (Unpublished), p. 66-69



schools had been acknowledged in the quasi centenary reports which stated that usually it was the little 'educated' people who found the Lord and who became the leaders of the churches. They became evangelists, teachers, pastors and other workers in the church and community.<sup>37</sup> Interestingly, it was reported that the church and the village schools would be usually in close proximity and often in the same building which explains a great deal about it.<sup>38</sup> The reports vividly captured the way missionary education had influenced the minds of the students. No wonder, the missionaries had devoted the utmost priority on education and schools.

Around the same time, a direct correlation had been found between evangelical education and the outcome of Christian proselytization across Naga Hills. Rivenburg reported that church membership had been steadily increased to 368 in 1899 in the Impur Mission field,<sup>39</sup> the seat of education and Christianity amongst Naga tribes of that time. A more substantial statistics has been found in the report of the Seventh Session of the American Baptist Conference, held at Gauhati, December, 27, 1902 to 4<sup>th</sup> January 1903, in which the school statistics of 1901-02 shows that the village schools had about four times more students to the mission station school at Impur. The ratio for which has been given as 134:35 in 1901 and 120:48 in 1902. Interestingly, it was also reported that the missionaries were spending much more on schools than on Churches.<sup>40</sup> Later, B. I. Anderson had reported in 1938 about the Sema Nagas that teaching and training had been given more importance than baptism.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, Christianity was taught rather than preached in the early years and so missionaries found schools more important

---

<sup>37</sup> 125 Years, Jubilee Reports of Baptist Work in North East India, p 10

<sup>38</sup> Ibid

<sup>39</sup> Sixth Session of the American Baptist Conference, held at Gauhati, December 22-31, 1900, Gauhati Mission Press, 1901, p 37

<sup>40</sup> Seventh Session of the American Baptist Conference, held at Gauhati, December, 27, 1902-4<sup>th</sup> January 1903, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, p 44

<sup>41</sup> One Hundred-Twenty Fourth Annual Report of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, 1938, New York, Judson Press Philadelphia p 30

than churches. Of course, that doesn't mean that missionaries had sidelined the church – the two-pronged agenda ran simultaneously.

Evidently by the early twentieth century, the typical missionary school environment had been shaped with everyday chapel exercises with scripture, song and prayer, music instructor on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, short talks on current topics, personal and village hygiene on Thursdays and religious and moral lessons on Fridays,<sup>42</sup> which indicates the regular routine of a typical missionary village school. Therefore, the missionary schools were not ordinary schools from the religious and cultural point of view. It had the strategy, capacity and environment to strongly shape the sort of character and personality of a child the colonial masters and missionaries intended. This regular activity brings out the core aspect of educational evangelism in these hills. Interestingly around this time, it was reported that in the village schools, a system by which teachers were paid according to their performance was evolved.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, apparently by the first decade of twentieth century, the administration and responsibility of schools had to be increasingly transferred to the local churches in principle<sup>44</sup> and also to the government. This is where the logic of capital becomes operational within the local spaces, by which it means, the requirement to produce surplus in order to patronize institutions. Similarly, the Annual Report of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, 1917, endorsed the educational evangelistic objectives with reference to the Jorhat Christian Schools by stating that the Bible school should impart Bible instruction in order to produce trained leaders, the school should give academic and vocational instruction to produce trained Christian laymen and the hospital as a way of reaching out.<sup>45</sup> Similar system had been instituted in Serampore long before the Jorhat School. It was initially a Danish Settlement and transferred to the British

---

<sup>42</sup> One Hundred-First Annual Report of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Los Angeles, California, 1915, p 84

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, p 83

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, p 18

<sup>45</sup> One Hundred-Third Annual Report of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, 1917, Boston, Massachusetts, p. 87

through the treaty of purchase in 1845.<sup>46</sup> According to Rev. George Howells, a Christian University for India in the form of Serampore University was considered to render great service in giving to the present social and political unrest a moral and Christian basis.<sup>47</sup> This is an important piece of evidence to locate the place of Christian theology in the social and political arenas of Indian society in the first decade of twentieth century.

In January 1905, it was reported that there were twenty four village schools and out of which towards the close of 1905, fourteen schools had been taken over by the government.<sup>48</sup> In the first decade of the twentieth century, the colonial government had shown a new vigor in the educational sector, which the officials had referred to as secularizing the system of education in the Naga Hills. Moreover, around this time, as evident above, the village schools had mushroomed as a result of increased literacy over time. The management of these schools had become a sort of burden for the missionaries, forget about the quality of education. At the same time, the missionaries were able to make considerable success in producing literates and converts however shallow the education might be. The government's initiative to aid and to take over was more or less welcome. Nevertheless, Rev. Longwell wrote in the *American Baptist Missionary Review* in 1910 detesting the idea of secularizing education by the mission stating that 'such policy puts last things first and first things last'.<sup>49</sup> However for people like Dowd, secular education helps Christianity in the long run.<sup>50</sup> In the education report of the Ninth Biennial Conference of the American Baptist Missionary Union, 1907, he had made it clear that the missionaries were not capable enough, as far as resources were concerned, to upgrade the level of schools besides primary levels. Therefore, they depended

---

<sup>46</sup> The American Baptist Missionary Review, January, 1908, p. 274

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, p. 280

<sup>48</sup> Eight Session of the American Baptist Conference, held at Gauhati, December 24, 1904 to January 1, 1905, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, 1905,

<sup>49</sup> The American Baptist Missionary Review, 1910, p 170

<sup>50</sup> Ninth Biennial Conference of the American Baptist Missionary Union, held at Gauhati, January 5 to 12, 1907, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, 1907, p. 30

for government's intervention. However, the debate on secular versus evangelical education had been doing the rounds in the missionary circles evidently. A sort of conflict of interest is visible in what Rev. Perrine had written in 1899. He stated 'we (missionaries) believe in the complete separation of Church and state; but we also see no more harm in Government schools in Assam than in America, where Christian men conduct their affairs much the same as we do ours here.'<sup>51</sup> Therefore, as discussed elsewhere, the missionaries had been cautious in their engagement with the colonial government. Later, missionaries like Dowd had suggested in the conclusion of the ninth biennial conference report that the missionaries could accomplish their mission through secular education by availing government money.<sup>52</sup> With a more liberal approach on the part of the American missionaries, a good number of village primary schools set up by the mission had been taken over by the colonial government.

As the focus of the missionary education had been by and large on primary education, evidently shifts percolated from bottom up as far as conversions were concerned. According to 125<sup>th</sup> Jubilee report, it was recorded that the youth ministry officially commenced as a body only in 1948. But as a matter of fact, youths were active since the very start of the engagement. Generally the elders would oppose the new faith and therefore, it was the young people who first took interest, which was evidently true. Moreover, there had been instances of churches built by young people like that in Garo hills where two young brothers built churches and spread Christianity.<sup>53</sup> Interestingly, during the mid-nineteen-twenties Christian endeavor societies were organized in which the youths had pledged themselves to carry on the activities of the church more than the ordinary members of the Church. It was reported that Christian youth endeavor societies were

---

<sup>51</sup> Fifth Triennial Conference held at Dibrugarh, Feb 11-19, 1899, Calcutta Baptist Mission Press, p. 39

<sup>52</sup> Ninth Biennial Conference of the American Baptist Missionary Union, held at Gauhati, January 5 to 12, 1907, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, 1907, p. 31

<sup>53</sup> See 125 Years, Jubilee Reports of Baptist Work in North East India, p. 9

proactive in evangelism all through.<sup>54</sup> Looking at the way education and evangelism had been organized in the Naga Hills and North-East by and large, it had immense bearing in evangelizing the young people. To sum up, it is pertinent to note that the idea of an ‘intelligent Christian Community’, as it was referred, was always central to the missionary’s imagination.<sup>55</sup>

The American missionaries had admitted that the education that were imparted though the village primary schools were of ‘low grade’ but they also confided that these schools were established to streamline children to the education system and send them for better trainings at the higher levels. Rev. Jones had defined the nature of education prevalent by saying that it was a “missionary education.” According to him, it was necessary to differentiate the education imparted by government and other bodies or private individuals with the missionary education. He contended that the adjective ‘missionary’ represents the missionary ideas and imparts missionary ideals. Missionary education is distinctively a Christian education, he summarized.<sup>56</sup> Another aspect of establishing the schools was to establish points of contact with the local people.<sup>57</sup> Therefore, it is interesting to observe that primary schools were established as a way to negotiate with the local cultural systems, traditions and spaces. This may be referred to as an institutionalized way to de-essentialize the indigenous knowledge and performative systems. The gradual process of upgrading the level of education from the primary to middle-English and subsequently to High school had borne the evidence that this institutionalized strategy of the missionaries had a bottom up approach. Later it was recorded that the American Baptist mission had been the pioneer in village education in certain part of the Assam province, which refers to the Brahmaputra valley and the frontier hills. According to this source, the statistical datas indicate

---

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, p. 10

<sup>55</sup> Assam Missionary Conference of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Golaghat, January 1915, The Banerjee Press, Calcutta, p 4

<sup>56</sup> Baptist Missionary Review, August, 1908, p 309

<sup>57</sup> Assam Missionary Conference of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Golaghat, January 1915, The Banerjee Press, Calcutta, p 4

that up to forty percent of the converts could be traced to the village schools. That was the reason why the teacher was referred to as the right hand of the evangelist.<sup>58</sup> The percentage of conversion as a result of education would be much higher in the Naga Hills *per se*. Thus, educational evangelism to a great extent has been contingent with the definition of Christian education given by the missionaries which describes as the education given in schools and colleges, organized with definite purpose of conducting the Christian environment.<sup>59</sup>

On a critical note, although, it was also evident that not all mission groups subscribed the use of education as a means of evangelization, for instance, the Arthington Aborigines Mission objected to huge expenditure on school work, many missionary groups like the American Baptists overwhelmingly believed that intellectual enlightenment and discipline were fundamental to conversion.<sup>60</sup> In addition, missionaries were confident that the purpose of education was to raise a 'corps of translators' to be engaged in different areas.<sup>61</sup> More to that, Geertz has presented a strong case as to how literacy is a process of formulating and presenting ideologies and other cultural goods as symbolic templates. According to him, such templates are necessary considering the plastic nature of human behavior. He stated that human innate receptive abilities to particular patterns of behaviors is determined more by cultural templates rather than genetic factors.<sup>62</sup> It is through the construction of cultural and ideological templates that "schematic images of social order" result in the making of man as a good or bad political, and religious and cultural in this context, being.<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>58</sup> Assam Moves towards God By Walfred Danielson, American Baptist Foreign Mission Society 152 Madison Avenue New York

<sup>59</sup> Second Survey of Fields and Work of the Northern Baptist Convention, Board of Missionary Cooperation, New York, Judson Press, Philadelphia, p 93

<sup>60</sup> Sitlhou, *Deconstructing Colonial Ethnography*, p. 81

<sup>61</sup> Bhabha, *The Location Of Culture*, p. 124-125

<sup>62</sup> Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, p. 218

<sup>63</sup> Ibid

### **2.3 The Education Policies of American Baptist Mission Under Assam Field**

Having discussed on educational evangelism, it is also important to look at the educational policies that had been formulated from time to time. One of the reasons for these policies was also the question of uniformity in the educational system under the American Baptist Mission enterprise in Assam, the need for which had been evidently raised by quite a few individuals and committees. For instance, the Educational commission had recommended in 1911 that there should be uniformity in the standards and curricula of all the mission schools and also in conformity with the government curricula.<sup>64</sup> However, it admitted constraints to recommend for uniformity in infrastructure and salary of teachers due to the different conditions and circumstances.<sup>65</sup> One of the earliest policies on education was framed by Rev. Perrine in 1895. Prior to this, the education system had been more or less irregular and individuated. As the missionaries engaged with their respective fields, they had independently developed their own models of texts, languages, systems of education and evangelism. With the coming of new missionaries like Perrine in the early 1890s, it brought about a new wave not only in mission but also in the pedagogic policies. According to one of the policies, the Training schools which were responsible for producing school teachers, had three basic tasks. First, the teachers of 'normal class' were organized more or less like the summer schools in America. In this training, teachers were requisitioned twice a year for training in pedagogic methods, writing in the Naga vernaculars, preaching, translating from English to vernacular languages, teachings on Holy Spirit and prayer. Moreover, the teachers were trained to correspond both in English

---

<sup>64</sup> Assam Baptist Missionary Union, Report of the Eleventh Biennial Session, Gauhati, March 4-12, 1911, Calcutta Mission Press, p. 22

<sup>65</sup> Ibid

and the vernacular.<sup>66</sup> The second category was known as ‘workers class’, which was basically a sort of evangelical training for lay preachers. Under this category, those individuals who were late to join schools had been trained in their respective mother tongues about preaching.<sup>67</sup> Thirdly, the ‘English Class’ deals with a more advanced category of students. This level had three basic objectives. The first objective was to teach about reciting the bible narratives, especially old- testament and New Testament stories, which was intended to improve skills in English speaking, retention of Biblical knowledge and to impart them illustrations for sermons. The second objective was to practically train about preparation and delivery of sermons. The third objective was about teaching the doctrines of the Bible.<sup>68</sup> Rev. Perrine had reported that the performance of the ‘English class’ had been ‘very great’.<sup>69</sup> However, this literary hierarchy in the educational policy somehow bring out class manifestations, although it was organized according to circumstances and needs.

Apparently after this education policy, the next policy on education was formulated after five decades known as Mission Education Policy and Program in Assam, 1949. Perhaps, this was the last policy under American Baptist Mission in Assam. This policy was by far the most detailed and systematic formulation on missionary education system. Since the very beginning of the mission work, primary education had been given priority. Even after a century of mission work in Assam, primary education still retained significant place in the mission policies. According to this policy of 1949, it divulged that the responsibility of primary education should be shifted to the developed Christian communities or churches or otherwise to the government, if necessary.<sup>70</sup> Nevertheless, it underscored that as a

---

<sup>66</sup> The Assam Mission of the American Baptist Missionary Union- Triennial Conference 1895, p. 43

<sup>67</sup> Ibid

<sup>68</sup> Ibid

<sup>69</sup> Ibid

<sup>70</sup> American Baptist Mission Foreign Society, Madison Avenue, New York, Mission Education Policy and Program in Assam, 1949



policy, proper religious instruction to the children should continue even if the government takes over it.<sup>71</sup> However, the mission had expressed that it would continue support for the underdeveloped communities until a certain point of time. Moreover, it recommended in principle that it should not overlap with the government efforts on primary education, in areas where government had introduced schools.<sup>72</sup> Further, it clearly mentioned that there should be a strong and positive strategy for religious instruction through the hostels and extra classes under qualified supervision for the students who aspired to join the middle schools, which were under the government establishment.<sup>73</sup> It also recommended that if funds were available, such pedagogic strategies and instructions, and boarding facilities should be extended to high school and college levels respectively.<sup>74</sup>

Subsequently, the mission had recognized the importance of spiritual development by providing religious teachings in the high schools. The mission had pointed out that Christian communities should make financial contributions through the increase of school fees to sustain the high schools, by citing the example of Golaghat and Jorhat high schools. It continues to recommend for a coeducation model till the high school level.<sup>75</sup> Noticeably, a progressive leap from the earlier educational policies is that missionaries evidently had voted for the need to establish a Christian college.<sup>76</sup> This was a phenomenal progress as earlier the mission had in principle focused on primary education and a few secondary schools. Moreover, in general, the mission had also recommended for a coordinated framework for ‘Normal Training’ of men and women in line with the government stipend policies and other support systems.<sup>77</sup> It also suggested for the introduction of a ‘student-teacher’ model in which the students of higher classes were tasked to

---

<sup>71</sup> Ibid

<sup>72</sup> Ibid

<sup>73</sup> Ibid

<sup>74</sup> Ibid

<sup>75</sup> Ibid

<sup>76</sup> Ibid

<sup>77</sup> Ibid

teach the lower classes.<sup>78</sup> Going by the provisions of this policy, the mission was positive that it would increase number of teachers in mission and government run schools. Moreover, it repeatedly recommended for a regular course of bible study, training for Christian ministry and most importantly courses on building Christian homes for both men and women.<sup>79</sup> The last recommendation strongly bring out the cultural policy of the missionaries within educational policy. This policy stressed on the importance of a dual role of Christian teachers by undertaking leadership roles in evangelism in their respective areas of work.<sup>80</sup> In addition to the list of recommendations, it also mentioned about a provision of vernacular bible schools particularly in the hill areas where there were no normal training institutions.<sup>81</sup> These policies enormously shaped the character of education under the American Baptist mission in Assam and particularly the Naga Hills.

Evidently, the mission and the government had given considerable attention in the vocational system which they had referred to as technical education. Some of the colonial officials had shown keen interest in giving out vocational trainings. In one of the instances, the Chief Commissioner, Surma Valley and Hill Districts, Arbuthnott reported in 1906 that education continues to make satisfactory progress. He however lamented that the technical school ought to provide more suitable nature of instruction to what he called the Nagas as a 'practical people'.<sup>82</sup> According to him, it was hard to imagine students who had just graduated from the lower primary schools with limited knowledge of any written language to follow geometry and Euclid and paradoxically how such subjects would be relevant to learn rough carpentry and blacksmith work.<sup>83</sup> He further commented that if it was intended to make an engineering school, the standard of entrance should be raised and moreover the students should be better educated before entering technical

---

<sup>78</sup> Ibid

<sup>79</sup> Ibid

<sup>80</sup> Ibid

<sup>81</sup> Ibid

<sup>82</sup> Annual Administration Report Of The Naga Hills District 1906-07

<sup>83</sup> Ibid

school.<sup>84</sup> These concerns had been communicated to the Director of Public Instruction for orders.<sup>85</sup> Interestingly, in the administration report of 1909, it has been reported that the curriculum of the Kohima Technical School had been revised in consultation with the Executive Engineer and Director Public Instruction.<sup>86</sup>

As seen from the educational policies of the missionaries and the colonial government, the policies had multiple objectives and provisions specifically designed for varied sections of people. It may be observed that some of the policies were found to be more of cultural and religious than educational. Also going by the hierarchy laid out in the policies, the basis of class formation in the Naga society may be found. Moreover, with the new cultural capital that came through education and literacy, clearly, the operation of the missionary logic of capital becomes visible as the understanding of value gets altered from the traditional understanding by around the last quarter of nineteenth century. As a result, the local communities were compelled to either generate surplus production or turn the available goods to market to patronize educational and ecclesiastical measures or buy the goods and services of the emerging literate class. Thus, cultural change phenomenally depended on the nature of policies of its proponents.

## **2.4 Missionaries as Linguists and Administrators as Taskmasters**

Starting from missionary and imperial agendas that they brought along with them to strategic policies that were formulated to engage and evangelize the locals, the administrators and missionaries closely collaborated to execute these policies to secure their interest. It may be said that until the second half of the nineteenth century, the Naga society was basically an oral society. Although, irregular forms of literalization of ‘Angami’ and ‘Singphoo’ languages had been introduced by the

---

<sup>84</sup> Ibid

<sup>85</sup> Ibid

<sup>86</sup> Annual Administration Report Of The Naga Hills District 1909, p 1

colonial administrators and the American Baptist missionaries<sup>87</sup> respectively even prior to the 1870s, it was Dr. Clark who along with some locals that literalized ‘Chongli Ao’ Naga in phonetically written form since the mid-1870s.<sup>88</sup> By late 1870s and early 1880s, Rev. C. D. King commenced the literalisation of Angami language under Kohima station.<sup>89</sup> However, it was the successor couple, Rev. Rivenburg and his wife Mrs. Hattie, who significantly contributed in literalizing the ‘Angami’ language and evangelizing in and around the Kohima station.<sup>90</sup> A host of American missionaries who had steadily joined the mission field contributed towards literalization of local languages, and further development and regularization of this new cultural form of expression and reception.<sup>91</sup> Literacy slowly got interiorized into the cultural practices of the Naga village societies through different modes, principally through the primary schools. With this shift the society had witnessed the emergence of a ‘dual culture’, a culture where both oral and literary operated together. This cultural interaction created cultural anxieties and tensions of different sorts, which shall be discussed in the later chapters.

Dr. Clark who had pioneered the Christian missionary work in the Naga Hills had confided that from the beginning, his work was mostly literary. He admitted that literalization of Naga languages was not easy as they had no ‘alphabet’ or ‘books’ of their own. In addition to his efforts, Clark also disclosed that he and his wife had expended substantial amount of money on what he calls ‘letter field’, a reference for literary development, in last three years.<sup>92</sup> At the

---

<sup>87</sup> Miles Bronson had attempted to literalize the language of the Singphos in the late 1830s and early 1840s, but he had to eventually abandon the field due to circumstances. Gammell, *History of American Baptist Missions*, p. 219

<sup>88</sup> Government of Nagaland, Private Department (ABAM), 1901, File No. 12, pp. 6

<sup>89</sup> Mary Mead Clark, *A Corner in India*, American Baptist Publication, Philadelphia, 1907, p. 119; S. W. Rivenburg, *The Way to Health in Angami Naga*, (Translated and revised) American Baptist Union, Kohima Assam, 1904

<sup>90</sup> Clark, *A Corner in India*, p. 119; Rivenburg, *The Way to Health in Angami Naga*, 1904

<sup>91</sup> Government of Nagaland, Private Department (ABAM), 1901, File No. 12, pp. 6

<sup>92</sup> Assam Baptist Missionary Conference of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Twelfth Biennial Session, Gauhati, January 4-13, 1913, p 55

Kohima station, Rivenburg reported in 1886, that ‘some hours’ had been devoted on language development each day. He admitted that after working on Angami language for about three years, he was able to speak what he wished to say but admitted that command over pronunciation and articulation was still poor, and he also understands a small portion of what locals tell him.<sup>93</sup> With the early missionaries actively engaged in literalizing the oral languages in these hills and elsewhere, Mary Mead Clark stated in her book in 1893 that “romanizing the unwritten languages of the world was in vogue”.<sup>94</sup> However, since the Naga languages had its unique sound, Mrs. Clark had revealed that the Roman vowels in Ao books had the Italian sound, for which it had the approval of Royal Geographical Societies of London and Paris. For example, ‘a’ sounds like *ũ*.<sup>95</sup> It was evident that literalization of languages was central to missionary engagement and in this way, interfered with the core cultural aspects of the local societies. When the missionaries succeeded in altering the linguistic intricacies, the foundation of a new cultural database had been instituted. After all, culture is itself language and vice versa in oral societies. Thus, the missionaries had recognized this very fact and primarily invested their energy and resources even before actively setting out to evangelize the locals.

It was reported that the missionaries had to undergo a language test after their arrival in the Naga Hills, which was the case even with the colonial administrators.<sup>96</sup> Mr. Tanquist had reported that he had passed the First Language Examination at the end of the first year on the field. Even the missionaries had the language proficiency test in order to qualify to work on the local languages. The Colonial officials had this system in place long time ago. In fact, as far as the Naga

---

<sup>93</sup> The Assam Mission of the American Baptist Missionary Union- Triennial Conference 1889, p. 41

<sup>94</sup> Ao Naga Grammar with illustrative Phrases and Vocabulary by Mrs. E. W. Clark, Assam Secretariat Press, Shillong, 1893, p 2

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, p. 2

<sup>96</sup> Assam Baptist Missionary Conference of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Twelfth Biennial Session, Gauhati, January 4-13, 1913, p 49

Hills was concerned, the officials classified the languages and exams were conducted for the officers which was based on Sir Bam Fylde Fullers' order.<sup>97</sup> In the Assam Baptist Missionary Conference Report of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society of 1916, held in Nowgong, it was proposed that a general language examination committee should be composed of a representative each for a list of languages the missionaries were engaged.<sup>98</sup> It also resolved that an examining body should consist of two Europeans assisted by one or two of the best qualified local language speakers by conforming to the rules and regulations of the Calcutta Missionary Examination.<sup>99</sup> Tanquist stated that mastery in the language would give wonderful influence amongst the local people.<sup>100</sup>

In many cases, the colonial government being the supreme master, availed the services of missionary linguists to meet their ends. The service of Rev. Pettigrew who worked amongst the southern Nagas and neighboring communities, was utilized by the government to translate old Manipuri manuscripts.<sup>101</sup> Therefore, missionaries were also used as hand of the state to secure colonial interest. While, the linguistic expertise of missionaries kept the state to constantly depend on the American mission, the missionaries bargained financial and infrastructural aids, and occasionally availed its protection.<sup>102</sup> A review of 100 years of literary work in Assam under the title 'Literary Heritage of 100 Years in the Mission', by Rev. Button, stated that the early missionaries in Assam did more pedagogic work than the later ones. According to him literary culture was developed for the following

---

<sup>97</sup> Government of Nagaland, General Department, File No. 167, 1884-85; General Department, File No. 507, 1884; Appointment and Political Department, File No. 62, 1922; Government order dated, 17.7.1906 and Para 3 of Es & A Government letter No. 8141c dated 14.8.1906 in Government of Nagaland, Appointment and Political Department, 1922, File No. 62, p. 6

<sup>98</sup> Assamese, Angami Naga, Garo, Ao Naga, Manipuri, Bengali, Kuri, Abor Miri, Mikir, Tangkhul

<sup>99</sup> Assam Missionary Conference of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Nowgong, February 1916, The Banerjee Press, Calcutta, p 21

<sup>100</sup> Assam Missionary Conference of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Golaghat, January 1915, The Banerjee Press, Calcutta, p 31

<sup>101</sup> The Baptist Missionary Review, April, 1936, vol. XLII, p. 169

<sup>102</sup> Assam – Historical – Mission Education Policy and Program in Assam – 11/14 16/49 (Microfilm) 712-2.3, p 14

reasons. First, the locals did not have ‘texts at all’, so the only way was to literalize it, and secondly, missionaries had more time to work on literary development as there were less Christian converts in the early days.<sup>103</sup>

However, after the investment of enormous time, effort and resources, the missionaries couldn’t really induce children to learn and their parents to send them to schools during the early part of the locals tryst with education. An epic instance had been recorded in the Annual administrative report of 1906-07 which stated that many Nagas would come and say,

*“What is the use of education? I want my boy to work in the field with me, I want him to work in the house, to draw water and to cut wood; if he goes to school he cannot work for me, and what will be gained afterwards?” It was difficult question to answer, says an official.*<sup>104</sup>

In such a scenario, the Colonial officials promptly intervened. The Sub Divisional Officer wrote in his annual report that Education was not voluntary and no doubt pressure was necessary to maintain decent attendance in the village schools.<sup>105</sup> Officials lamented that education was still not popular enough even after government took over fourteen lower primary village schools from the Impur American Baptist Mission in November 1905.<sup>106</sup> Thus, the officials made it clear that education was not voluntary. They also divulged that the flattering attendance at some of the schools was due to stringent orders to the Goanburas of respective villages to ensure that the ordered number of boys attended. Therefore, the SDO opined that without standing orders and continual vigilance, the number of ‘boys’ in any of the schools would be reduced to only Christians, which would be too small a number to pay the school teacher.<sup>107</sup> In the same report, the administrator also

---

<sup>103</sup> Ibid

<sup>104</sup> Annual Administration Report Of The Naga Hills District 1906-07, p 8

<sup>105</sup> Ibid

<sup>106</sup> Ibid

<sup>107</sup> Ibid

expressed that it would be far better to have fewer schools with better trained teachers and voluntary pupils. Interestingly, he also recorded that in many of the schools that he inspected, the ‘pundit’ were nearly as ignorant as the pupils.<sup>108</sup> While, missionaries were proactively engaged in planting primary schools, developing pedagogic texts and literalizing local languages, the officials had been continually lamenting on the state of education around the first decade of the twentieth century. In one of the administrative reports, Mr. Needhan wrote that there were a number of schools including the 14 lower primary schools taken over by the government from the American mission as well as a government school in Mokokchung teaching Assamese and ‘little English’ to *sepoys* and *Faltus* children, however, he called government run schools as quite unsuccessful.<sup>109</sup>

According to Needhan, the Nagas sent their children to school only for fear of being punished. Amusingly, the villagers would quarrel amongst themselves as to whose children would be sent to school even on availing monetary gifts from rest of the parents.<sup>110</sup> He recorded that such collections reached as much as Rs. 8/- to Rs 10/- in most occasions. Thus, the children were forced to enter into a formal and literate space even though it was revealed that village ‘pundits’ were not educated enough to teach students.<sup>111</sup>

Evidently, a few decades later the question of literacy had become a political matter at the colonial headquarters, which demonstrated the centrality of literacy within the colonial regime and hegemonic undertones encrypted within it. There were parliamentary debates in the Central Legislative Assembly in Delhi on the question of literacy among government employees.<sup>112</sup> Around the same time, the missionaries and colonial officials were actively engaged in ‘literacy campaigns’

---

<sup>108</sup> Annual Administration Report Of The Naga Hills District 1906-07, p 8

<sup>109</sup> Annual Administration Report Of The Naga Hills District 1909, p2

<sup>110</sup> Ibid, p2

<sup>111</sup> Ibid, p2

<sup>112</sup> File No 131/45 Public Section, Government of India, Home Dept., 1945, p. 2



in the Naga Hills.<sup>113</sup> A legislative proceeding had taken place at the Legislative Assembly on the issue of literacy consequent to a starred question put forward by Mr. Manu Subedhar in 1945, as to what efforts had the government of India made with regard to the increase of adult literacy amongst its own employees in the departments namely Posts and Telegraphs, Railways and other Departments? And secondly, what steps had been taken to increase the literacy amongst the Chraprasis and Chowkidars employed by the Government of India at the centre?<sup>114</sup> Basing on these questions, the Assistant Secretary of the Department of Education, Health and Land had issued an Office Memorandum addressed to all the Departments of Government of India and Political department to furnish details about the status of literacy of employees before 1<sup>st</sup> March, 1945. This official memorandum had been responded by the Home department and in the draft memorandum addressed to the Department of Education, Health and Land, had clarified that

*“...the undersigned is directed to say that the Home Department have not taken any special steps to increase literacy among the inferior servants employed by them. An endeavor is however always made to ensure that so far as possible inferior servants newly recruited are literate.”<sup>115</sup>*

What Macaulay had imagined and proposed a century ago had resonated in the consciousness of the Indian leaders who were at the helm of affairs at that point of time. Although, from the perspective of delivering a competent governance, in today's parlance, literacy could have become a necessary evil. Nevertheless, hegemony had been anchored in a very subtle way. According to Gramsci, “hegemony is exercised in society by the ruling class, supported by the intellectuals, the officers of the ruling class, and the apparatus of state coercion.”<sup>116</sup> As a matter of fact, the locals were presented with a unidimensional mode of progress, which

---

<sup>113</sup> Assam Baptist Missionary conference report, Thirty Seventy Session, Jorhat, Assam, 1940, p. 24

<sup>114</sup> File No 131/45 Public Section, Government of India, Home Dept., 1945, p. 2

<sup>115</sup> *ibid*

<sup>116</sup> Antonio Gramsci, *On Hegemony and Direct Rule*, in A. L. Macfie ed., *Orientalism A Reader*, Edinburgh University Press, 2000, p. 39

was through the English education, similar to the ‘dissenters’ salvation’ discussed in the earlier chapter. Similarly, education was also projected as the sole bailout from the indigenous evil cultural ecosystem. Thus, learning at schools became a strenuous task rather than a pleasant exercise. In this way, hegemony operated as a necessary evil.

The missionaries and administrators as linguists, teachers, patrons and taskmasters combined their efforts to ensure the development of a literate socio-cultural capital out of the oral and traditional societies. This process of direct engagement with the locals through literary works and educational measures was significant for cultural engagement between modern western world and the Naga ‘traditional’ world. Moreover, this new cultural practice of literacy was fundamental to the formation of a ‘formalized’ space within the traditional society. As cited above, literacy was the point of entry for local children into the literate cultural and ‘modern’ world. Therefore, locating this entry point is important to understand the class consciousness and its formation itself. Colonial administrators by extending its legal imperative to ensure regular attendance had been a great enabler of this cultural engagement.

## **2.5 Literacy Campaigns, Conversions and New Imaginations**

Evidently the colonial rulers and the American missionaries found a common ground to secure their interests and holdings in the Naga Hills. Both administrators and missionaries used literacy as the threshold of cultural and ideological and political dissemination and control. The administrators needed clerks and local officials for administrative expediency and importantly governance. Whereas, for the missionaries, literacy was the primary medium to transmit the teachings of Christianity. On the whole, almost every white men and women irrespective of their profession, had personal agenda of exerting all means to draw the ‘subjects’ towards their dominant culture and civilization. Looking at

the way colonial and missionary schools had been introduced attests this very fact. Mary Mead Clark, who started the first school in the Naga Hills initially organized evening literary classes to teach alphabets, numbers, songs, and bible stories.<sup>117</sup> It was fondly noted by Mrs. Clark that the donation that came from Colonel Buckingham, the then Chief Commissioner of Assam in 1878 that enabled the construction of the first ‘school house’. Initially children flocked in “as if of a holiday” stated Mrs. Clark, but soon to decline when discipline became the order.<sup>118</sup> However, she revealed that it didn’t take long to demonstrate “what educated boys or girls might be and do”.<sup>119</sup> Teaching them English was necessary for evangelism according to the Clarks so that students would be able to communicate with the missionaries and set out to mediate between the non-Christians and the Christian world.<sup>120</sup> When Rivenburg arrived at the Kohima mission station, there were only two Nagas, one Mikir and two Assamese on the Church roll. However, of the two Nagas, one had been excluded for immoral practice and the other for ‘false worship’ last December. He also reported initially the church services we held in Assamese but changed to Angami after two years. Rivenburg also organized an English service for the English officers but attendance receded gradually. He admitted that ‘out of door’ preaching were not possible because of communication problems.<sup>121</sup> All these factors combined to make the missionary efforts to evangelize difficult during the initial years. Considering these facts, the location of cultural shifts in the Naga Hills is interesting because there are statistical and archival sources which presents a minute progression of school and church enrollments from the scratch. Thus, this statistical progression indicate that every convert or literate were markers of cultural change. The converts and literates were moving into the ‘modern’ domains in some sense.

---

<sup>117</sup> Bendangyabang Ao, *History of Christianity in Nagaland*, p. 94-95

<sup>118</sup> Clark, *A Corner in India*, pp. 83-84

<sup>119</sup> Ibid p. 84-85

<sup>120</sup> Bendangyabang Ao, *History of Christianity in Nagaland*, pp. 94-95

<sup>121</sup> The Assam Mission of the American Baptist Missionary Union- Triennial Conference 1889, p. 42

A sneak peek in to the statistics of early church membership and students' enrollment in primary schools bring out the earliest shift from traditional to the modern domains. One of the early sources mention that the number of Ao Church membership was seventy-four in 1887 and the number of 'day schools', which was a reference for village primary schools, in operation was five with total enrollment of one-hundred-fifty-seven and an average attendance of one-hundred-fifteen.<sup>122</sup> In 1888, the number of schools had increased to seven with one-hundred-eighty pupils, with an average attendance of one-hundred-fifty-six.<sup>123</sup> These schools were all in different villages, except two in a large village. Initially, the teachers were mostly Assamese, who were tasked to perform considerable preaching in their respective villages after two hours of morning teaching on all week days.<sup>124</sup> Clark revealed that he preferred to have 'feeble instrumentalities' in these villages to preach the gospel, by which, Clark probably meant to refer young and impressionable minds. He stated that "...only by educating the children, can we hope to have any church members who will be able to read the scriptures."<sup>125</sup> Therefore, this instance suggested that the missionary strategy targeted the young minds, right from the start, through its primary schools. As a result, a report stated "most of the villages where the schools are, praying men are beginning to appear."<sup>126</sup> Rivenburg also added an instance where three boys who stayed with him had been taught six hours daily.<sup>127</sup> Soon, they learned how to read, write, add, subtract and the multiplication table. He revealed that his chief object in having them was to test his method of writing in the 'Angami' language and see if the children could learn it easily.<sup>128</sup> In July, 1900 Kennedy had inspected the Pathsala at *Themokedima* where there were thirteen boys present out of which seven could

---

<sup>122</sup> Ibid, p. 39

<sup>123</sup> Ibid

<sup>124</sup> Ibid

<sup>125</sup> Ibid

<sup>126</sup> Ibid, p. 40

<sup>127</sup> Ibid, p. 42

<sup>128</sup> Ibid

read and write fairly well, and knew a little bit of simple arithmetic.<sup>129</sup> Similarly, in September, 1901, the DC inspected the Kigwema pathsala which had five boys and recorded that writing and reading were fair but admitted that arithmetic was rather weak.<sup>130</sup> Even though the response was still upcoming, in the words of Rev. Baker “with the school that had been constructed, the sound of a child reading...the untrained mind (s) had something before it within the range of their own senses.”<sup>131</sup> Further stated that a good school is a nucleus around which the Christian sentiment of a hamlet gathers by itself.<sup>132</sup> By about the first decade of the twentieth century considerable number of people had been converted to Christianity. It is visible that the missionaries had been quite overwhelmed. In 1910 Longwell reported that converts were coming from every direction, churches had been emerging village after village and he admitted that there was no capacity to take care of it.<sup>133</sup> The Nagas had been continuously moving towards new intellectual and religious spaces.

Around the same time, the need for literate local Christian leaders, evangelists and preachers was evidently far greater than what was available as conversions were taking place more rapidly. There were many instances where groups of people gathered together for worship but there were no one amongst them who could read or preach. Mr. Supplee wrote in the late 1920s about a group of villages in the lower hills of the Angami country who had asked for a pastor-evangelist because they had no literate person among them.<sup>134</sup> Similarly, in the case of the Eastern Angamis, whose dialect vary from that of the ‘Kohima Angamis’,

---

<sup>129</sup> File No 445, Tour Diary of Lt W M Kennedy, ISC, officiating DC, Naga Hills for July 1900, (July, 1901), p. 9

<sup>130</sup> File No 445, Tour Diary of Lt W M Kennedy, ISC, officiating DC, Naga Hills for July 1900, (Sept 1901), p11

<sup>131</sup> The American Baptist Missionary Review, January, 1908, p 112

<sup>132</sup> Ibid, p 112

<sup>133</sup> Assam Baptist Missionary Conference of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Twelfth Biennial Session, Gauhati, January 4-13, 1913, p 50

<sup>134</sup> American Baptist Foreign Mission Societies, Records, 1817-1969 (Assam, Kohima, General Material, 1924-46), Supplee, July 17, 1937, p. 4

two churches had been organized by the native evangelists but amongst the forty to fifty members, there was not a single literate person.<sup>135</sup> Even in the case of Kacha Nagas, around 1933, there was only one church with membership of twelve houses, while another church started when twenty four houses converted at one time, making it one of the largest churches in the entire mission field, yet it was without a literate person to lead.<sup>136</sup> A similar instance was reported in two other villages where a similar movement towards Christianity took place but lacked the literate resource.<sup>137</sup> In the case of the Sema tribe, Mr. Tanquist was the first missionary to literalize its dialect and produce Christian literatures. Unlike other tribes like Angami, conversions took place more rapidly. For instance, a huge number of villages had built meeting houses and gathered regularly for worship, though they seldom had anyone among them who could preach or sing or read.<sup>138</sup> By early 1930s, the total number of Sema Christians went up to about five thousand, whereas the literate members were reportedly not more than fifty.<sup>139</sup>

By the late 1930s, the number of Ao converts had crossed ten thousand, which was highest among the Naga tribes of that time. Interestingly, this mission station had the maximum number of missionary primary schools and as a result the literacy rate was highest too.<sup>140</sup> In 1938 across the Naga Hills, there were 69 churches with 11,657 members, with 893 new baptisms in that particular year, and 41 village primary schools with 1,234 regular pupils.<sup>141</sup> In the same year, there was a 'Christian Association', a general meeting of Christians, under the Impur mission which had about 3700 attendance.<sup>142</sup> With the increase in literacy, the 'Ao Milan', a local vernacular published by the missionaries had about 500 subscribers by

---

<sup>135</sup> Ibid

<sup>136</sup> Ibid

<sup>137</sup> Ibid

<sup>138</sup> Ibid

<sup>139</sup> Ibid

<sup>140</sup> One Hundred-Twenty Fourth Annual Report of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, 1938, New York, Judson Press Philadelphia p. 28-29

<sup>141</sup> Ibid

<sup>142</sup> Ibid

then.<sup>143</sup> Anderson had reported that the number of graduates from schools had increased but lamented that there were less students in colleges. The missionaries stated that students should complete their education and ‘help their people for advancement.’<sup>144</sup> This idea of ‘advancement’ in the missionary parlance may be profoundly captured in few instances. The first Lotha converts, Nkhao and Shanrio, were orphans who studied at the Impur Mission School and received baptism in 1898.<sup>145</sup> Similarly, Downs recorded that the first Christian from Sumi community by the name Ivilho was a student of Baptist mission school Kohima.<sup>146</sup> It was in the later part of 1929, a boy from Tamlu, which was part of the British administered area, was brought to Impur Mission Centre for education. That boy reportedly ‘accepted Christ’ and got baptized at Impur. Later this boy brought three of his friends to attend the Impur mission school. It was reported that all the boys accepted Christ and were baptized.<sup>147</sup> Gradually, Christianity expanded to these regions through these few literate-converts.

Throughout the missionary engagement in these hills, literary works had been accorded prime importance. Besides the educational measures, ‘adult literary campaigns’ were organized regularly in the 1940s. The exact nature of these campaigns could not be ascertained, nevertheless, it should be the short term Bible schools which were regularly organized to train evangelists and pastors with a target group of non-literate youths late to attend schools.<sup>148</sup> Along with these campaigns, J. E. Tanquist had stated that no language group was too small to be literalised and developed as scriptures in respective languages provide better chances for organic Christian community. According to Tanquist, there were about 213 baptisms which were recorded as the greatest number of conversion amongst the Angami Nagas in a year. Therefore, according to Tanquist, these literary

---

<sup>143</sup> Ibid, p. 29

<sup>144</sup> Ibid

<sup>145</sup> Downs, *Christianity in North-East India*, p. 134

<sup>146</sup> Ibid, p. 134

<sup>147</sup> 125 Years, Jubilee Reports of Baptist Work in North East India, p 39

<sup>148</sup> Assam Baptist Missionary conference report, Thirty Seventy Session, Jorhat, Assam, 1940, p. 24

development and adult literacy campaigns had spontaneously reciprocated in conversions and baptisms.<sup>149</sup> Tanquist also reported that the Christian community among the Lothas was steadily increasing but lamented at the state of ‘illiteracy’ amongst the people and sought direction from other missionaries who could direct him.<sup>150</sup> He also mentioned that the community lacked intelligent leadership and mentioned that the locals were conscious about it and were sending men to bible schools.<sup>151</sup> Therefore, these adult literacy campaigns were largely an alternative and an informal system of education targeting specific sections. All these literary activities indicate the presence of a strong literary public sphere.

Jonathan Draper has pointed out that the oral cultures are fluid in nature and it tends to change without being conscious or aware. He talks about the constant interaction between the indigenous and the dominant colonial and missionary cultural systems. As a result for him, cultural change is usually unconscious, as the indigenous systems get subjected to negotiate the harsh colonial reality which in the case of Africa had produced subversive dispositions.<sup>152</sup> As discussed by Draper, the change that took place in Africa and the case of colonial India where the educated had risen to resist the proponents of education, interestingly did not resonate in the Naga Hills, rather education produced more of cultural affinity. This comparative paradox in many ways intrigue a critical analysis of the diverse cultural capital that had been created through western education. Also, the Naga literate class and people alike had expressed resentment at the news of the British departure when India became independent.<sup>153</sup> Interestingly, literacy may be even referred to as the first step to cultural adaptations, which manifested the cultural

---

<sup>149</sup> Ibid, p. 24

<sup>150</sup> Ibid, p. 28

<sup>151</sup> Ibid, p. 28

<sup>152</sup> Jonathan Draper ed., *Orality, Literacy and Colonialism in Southern Africa*, Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta, 2003, p. 5; This process of bricolage meant that cultural symbols and doctrines ostensibly drawn from the missionaries and the Christian faith in Africa could change their shape and reference. They were turned back against their own proponents.

<sup>153</sup> Charles Chasie, *The Naga Imbroglio: A Personal Perspective*, Standard Printers & Publishers, 1999, p. 32



dimension of literary development. Even, Dowd made a cultural statement by saying that every teacher was a preacher.<sup>154</sup>

The making of a Naga Christianized space heavily depended on literacy. As evident from missionary narratives, to be recognized as a 'leader' in the new emerging Christian community, the ability to read and write was most paramount eligibility. This experience to a great extent had moved away from the traditional idea of leadership where bravery, kinship affiliations, performing feast of merit, etc. were the virtues. The shift to the literary imagination of leadership therefore created a new binary between literate and 'illiterate', which had significantly twisted the spine of the 'traditional' Naga village societies. It was more or less a structural reorganization of Naga village societies into bigger social composites and the literates occupied the seat of leadership. Thus, with the expansion of literacy and evangelism, evidently new social conditions and new imaginations had been created. In fact, as the Church was largely a literate space, the village schools became its feeder as mini churches. The instance cited above about the boy from Tamlu shows how literacy opened up cultures to negotiate with new accesses, and at the same time the way converts had responded to dominant cultures is interestingly cultural change in itself.

## **2.6 The Intervention of Literacy and Proselytization into the Cultural Cores**

As argued above cultural adaptations began with literacy, in this context. With this entry point, it is important to study how the perception of the people changes over the course of time. As some scholars<sup>155</sup> argue, colonization begins in

---

<sup>154</sup> Seventh Session of the American Baptist Conference, held at Gauhati, December, 27, 1902-4<sup>th</sup> January 1903, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, p 42

<sup>155</sup> Nicholas Dirks, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India*, Princeton University Press, 2011; Gauri Viswanathan, *Mask of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in*

the mind, the location of change in perception becomes a crucial vantage point for this study. Like it was preliminarily discussed in the MPhil dissertation, domination and colonization of the mind through literacy was strategic to the conquest of Nagas.<sup>156</sup> The alteration of language had impact on thought processes, perception, assumption and other cognitive systems. It influenced habits, practices, outlooks and worldviews. It was so because literacy was the new conduit of western ideas to the Nagas. Such shift in worldviews was possible when the perception of the subjects gets altered. The superior construction of the 'imperial civilization' was very crucial in the way the perception of the 'subjects' had been shaped. Hence, perception is an imperative paradigm to locate cultural change.

Generally, the missionaries were often criticized for their determined effort to convert the non-believers. They assumed to themselves the evangelization of the unbelievers as a 'burden' and a 'conviction', and as evident above, it was exerted to the extent of even risking their lives.<sup>157</sup> The missionaries based at Sibsagar, which was the closest mission station to the Naga Hills from the North-West Assam, had written that they were filled with a burden that the people in the hills would perish without knowing Christ,<sup>158</sup> a typical 'missionary burden' on the part of the early American Baptist evangelists in the second half of the nineteenth century. This burden showcases an aspect of Christian ideology and commitment which convicts Christians to take the gospel to every nation (Matthew 28:19). This particular passage was cited in the letter, when Clark sought permission from the colonial government to enter the un-administered part of Naga Hills, to express the urgency of Christian missionary conviction to reach out to the non-believers.<sup>159</sup> Similarly, W. F. Dowd had written in 1907 that, the missionaries could not stand

---

*India*, Oxford University Press, 1998; Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India*, Princeton University Press, 1996

<sup>156</sup> Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge*, p. 4

<sup>157</sup> Clark, *A Corner in India*, p. 100

<sup>158</sup> Government of Nagaland, File no 4, Private (ABAM), special paper on Church activity, 1871, 1896, 1940, p. 5

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid*, p. 6

and watch the children of Christians grow up untrained and ‘illiterate’.<sup>160</sup> Their venture to the Naga Hills was nothing short of this ‘providential burden’ when the gospel was first taken there. When Dr. E W Clark delegated one of his assistants, Godhula, to the hills to learn one of the languages, the villagers initially suspected him to be a government spy. Nevertheless, it was recorded that the villagers were quick to extend their hospitality after it was confirmed that he was not a government spy, and had shown keen interest in listening to the gospel.<sup>161</sup> Even Rivenburg mentioned in 1894 that whenever he went to villages to preach, people attentively listened, asked questions and used to say that the words were good.<sup>162</sup> Going by these instances, one could deduce a certain level of curiosity and receptive spirit on the part of the Naga villagers since their earliest contact with the missionaries, and also not as rigid as the way many scholars generally perceive traditional societies.

On a similar note, an observant colonial official stated in 1906 that Nagas are a very practical race. And he added,

*“Education is gradually becoming more popular and were it possible to impress the people with the fact that the practical results of education are good, there would be an immense increase in the number of scholars. Nagas are a very practical race, and they require ocular proof of the practical value of education. As soon as it becomes possible to give a few good billets to Nagas, I am sure that the number of scholars will increase”.*<sup>163</sup>

It may be observed that certain sense of cultural adaptability of the Nagas had been alluded in this statement. It further suggested that Naga cultures may be responsive and perceptive to the tastes of some other cultures. Moreover, the need

---

<sup>160</sup> Ninth Biennial Conference of the American Baptist Missionary Union, held at Gauhati, January 5 to 12, 1907, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, 1907, p. 28

<sup>161</sup> Governemnt of Nagaland, File no 4, Private (ABAM), special paper on Church activity, 1871, 1896, 1940, p. 7

<sup>162</sup> The Assam Mission of the American Baptist Missionary Union- Triennial Conference 1895, p. 45

<sup>163</sup> Annual Administration Report Of The Naga Hills District 1906-07

of Nagas for visual proofs of the practical value of education, intriguingly take us to the very core essence of Naga communitarian ethos which was the pragmatic and functional nature.<sup>164</sup> The missionaries and colonial administrators were quick enough to appropriate the pragmatic essence of the indigenous cultural systems to infuse the cultural elements necessary for proselytization. For instance, the concept of ‘god’ was adapted from respective ‘tribal’ concepts like *tsungrem* in the case of the Aos, *ukepenuopfu* for the Angamis, *potso* for the Lothas, etc. and these indigenous terms were suffixed with ‘Jehovah’ to symbolically imply it to be more Christian.<sup>165</sup> These concepts and terms were adapted and printed in the pedagogic texts, Christian pamphlets, translated bibles, etc. which internalized the idea of Christian God more subtly in the consciousness of the early generation literates and converts who were the earliest lots to access such printed circulations. Jacobs had written that “it was the initial shrewd translation which gave Christianity its foothold...”<sup>166</sup> in the Naga Hills and elsewhere, which was evidently true, from the cultural point of view. It was even more cultural than Christian because such ‘shrewd strategies’ of evangelization were devised by missionaries probably according to the exigencies of host cultures. Therefore, a lot of strategies and practices that the missionaries imparted and imposed may be regarded as more missionary practices than actual Christian practices, because of which evangelization by the American missionaries in contexts like the Naga society had been overwhelmingly culture centric. A lot of such missionary practices had remained with the converts of Christianized societies like Nagas. Another instance could be the prohibition of drinking ‘rice beer’ as sin by the missionaries. Rice beer was originally a cultural beverage of Nagas, but the connotation of sin to this

---

<sup>164</sup> Khutso, “Shifting Democratic Experiences of Nagas”, 2018 (Upcoming)

<sup>165</sup> Julian Jacobs, *The Nagas Hill peoples of Northeast India: Society, Culture, and the Colonial Encounter*, Hansjörg Mayer 1990 (Extended New Edition 2012), New York Thames & Hudson, p 155; Khutso, *English Language and the Formation of Public Sphere*, Unpublished, p. 63

<sup>166</sup> Jacobs, *The Nagas Hill peoples of Northeast India*, p 155; Khutso, *English Language and the Formation of Public Sphere*, (Unpublished), p. 63

activity/ practice has continued in the Naga understanding of Christianity'.<sup>167</sup> In the post-colonial parlance, these missionary practices may be referred to as a 'cultural baggage'.<sup>168</sup>

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, missionaries had mostly committed their time and resources on language development and the introduction of village primary schools. As discussed in this thesis, the rate of conversion in this quarter of the century was negligent however, noticeably primary schools had been rapidly introduced in many villages. Yet, the missionaries did not go from village to village to either plant churches or set up schools. It was actually the students who had attended training schools and mission station schools who were sent out across villages as teachers and preachers.<sup>169</sup> Evidently with the introduction of schools, conversions gradually followed. Mary Mead Clark admitted that schools had always been means of evangelism in the Naga Hills.<sup>170</sup> A relatively recent instance had been cited about a Rengma village where there was not a single convert a decade before 1941. When the son of a village chief attended the mission school in Kohima and converted to Christianity he was excommunicated from the village. According to the report, later he was invited back to the village after the villagers, according to missionaries, had seen something 'worthwhile' in the boy.<sup>171</sup> Soon, the numbers of converts went up to 150 in that particular village. In 1941, this village hosted the 'Rengma Christian Association', an annual Christian meeting of about 1000 members. It was recorded that all the non-believers had donated towards the event and hosted Christian guests in their homes.<sup>172</sup> There were ample similar instances of how non-Christians had rendered help to their counterparts in the

---

<sup>167</sup> Government of Nagaland, Private Department (ABAM), (correspondence letters with government), 1912-41

<sup>168</sup> A more elaborate discussion shall be done in chapter IV of this thesis.

<sup>169</sup> Khutso, *English Language and the Formation of Public Sphere*, Unpublished, p. 66-69

<sup>170</sup> Mary Mead Clark, *A Corner in India*, pp. 84-85

<sup>171</sup> American Baptist Foreign Mission Society & Womans' American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Assam Baptist Missionary Conference Report, Thirty Eighth Session, Kohima, Assam, 1941, p. 36

<sup>172</sup> Ibid

villages. This illustrates the intensity of social capital<sup>173</sup> in the communitarian societies and therefore, it is crucial to understand some of these inherent cultural values in order to locate cultural change. A great deal of social capital may be related to communitarian ‘welfare’ notions within village societies. For which, apparently the missionaries had recognized this very aspect of the indigenous societies and used it to enhance their mission by making cultural interventions.<sup>174</sup> However, the nature of communitarian social capital steadily inclined towards Bordieu’s concept of capital conceptualized in terms of making profit and surplus.<sup>175</sup> This shift from the communitarian experience to social capital in terms of ‘profit’ and ‘donations’, was a departure point from traditional cultural systems.

The rate of conversion had become rapid since the beginning of the twentieth century. The Assam mission field was predominantly under American Baptist territory with 67 Baptist missionaries against 8 others who were responsible for three-fifth of the total area under missionary occupation. Out of which, there were five American missionary field stations with 22 missionaries working in the Assam hills, by and large in the Naga Hills. The missionaries had pointed out that these hills were most difficult part of British territory, with at least 67 different dialects.<sup>176</sup> On the contrary, the greatest success of the American Baptist Mission came from these Hills. The number of churches had ascended from 98 in 1907 to 173 in 1917 and to 395 in 1927, or precisely 146% growth in a decade. The

---

<sup>173</sup> According to Bourdieu, “Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group– which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity owned capital, a ‘credential’ which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word.” Bourdieu, *The Forms of Capital*, p. 9

<sup>174</sup> The idea of welfare has been discussed in detail in Khutso, *English Language and the Formation of Public Sphere* (Unpublished), p. 76-83; V. K. Nuh and Wetshokhrolo Lasuh (eds.), V. K. Nuh and Wetshokhrolo Lasuh (eds.) *The Naga Chronicle*, Indian Council of Social Science Research, Regency Publication, New Delhi 2002, pp. 30-31; Piketo Sema, *British Policy and Administration in Nagaland*, p. 139

<sup>175</sup> Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital”, p. 9

<sup>176</sup> Second Survey of Fields and Work of the Northern Baptist Convention, Board of Missionary Cooperation, New York, Judson Press, Philadelphia, p 153-54

membership had multiplied over four times in 20 years with 9309 in 1907 to 16679 in 1917, or 79% and to 41, 076 in 1927 or 146% growth.<sup>177</sup> These statistics indicate the rapid shift towards the Christian domain. Here, it must be noted that this shift itself should explain the nature of how people were moving out of their traditional domains and moving into new intellectual and religious spaces overwhelmingly through literacy and educational measures. This intellectual, emotional and convictional realignment was a strategic point to locate cultural shifts. The statistics of churches and conversions as of 1940 under Impur mission shows that Aos had 56 churches and a membership of 12150; 'Angami' also had similar number of converts and churches; the Sema tribe within the British Territory had 60 churches with 9000 membership, those Sema villages in the trans-frontier area had 25 churches with 1000 members, Sangtams had 10 churches and 600 members, Konyaks had 2 churches with 145 members, Changs had 1 church with 50 members and Lothas with 46 churches and 2050 members.<sup>178</sup> By 1960s most of the missionaries had gone back to America. In a report, Kenneth Kerhuo stated that Churches had done great deal of work in bringing about peace.<sup>179</sup> It was reported that in all the minor and major towns, churches had been established and the evangelistic activities of the churches, students, government servants, businessmen etc. had become vibrant.<sup>180</sup>

As mentioned above, the American Missionaries had predominantly occupied the Assam mission and a large part of South India. In one of the reports, a close comparison had been made about the two mission fields. It was stated that

---

<sup>177</sup> Ibid, p. 154

<sup>178</sup> American Baptist Foreign Mission Society & Womans' American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Assam Baptist Missionary Conference Report, Thirty Eighth Session, Kohima, Assam, 1941, p. 33;

<sup>179</sup> Council of Baptist Churches in North East India, Thirteenth Annual Session, Sibsagar, Assam, 1963, p. 63

<sup>180</sup> By 1963, the total number of baptized membership had risen to 82000, with fourteen tribal Church associations in Nagaland. Council of Baptist Churches in North East India, Thirteenth Annual Session, Sibsagar, Assam, 1963, p. 64; Downs recorded that Nagaland Christians grew from 3308 in 1911 to 22908 in 1931. By 1951 the number increased to 98068 and to 344798 in 1971. Refer Downs, *Christianity in North-East India*, p. 134

South India had four times as many 'native' workers, twice as many church members to that of Assam but while 80% of the churches in Assam had become 'self-supporting' by first quarter of the twentieth century, only 25% were so in the case of the south. Moreover, 41,076 members in Assam gave \$4000 more than 89,956 members in South India, the report stated.<sup>181</sup> These statistics indicate how some inherent cultural systems of societies determine the process of cultural adaptation and assimilation. Considering the Assam case, which was a reference predominantly of the Naga Hills characterized by communitarian structure, in comparison with the caste based societies of the south India show differential outcomes. On the aspect of education, the report stated that the American Missionaries had comparatively devoted less attention in Assam than other fields in the mainland especially in the south.<sup>182</sup> In 1929, Assam had about 316 missionary run schools which were mostly elementary institutions. South India evidently had 1339 schools with 34,374 students as compared to 8379 in Assam. However, the missionaries reported that schools in Assam proved to be 'most effective agencies' of evangelism than that of the south or elsewhere in British India.<sup>183</sup> In view of the positive impact of education on proselytization under the Assam mission field, the decadal program of the American Baptist Mission in Assam in the year 1919 proposed to rapidly establish village schools in the Hills and the result for which according to the missionaries was a 'gratifying progress'.<sup>184</sup>

Therefore, as literacy and conversions continue on an ascending degree in the course of time, Nagas had progressively opened up its cultures to adapt the practices and beliefs that came along with education and Christianity. These shifts had been noticeable at different levels in subtle ways. The expression of emotions like love and the notions of sexuality as well as gender have changed from the

---

<sup>181</sup> Second Survey of Fields and Work of the Northern Baptist Convention, Board of Missionary Cooperation, New York, Judson Press, Philadelphia, p 154

<sup>182</sup> Ibid, p 155

<sup>183</sup> Ibid

<sup>184</sup> Ibid, p 158



traditional understanding. Christian marriages were solemnized in churches and thus the expression of emotions came out in public. Sitlhou also discusses how the institution of marriage changed before and after the contact with Christianity taking the case of Khasis and Ao Nagas.<sup>185</sup> According to her, the traditional society was more tolerant to premarital relations across societies. She also cited instances as to why missionaries forbade converted Christians not to continue their stay in the *Morung*<sup>186</sup> so as to maintain sexual purity and keep away from heathen practices/influences.<sup>187</sup> The missionaries also prohibited festivals, ceremonies surrounding death, births, marriages, drum beating, village feasts and festivals in order to maintain Christian purity.<sup>188</sup> Prior to the Christian experience, the traditional marriages were mostly private affairs with certain individuals mediating between the groom and the bride.<sup>189</sup> As Christianity preaches nonviolence, love, grace and other Christian virtues, the adaptations to these values were visible, with the total rescindence of 'headhunting' culture as a case in point. Also, a new understanding of purity in the light of 'Christian Teachings' replaced the old notions where men would perform rituals and bathe in the springs to cleanse themselves.<sup>190</sup> Notions of purity for women also existed in its own domain. But most of the practices of purity related to women were hidden from the public sight. As mentioned, Christianity brought worship as a new way of purity and in which both genders could avail the same form of access to purity inside the church. In this way, notions of sanctification had moved from the ritual performances in public to the personal domain of prayers. Therefore, the practice of purity rituals had shifted from public performances to private and personal spaces. In 1913, Mr. Pettigrew reported about the preceding year by stating that "the year has been characterized

---

<sup>185</sup> Robinson Rowena, *Christians in India*, 2003, p. 63; Cited in Sitlhou, *Deconstructing Colonial Ethnography*, p. 84

<sup>186</sup> Morungs are traditional homes for young boys and girls in the Naga villages from where cultural knowledge, warfare skills, agricultural techniques, etc. were imparted from generation to generation

<sup>187</sup> Sitlhou, *Deconstructing Colonial Ethnography*, p. 83; also see Mackenzie, *The North-East Frontier of India*, 1993, p. 83-84

<sup>188</sup> Cited in Sitlhou, *Deconstructing Colonial Ethnography*, p. 84

<sup>189</sup> Lohe, *Socio-Cultural Heritage of Kuzhami Chakhesang Nagas*, p. 41-42

<sup>190</sup> Ibid, p. 70-74

by a movement among the members tending toward greater purity of life and action as church members.”<sup>191</sup> He had described it as ‘greater purity of life’, which suggest the imagination of a greater culture over the traditional. It was also reported that those villages which had better schools had garnered better conditions of village life, cleanliness, peace, ‘holy living’ taught in precept and example by teachers who had been trained in some station schools.<sup>192</sup> As we can see from this instance, the villages which had embraced Christianity and welcomed schools had evidently become more progressive or perhaps more like their cultural masters. These were some early instances of visible shifts.

Around the late nineteenth century, the missionary wave across India had been quite felt. On one occasion, the foreign missionaries in India had petitioned the colonial government to declare Sundays as holidays. The correspondence between the government and the missionaries had eventually led the government to relax. In the proceeding, J. Woodburn had stated that

*“So far as Sundays are concerned, the monstrosity was effected when we imposed our own weekly close holiday instead of the Muhammadan holiday on the more moveable feasts of the Hindoos. There is not a village school in India which does not observe the Sunday holiday, and there is not a Hindoo or Muhammadan official in the country who would not accept what in practice they all do, and welcome a definite rule...(sic.)”*<sup>193</sup>

Central Committee of the Lords Day Union, Calcutta, had submitted a memorandum to the government of India to reconsider the decision in which holiday on Sunday was repealed in 1877. The committee had “begged to approach

---

<sup>191</sup> Ninety ninth Annual Report of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Michigan, May, 1913, p. 72

<sup>192</sup> One Hundred-First Annual Report of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Los Angeles, California, 1915, p 145

<sup>193</sup> Proposal to pass an Act declaring the Lord’s Day both legal dies non and a public holiday, Government of India, Home Department, Judicial Proceedings, July 1896, p. 9

his Excellency's government with a few observations on the legal aspect of the Lord's Day, which in their view is at present very unsatisfactory."<sup>194</sup> The petitioners asserted that

*"They might add that not only has experience proved that the periodic rest of one day in seven is exceedingly desirable on physical, moral and religious grounds for all classes of the community, but also that there is a growing feeling in reference to this subject which is very widespread and by no means confined to the Christian Community, so that any legislation, declaring the Lords Day a general and legal dies non, on civil grounds and grounds of expediency and public convenience, would be generally acceptable."*<sup>195</sup>

This particular memorandum suggested some undercurrent agendas of the missionaries in India. In the petition, the missionaries had assumed a very secular approach to secure an interest of religious significance. The letter started by invoking legal aspect to the significance of the Lords Day in India. Moreover, the memorialists never explicitly mentioned about their interest but had assumed a responsibility or burden for the general interest of all walks of life especially the government employees irrespective of faith. This is an instance of how the missionaries negotiate with the government in trying to secure legal sanction so as to create a cultural and religious space in the minds and also the occupations of the people. This was another instance of missionaries who attempted to sway the policies of the colonial government to its favor. Moreover, the instance of how missionaries petitioned the colonial government to pressure and influence policy changes across the British colonial India to declare all Sundays as official holiday indicate how state apparatuses and its agencies in tandem with the missionaries could extend cultural hegemony across the colonial Indian sub-continent.

---

<sup>194</sup> Ibid, p. 13

<sup>195</sup> Ibid, p. 14

As a result of the cultural intercourse between the administrators, missionaries and the Naga villagers, cultural technologies in the form of literacy had proactively interfered into the cultural, cognitive, emotional, traditional and cosmological systems to negotiate a new socio-cultural and religious space out of the traditional domains. The interference on indigenous systems jostled the cultural perceptions, ethos, belief systems, customs and worldviews. Geertz broadly defines a people's ethos as the tone, character, quality of life, moral and aesthetic style and mood and importantly the underlying attitude towards themselves as individuals and the world at large. Whereas, for him, cognitive and existential aspects constitute the term 'worldview'. He beautifully captures the meaning by saying that a worldview is the picture of things in actuality like the concept of nature, of self and of society.<sup>196</sup>

At the same time, cultural shifts cannot be total, for the very fact that cultural changes take place because of cultural intercourse and engagement. A perfect instance may be the celebration of Christmas which to a large extent had become more or less like a traditional festival which involved hosts, feasts and merrymaking. Subsequently, in many villages, the hosts were entitled to certain cultural regalia like decorated houses, clothes, etc. similar to the performance of the 'feast of merit'.<sup>197</sup> However, it also display the fusion of traditional practices with western Christian traditions with 'Jesus Christ' as the centerpiece of the season. These are new assumptions that had been built into the consciousness of the local Christians. Therefore, cultural change may be at best termed as fusion. As a matter of fact, a sort of 'supra-religious-cultural' domain has been constructed.

---

<sup>196</sup> Geertz, *Religion as a Cultural System*, p. 127

<sup>197</sup> Naga feast of merit is an age old practice of hosting massive feasts for village (s) to earn social status, standing and sway. Wouters also talked about the shift in the idea of feasts over the course of time. Jelle J. P. Wouters, "Feasts of Merit, Election Feasts, or No Feasts? On The Politics Of Wining and Dining in Nagaland, Northeast India," *The South Asianist*, Vol. 3, No. 2, p. 8

## 2.7 The New Socio-Cultural Imagination of Missionaries, Administrators and, ‘Literates’ and ‘Converts’

The initial success of missionaries and administrators in imparting literacy through primary schools did not ensure the accomplishment of their evangelical and imperial agendas. Therefore, they continued their efforts not only by educating the locals but also importantly prepared pedagogic materials and evangelical texts in order to prepare an new socio-cultural and religious environment through which the imagination of a ‘modernized’ and a literate Christian world within Naga society could happen. Although, the missionary strategy of imparting literacy through the primary schools had resulted in substantial success, some missionary thinkers like Dowd was critical of the state of missionary and colonial education in the Naga Hills. As he argues, students should be prepared and skilled for higher levels of education in order to secure actual accomplishment of missionary and imperial agendas.

Dowd wrote in the proceedings of the ninth biennial conference of 1907 that

*“For conversion and training of the individual we need Christian education; but Christian education is absolutely indispensable if we are to have an intelligent, independent and growing Christian community. I am sure that we can never be satisfied until the rank and file of our churches can read the Bible intelligently.”*<sup>198</sup>

He further stressed the importance of having trained leaders for the Churches. By trained he was referring to those who were trained to think, who had some knowledge about the outside world and its history, and who knew bible thoroughly.<sup>199</sup> Moreover, he argues that the purpose of education should be to

---

<sup>198</sup> Ninth Biennial Conference of the American Baptist Missionary Union, held at Gauhati, January 5 to 12, 1907, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, 1907, p. 29

<sup>199</sup> Ibid

*“Give a thorough well-balanced education that would train the hands, and the heart as well as the intellect and train the body to be self-reliant, intelligent man with sturdy Christian character and devoted to the cause of Christ.”*<sup>200</sup>

In the light of such vision, Dowd asserted that primary and even high school education were not sufficient to what he writes “give the mind the required training for a good leader”.<sup>201</sup> And further challenged that the whole purpose of mission education would fail if the system doesn’t have avenues for higher pursuits.<sup>202</sup> For him, teaching only to ‘read’ would render the original mission to fail and underscores that a deep mental and moral training were necessary to accomplish the purpose of the American Baptist Mission in Assam. Dowd had been harping for a radical shift, like Perrine who preceded him, in the system of education from basic literacy to strong mental and moral training by putting in place higher degrees in the system of education. Apparently the dual-core approach of ‘missionary-teacher’ remained intact even if radical changes were invoked by different missionary thinkers. Even Dowd stated that “every teacher would be fitted to teach and every teacher a preacher of the Gospel”.<sup>203</sup>

Dowd argued that, the system of education should be to join the industrial education with the educational work from the ABC classes to the end of Theological seminary. He suggested for a “self-reliant progressive Christian Community” through a comprehensive system or model of education.<sup>204</sup> It may be understood that the cultural turnover of the Nagas in particular and the other communities for that matter, had been long established in the imaginations and plans of the American Christian missionaries. It was just that they had to struggle to institutionalize systems and agencies over an extended period of time. Looking

---

<sup>200</sup> Ibid, p. 30

<sup>201</sup> Ibid

<sup>202</sup> Ibid

<sup>203</sup> Ibid

<sup>204</sup> Ibid

at the statements, the missionaries had strong cultural agendas embedded within their evangelistic endeavor. They aspired for a concrete cultural base perhaps in the likeness of American society, as they were basically from there, for perpetual and organic sustenance of Christianity. Therefore, they had associated Christianity with that of a progressive culture that had been built into the imagination of the local people over time. This particular aspect of a progressive culture is significant as it creates a social and emotional dynamic to reverberate across individuals and sections of the society. Thus, it may be argued that the American mission's idea of a new domain of culture, society and eternity had been critical to creating recurrent cultural change.

Looking from a different perspective, Walter Ong suggested that writing has sustained some of the great introspective religious traditions like Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. While at the same time lamented at the Greco-Roman tradition of writing which according to him could not establish itself in the recesses of the psyche like the sacred books.<sup>205</sup> Basing on this, it may be somehow assumed that 'sacred' appeal of sacred works and its literary appendices like primers may have a deep cultural and literary impact on the subjects and converts. The literary experience in the Naga Hills during the colonial rule had been particularly that of ecclesiastical literatures and it may be argued that the literary appeal had the spiritual and sacred element within it. This sacred dynamic also was essential to the way literary knowledge was consumed as 'gospel truth' without reasoning and questioning. Therefore, the nature of such consumption had huge bearing on local and indigenous cultures as the progress of culture had become more or less linear. There is also another way of looking at this sacred experience. In oral societies, especially the Nagas, the social and emotional quotient may be said to be high and not forgetting its own indigenous ritual and sacred experiences. Thus, in some sense, the new literary tradition with the sacred Christian appeal had coalesced well with the sacred intricacies of the local cultures and largely converted

---

<sup>205</sup> Ong, *Literacy and Orality*, p. 104

it into 'introspective religious traditions'. Consequently, Nagas in particular has huge leanings to social sciences and humanities and has developed some sort of 'missionary phobia' towards sciences.

Ong also argued that the chirographic experience which demands precision may be expressed in speech.<sup>206</sup> This is an interesting observation, in the sense that writing and literary tradition may restructure the thought processes and consciousness. He has also observed the way lists of words and dictionaries affects consciousness.<sup>207</sup> With the onset of literacy in the Naga Hills, the early pedagogic texts had been mostly bilingual phrases, translation of words and bilingual dictionaries.<sup>208</sup> In a way, bilingual dictionaries became databases of new cultural symbols, values and ethos. In this way bilingual translation of words led to the textualisation and translation of cultures. This inherent experience may be a crucial factor in altering and reconfiguring the mental faculties of the societies. Latin is an example of how writing can command a cosmopolitan thrust against oral languages and cultures.<sup>209</sup> The way institutions had been set up by the administrators and missionaries grounded the currency and legitimacy of English language and other literary vernaculars.

The year 1904 had witnessed some structural changes in the system of school in the Naga Hills. Initially, when the missionaries came, they brought along Assamese teachers and evangelists to assist them. Nevertheless, for different reasons, Assamese couldn't make its mark in these hills. There had been instances of rote learning in some schools but most of those students couldn't understand it. Moreover, the cultural prejudices that ran between the hill people and the plains since historical times, had disoriented the emic sensibilities and built an insecure psychosis in the locals. This is a significant pointer to the very way historical

---

<sup>206</sup> Ibid, p. 103

<sup>207</sup> Ibid

<sup>208</sup> Refer Chapter III

<sup>209</sup> See Ong, *Literacy and Orality*, p. 111



experiences shape cultural tastes. Moreover, it must also be mentioned that the students wouldn't even prefer to study the vernacular of other tribes. For instance, at the Impur mission station school in 1904, some Sema students were enrolled and Perrine had recorded that they did not care to study Ao.<sup>210</sup> It must be said that cultural prejudices operated at different levels, which largely determined the course of history of societies. As the indigenous vernaculars use the roman script, the adaptation process became more or less instinctive and spontaneous towards English language and the western cultures.

Consequently, Assamese had been officially dropped as the second language in 1904 and English language was recognized as the standard medium entirely in the schools of Naga Hills.<sup>211</sup> Along with that, the school sessions had been lengthened from six months to nine months and also the daily study hours had been extended considerably. According to Perrine, these changes were made as a result of the marked improvement and evidently the intensified interest to join the advanced school. Rev. Perrine had put this interesting historical fact to record by saying that, "formerly, it was difficult to hold the pupils for more than two or three years; now it is hard to persuade some of the older boys to leave for outside work."<sup>212</sup> Teachings and school curriculums evidently were getting internalized. This is an interesting break in the shift from the traditional and indigenous to the new societal domain imagined by the missionaries and the administrators. This structural breakthrough succeeded after about three decades of mission pedagogic works in the Naga Hills. Moreover, it was evident that the collaboration of the colonial officials and the missionaries on the project of literary production had also taken a leap forward. Even the Colonial government had stepped up its efforts and

---

<sup>210</sup> Eight Session of the American Baptist Conference, held at Gauhati, December 24, 1904 to January 1, 1905, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, 1905, p 60 (Rev. Perrine had begun his work for the Semas)

<sup>211</sup> Ibid

<sup>212</sup> Ibid

commenced printing of the school primers and other literatures for the schools in the Naga Hills.<sup>213</sup> This instance may be regarded as a sort of cultural breakthrough.

A new cultural encounter had been visible through an official dispatch from the Inspector General of Registrations in 1936, which was served to the missionaries on the question of registration of marriages in the Naga Hills. In reply to the Inspector General of Registrations, through the Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills, Longwell had admitted that the missionaries had not indented for marriage registers in years. They stated that for various reasons, the Naga Christians had evolved a 'ceremony of their own' viz. marriages, in the presence of congregation and the missionaries lamented that rarely the missionaries had been invited to officiate.<sup>214</sup> Consequently, in a letter dated 15<sup>th</sup> July, 1936, the Deputy Commissioner had directed the appointment of Missionary in charge, Impur Mission station as registrar of Christians to fulfill the provisions of Indian Christian Marriage Act of 1872.<sup>215</sup> In the past, the marriages were institutionalized according to the local customs but with new cultural encounters, the colonial state as well as missionary agencies went out to legitimize cultural practices, marriage in case, as 'official' or 'sacred'. As a matter of fact, their success of governance and progress is located in the way intellectual and cultural values and practices had been impressed on the subjects.

Thus, in the imagination of a new socio-cultural domain, the missionaries had actively gambled with the cultural systems of the local societies whereas, the colonial administrators were always there to push further by legalizing and importantly standardizing new norms and systems. The collaboration of these two entities to a great extent manifested what colonialism actually entails.

---

<sup>213</sup> Ibid

<sup>214</sup> Government of Nagaland, Private Department (ABAM), (correspondence letters with government), 1912-41 (Impur, 25<sup>th</sup> March, 1918)

<sup>215</sup> Government of Nagaland, Private Department (ABAM), (correspondence letters with government), 1912-41 (Letter to B I Anderson from JP Mills, DC Naga Hills 1936)

## 2.8 The Emergence of a New Literate Culture

Along with literacy, new socio-cultural elements penetrated deep into the Naga traditional society to bring about some new cultural convergences, but altogether massive divergences from the local cultural systems. To refer the traditional Naga indigenous society as a purely egalitarian society would be hyperbolic. As a matter of fact, there were rigid social hierarchies subtly engrained at different levels of socio-political and cultural system. In the traditional Naga society, one has to earn social status through the ‘feast of merit’ which was a performance of redistribution of wealth by the rich and in return acquire social recognition.<sup>216</sup> Therefore, every individual had to toil and earn such statuses. Similarly, the institution of *mewo* (priesthood) was not totally hereditary and could be passed to most capable kin or clan member, or in absence even to an outsider. However, the villagers maintained strong social audit on the performance of *mewo*, who intercedes with the spirits.<sup>217</sup>

It was the westerners who, with all pomp and power, introduced literacy, and moreover, as the access to literacy was initially limited, it created elitist tendencies in the ‘literates’ and deep sense of reverential inclination amongst others, which gave birth to new forms of social consciousness. Consequently, this new social category of ‘literates’ became more and more structured within the Naga society to represent a cultural binary between ‘literates and non-literates’, ‘educated and uneducated’ and ‘progressive’ and ‘traditional’. Mills stated in 1931 that, those Nagas who attended schools were unwilling to return to their villages and according to him “venture into commerce”, to suggest taking up other occupations.<sup>218</sup> In addition he described these educated lots as,

---

<sup>216</sup> Wouters, “Feasts of Merit”, p. 8

<sup>217</sup> Refer note no iii, Khutso, “Shifting Democratic Experiences of Nagas” (Upcoming) 2018

<sup>218</sup> Government of Nagaland, General Department, 1931, File No. 67, pp. 4

*“Foreign dress also became popular among the government employees and which the American missionaries also actively encouraged. It was connected in the Naga mind with education title the possessor thereof to a pair of shorts, while a suit complete with watch chain and trilby hat... (Sic.)”*<sup>219</sup>

I. Ben Wati had written about Impur days of 1920s and 1930s contrasting the older women at Impur who used traditional dresses and ornaments, whereas, the young girls who resided at the Impur Mission School Girls’ Hostel in his words, “started new styles” by using ‘powder’ and said for the first time he heard a fashionable phrase ‘rosy cheek’.<sup>220</sup> The progressive expansion of literacy created new social dynamic by which one had to attend school, learn and join the literate section in order to earn a social standing, get employed by the colonial government and move further away from traditional villages and settle in the emerging mini cosmopolitan ‘towns’ like Kohima, Mokokchung and Wokha.<sup>221</sup> It was declared that the government would prefer English knowing Indians in the colonial government service, which made English education even more popular amongst the locals.<sup>222</sup> Even the peons – the lowest category in the colonial official hierarchy – were waged according to their literacy and qualification.<sup>223</sup> This cultural narcissistic logic gamed by the colonial government and American missionaries through its agencies and institutions, I argue, fraudulently swayed the ‘literates’ and ‘converts’ towards the project of grand western ‘cultural imperialism’.<sup>224</sup>

To elaborate, looking at the way literacy had been bringing about cultural shifts, it may be contended that education created certain form of ‘inequality’ or

---

<sup>219</sup> Ibid

<sup>220</sup> Wati, *Impur Chanu*, p. 36

<sup>221</sup> Khutso, *English Language and the Formation of Public Sphere*, Unpublished, p. 42-44

<sup>222</sup> Government of Nagaland, General Department, 1884, File No. 167, p. 5; File No 131/45 Public Section, Government of India, Home Dept., 1945,

<sup>223</sup> Government of Nagaland, General Department, 1884, File No. 167, p. 5

<sup>224</sup> Khutso, *English Language and the Formation of Public Sphere*, Unpublished, p. 43

perhaps, ‘distinction’. This new literate group had assumed titles like ‘mhekhechemi’ or ‘mhakesimia’ which translates as ‘those who know about things’.<sup>225</sup> This progressive social group began to ‘assume’ responsibility over those non-literates termed as ‘mhechekemomi’ or ‘mhasikemomia’ which translates as ‘those who doesn’t know about things’, which was clearly articulated in the Memorandum to the Simon Commission, by the members of the Naga Club in 1929 at Kohima.<sup>226</sup> The memo which was signed by 19 educated members of the Naga Club begins with “We the undersigned Nagas of the Naga Club at Kohima who are the only persons at present who can voice for our people...”<sup>227</sup> Such assumptions were expressed in a number of literary political memoranda since the early part of the twentieth century. Such categories of ‘known’ and ‘unknown’ became all the more manifest as the ‘known’ became part of the colonial and missionary power networks. More so, because of the thrust of modernity and its institutions through colonialism and evangelism that was taking over the Naga traditional spaces bit by bit to draw more and more people into the new cultural and social domains from the hierarchized traditional domains.

Such historical processes had given birth to structural shifts in the colonized societies. A new section of literates who transcended tribal particularities and other diversities was beginning to emerge by the late nineteenth century. The government officials who were taskmasters of literacy and education, continued to extend help to the missionaries who were to impart literacy, by making education and literacy more than voluntary. As the literate Nagas increasingly began to enter colonial services, the circulation of money became more than ever. With wider circulation of money, cultural notions like ‘luxury’, ‘pleasure’ and ‘happiness’ became progressively defined by the monetary capital. Thus, literacy may be understood as

---

<sup>225</sup> ‘Mekechemi’ in Kuzhale Chakhesang dialect and ‘Mhakesimia’ in Tenyidie

<sup>226</sup> Piketo Sema, *British Policy and Administration in Nagaland 1881-1947*, New Delhi: Scholar Publishing House. 1992, p. 142

<sup>227</sup> Nuh and Lasuh (eds.), *The Naga Chronicle*, pp. 30-31; Sema, *British Policy and Administration in Nagaland*, p. 139 (Original Letter, dated: 26.03.28)

a new 'rite of passage' to consumerist and materialist cultures and outlooks. In other words, capitalistic culture began to gain its foothold; the traditional economic understanding was shifting from accumulation in grains to cash. In this way, literacy, evangelism, colonial administration and other colonial and missionary instruments plucked in cultural imperialism to the Naga traditional systems.

The continual response and reciprocity to the cultural advances external to the indigenous systems may be further explained from the perspective of the 'logic of access'. To gain access to government and missionary institutions and for that matter 'modernity', the command over English language – the official language of correspondence – be it spoken or written becomes pertinent because, for instance, the 'colonial subjects', who were basically non-English speakers, had to articulate their petitions and demands to the government for services, employment and redress. The command over English language precisely defined what the locals termed it as 'mhekechemi' – 'the people who know'. Mrs. W L Ferguson succinctly captures how such reciprocal dynamic could be created through literacy and stated that "a keen sense of self-worth, own importance to themselves, community and country at large" had been engendered.<sup>228</sup> Further, she also stated that with the embrace of education, it had dawned a realization of self-consciousness.<sup>229</sup> By 'self-realization' and 'self-consciousness' that had been fostered through education, she was precisely referring to individualism. These notions perhaps brought about new cultural complexes crucial in creating the new literate Naga. Interestingly, 'Chaha', which was originally a local reverential reference for the British administrators, which means 'big shot' or 'officer', such as 'British Chaha', slowly passed on to the educated Nagas who joined the colonial service. As the idea of progress got attached with such categories it became a progressive cultural jargon. In this way, a fantasized imagination of the modern world got all the more entrenched in the minds of the local people to forge new socio-cultural space largely on its own.

---

<sup>228</sup> Baptist Missionary Review, Vol XXVIII, 1922, Orissa Missionary Press, 1922, p. 120

<sup>229</sup> Ibid

This fantasized imagination resulted in the construction of a literate culture in the Naga society indicating a break from the hierarchized traditional socio-cultural set up, not only structured by traditional institutions like ‘communitarian social systems’, ‘community land holdings’ ‘village’, ‘kinship-clan structures’, ‘priesthood’, ‘chieftainship’, ‘imperative of the elderly’, ‘morung’, perhaps, even ‘patriarchy’, earned statuses through performance of feasts of merit and bravery in warfare, etc. but also overwhelmingly conditioned by traditional ideological systems like ‘rituals’, ‘ceremonies’, ‘festivals’, ‘taboo’, ‘customs’, ‘ethos’ and other cosmological systems which were both rigid and relatively flexible<sup>230</sup> basing on circumstances and exigencies, that operate to sustain the traditional socio-political-cultural and religious ecosystem in the villages. The colonial and missionary agencies introduced literacy through the primary schools to interfere into this traditionally hierarchized social, political and cultural system to create a new ‘social idea of culture’ in the way Williams proposed, a culture which necessitated a ‘standard of perfection’ and ‘harmonious development of those qualities and faculties that characterize humanity’, aggressively emerged not only to influence society but also to judge it.<sup>231</sup> This suggest how society itself could become a space of socio-moral policing by defining conditions to hone a certain idea and practices of culture, to replace or otherwise synthesize, with the old traditional ideological systems, in order to create a new standardized socio-political, cultural and religious ecosystem.

I now turn to chapter four to demonstrate the process through which the new literate class begins to emerge from the established hierarchies of the pre-colonial and hierarchical Naga society.

---

<sup>230</sup> Khutso, “Shifting Democratic Experiences of Nagas”, (Upcoming), 2018

<sup>231</sup> Williams, *Culture and Society 1780-1950*, p. 69

## Chapter III

### Cultural Translations and Emergence of New Social Dynamics

From the making of literates and converts, this chapter focuses on how the process of pedagogic translation and production caused a departure point for cultural and social transformations. In the traditional order of ethnic hierarchies, it shall be argued that the material conditions had been progressively altered, and, therefore, not only did the traditional socio-cultural ethos change nor western cultural values unquestionably consumed, but importantly it also brought about a new cultural hybrid. Cultural hybridity in Homi Bhabha's terms refer to 'transcultural forms' or 'cross-cultural exchange' that are produced as a result of the relation between the colonizer and the colonized in a space known as 'Third Space of enunciation', an 'in-between' space that carries the burden and meaning of culture.<sup>1</sup> This was because of the new colonial cultural fields of power that created literacy within the Naga communities. Literacy was aided by proselytization imposed by a new critical self-location within traditional practices. The principal agency for this new cultural field of power was the village primary schools. But the blueprint of educational system in the form of policies had been driven by an imperial agenda, and had been given institutional shape on the ground by western missionary organizations. Therefore, in this sense, the socio-cultural transformations were framed through the prism of the interests of the British Empire and the homogenization of a dominant, culturally powerful religion – Christianity.<sup>2</sup> This organized cultural expansionism became visible in the early part

---

<sup>1</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, Routledge, 1994, p. 37-38

<sup>2</sup> Vijayraju had looked at this angle of conversion in his thesis: "Understanding Missionary Activity within Broader Historical Perspective: Two Micro Studies of the Brethren Movement in Andhra (1833-1968)", Department of History, University of Hyderabad, 2010.



of the twentieth century as the pattern of educational system at different levels had been reformed and the institutional bases for every level of education had been put in place. By then, even the missionaries had conformed to the educational curriculum of the government in the advanced educational programmes pushed in the high schools. Significantly, most of the teachers in the government schools were hired from the missionary training schools. Of course, this brand of cultural hybridity resulted out of the pressures exerted by missionaries and administrators through various measures of pedagogic strategies like translations, catechisms and other tools – even music and musical notations. But as the new cultural space of literates and converts expanded, evidently, cultural tensions also arose between traditional ways of life and the new ‘converts’. This further resulted in occasionally straining the working relationship between administrators and missionary workers.

In this chapter, I discuss the manner in which pedagogic texts, as well as religious texts were translated. These translations and production of primers as texts started a process of outlining a clear imperial cultural agenda in the Naga Hills. According to Avadesh Singh, the west had appropriated the intellectual resource of the rest of the world through translations and had made it its own.<sup>3</sup> The missionaries relied on translating the familiar oral traditions in the Roman script to draw in the imaginations of the Naga communities within the web of western cultural-and – religious fields. This process led to the emergence of new social dynamics which created the modern Naga identity.

Initially, the pedagogic productions were very simple. They were either anecdotal, catechisms, or took the form of parables. Importantly, this research found that allegories like John Bunyan’s ‘The Pilgrim’s Progress’, had been widely translated, circulated and reprinted. By looking at the nature and content of these translations, I argue that cultural translations were widely taking place. I also talk about the process of ‘decontextualization’ and ‘recontextualization’ of local

---

<sup>3</sup> Avadesh Kumar Singh, “Celebrating Translation As A Bridge Between Knowledge And Cultures”, *Translation Today*, Vol. 10, Issue-II, 2016, National Translation Mission, p. 2

cultures in order to circulate and interiorize the ‘cultural goods’ emanating from an imperial agenda. This project of imperial translation took on board the local beliefs and values, for greater acceptability amongst the various ethnic communities in the Naga Hills. As a case in point, the idea of ‘god’ was appropriated from local beliefs. Then, I discuss the role of western church music with scores and tonic solfa in tuning local voices and cultures. By the beginning of the twentieth century, it has been noticed that the colonial government started to exude a new colonial zeal on education. However, with the expansion of a literate space, it has been noticed that the cultural space had turned more and more didactic. This new social dynamic polarized the relationship between the ‘traditional’ and the ‘modernized’ sections of ethnic communities in the Naga Hills. Interestingly, the cultural differences created a new cultural dynamics which I call ‘politics of reverence’, which created shrinking resistance and a growing culture of reverence for the new socio-cultural and economic capital. This then connects to the concept of cultural mimicry and hybridity, a process of Naga communities appropriating and adapting the new paradigms of progress, thereby bringing about a new as well as a syncretic socio-cultural stratification within their own ethnic communities.

### **3.1 Pedagogic Productions**

Going by the catalogue of pedagogic production under the American Mission in Assam, the mission fields in the hills evidently received more attention than that of the plains.<sup>4</sup> For a long time, Nathan Brown’s bilingual Assamese-English grammar book, published in 1848 was one of the few missionary tracts in the Assam plains.<sup>5</sup> However, the Nagas waited for another three decades to receive similar pedagogic tracks prepared for them. Rev. Clark and his wife Mary Mead Clark were the pioneers of Christian missionary pedagogic exercises in the Naga

---

<sup>4</sup> Guide to the records in the National Archives of India, Part IV, 1871-1957, p. 7

<sup>5</sup> The Baptist Missionary Review, April, 1936, vol. XLII, p. 169

Hills under the American Baptist Mission who started with a compilation of the 'Ao Naga-English Manuscript Dictionary' and the Ao translation of the gospel of Matthew in 1883. Along with them, the younger missionaries like Rivenburg, Perrine and Witter had substantially contributed to the pedagogic translations and productions. When Rivenburg had to return to America in 1891 for a short break, it was reported that the following primers, texts, hymnals and scriptures were translated and printed in the Angami language – the gospel of Matthew, and John, a hymnal book of 100 hymns, the book of Acts, a small primer and a book on arithmetic of 55 pages.<sup>6</sup> The primers were reprinted in 1893, and a new English-Ao phrase and vocabulary book was printed in 1893.<sup>7</sup> W. E. Witter's work on the Lotha Naga was published in 1888, followed by 'the Ao Naga Dictionary' in 1893 by Mrs. E. W. Clark.<sup>8</sup> In 1895, Rev. S. A. Perrine reported that the English-Ao Bilingual Dictionary, was almost complete. Similarly, the first 'Angami New Testament' was printed in 1927 which was translated by Rev. Tanquist and assisted by several Angami converts.<sup>9</sup> Although the origin of many words could not be satisfactorily ascertained, he was optimistic that the dictionary would be useful to those who desired to learn and master the language.<sup>10</sup> Here, it is necessary to note that with the introduction of written and print culture, it became necessary for the indigenous locals to critically reread their own language and culture, and assess their traditional values against the imperial cultural project.

Initially, the missionaries undertook development of specific languages in their individual fields independently.<sup>11</sup> However, the American mission realized

---

<sup>6</sup> The Assam Mission of the American Baptist Missionary Union- Triennial Conference 1893, p.30 (Calcutta Mission Press)

<sup>7</sup> The Assam Mission of the American Baptist Missionary Union- Triennial Conference 1893, p. 29

<sup>8</sup> The Baptist Missionary Review, April, 1936, vol. XLII, p. 169

<sup>9</sup> Richard Eaton, "Comparative History as World History: Religious Conversion in Modern India", *Journal of World History*, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 243-271 Published by: University of Hawaii Press, p. 259 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20068595>

<sup>10</sup> The Assam Mission of the American Baptist Missionary Union- Triennial Conference, Sibsagar, 1895, p. 42

<sup>11</sup> 125 Years, Jubilee Reports of Baptist Work in North East India, p 33

that a lot of time and effort had been invested in producing the same kind of books, pamphlets and tracts. They admitted that it became almost impossible task to translate and work on every language in the mission fields, especially in the hills of Assam. To make things easier, a coordinated system was devised in order to produce all the primers, scriptural texts and tracts primarily in English at one place to be translated to different tribal languages with a central budget.<sup>12</sup> This joint project on translation of the scripture to save time and missionary resources came to be termed as a ‘collaborative translation’ project.<sup>13</sup> This initiative not only simplified mission work but resulted in an explosion of Christian pedagogic and textual productions. The importance of these pedagogic productions was strongly affirmed in the 125 Jubilee report on literature. It was stated that “literature is needed to save the very life of our Christians. And with this need goes the need for literacy.”<sup>14</sup> Further, it mentioned that “we must have a literate church in a literate community.”<sup>15</sup> Evidently, all these efforts on development and production of missionary texts had been geared towards the missionary imagination of a literate community.

### **3.2 Pedagogic Translations and Cultural Translations**

Pedagogic translations commenced right away with the process of literalizing the local languages. In fact, by ‘pedagogic work’ the missionaries in particular were not developing a new script for the Nagas but were rather translating the English Bible, song books, primers and other pedagogic and Christian tracts in vernacular languages and at the same time, textualizing selected oral folklores and practices. The basic Baptist missionary pedagogic materials under the Assam Mission, which included Naga Hills, comprised of catechisms, tracts, scripture

---

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p 33

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p 34

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p 37

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

translations, commentaries, parables, pastor's handbooks, church manuals, church covenants, church record books, readers, arithmetic, health books, nursing books, nature study, grammars – both for schools and general use, geographies, histories, song books, hymnals, tune books, phrase books and vocabularies, introduction to languages, folklore, books on temperance, cook-books, biographies, newspapers and children's books.<sup>16</sup> This pedagogic catalogue suggest the kind of pedagogic translation, genres of production and reproduction that had been in circulation during the early years of missionary engagement. At the same time, it is pertinent to uncover the intentions that underlie pedagogic translations or what Peter Burke calls as 'cultures of translation'.<sup>17</sup>

The missionaries were indisputably the *avantgarde* in the pedagogic translations as far as the Naga Hills was concerned. At the same time, these translations were eventually intended to secure religious capital in the form of conversion. However, these translated books came in different forms – as school primers, as bible translations, allegories like Bunyan's famous book the Pilgrim's Progress, anecdotal, and importantly as phrase-books or missionary-dictionaries. All these genres of pedagogic translations eventually came together to shatter local cultures.

Initially, the nature of primers was very anecdotal. The Christian message came through stories. When Billy Graham visited Nagaland in 1972, he commented that he had never seen a people who love to hear a story more than the Naga people.<sup>18</sup> In a way, it was a subtle bridge between oral cultures and the western literate cultures. Rev. Clark reported that 'A Life of Joseph', a story from the Bible was printed in 1884 and used as a reader in the Ao schools.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, catechisms,

---

<sup>16</sup> Guide to the records in the National Archives of India, Part IV, 1871-1957, p. 7;

<sup>17</sup> Burke and Hsia eds., *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe*, p. 11

<sup>18</sup> Billy Graham, *Why we came to Nagaland*, telebroadcast published on June 21, 2016 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FpEi8vwa54E>

<sup>19</sup> Eight Session of the American Baptist Conference, held at Gauhati, December 24, 1904 to January 1, 1905, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, 1905, p 55

which were summary of principles of Christian religion in simple question and answer format, occupied a large place in the early missionary pedagogic texts. It was reported that in some cases, catechisms were prepared and printed in a particular language even prior to securing any convert.<sup>20</sup> The first catechism by Nathan Brown was published in 1839 and had run through thirteen editions, the last print in 1920, and was translated into many languages.<sup>21</sup> However, it was reported that initially, teaching scripture to the Nagas had not been very successful. The missionaries had suspected that translation of scripture in so many Naga languages was counterproductive as the students could not recite in class rooms which normally consisted of different dialect speakers. Therefore, in 1899, Broadus Catechism had been chosen and a proper class on the Scripture had been arranged. The missionaries were optimistic that these two methods would help to impart fundamental teachings of the scripture.<sup>22</sup>

Looking at the statistics of publications made from 1935 to 1959, besides the Bible, hymnal books and Sunday school tracts, *The Pilgrim's Progress* was translated and printed in different languages.<sup>23</sup> The way the book was translated and reproduced over and again indicate its popularity. *The Pilgrim's Progress* is a religious allegory authored by John Bunyan, a celebrated English minister and preacher, and a writer in the seventeenth century. The popularity of the book for a long stretch of time was only second to the Bible. The book is a Puritan conversion novel but presented in good contrast by Bunyan of humor, realistic portrayals, spiritual experience, Christian virtues and imagination of life, individual, family

---

<sup>20</sup> The Baptist Missionary Review, April, 1936, vol. XLII, p. 168

<sup>21</sup> Ibid

<sup>22</sup> Fifth Triennial Conference held at Dibrugarh, Feb 11-19, 1899, Calcutta Baptist Mission Press, p. 41

<sup>23</sup> 125 Years, Jubilee Reports of Baptist Work in North East India, p 36 (Refer for list of translated publications)

and community. It may be regarded as a dignified Biblical prose which has both spiritual and practical essence.<sup>24</sup>

Similarly, phrase books which were synonymous with dictionaries in missionary parlance were important. In the mission formative years, the missionaries were reported to be actively “collecting and defining words”<sup>25</sup> either from vernaculars to English or vice versa, while evidently some translations consisted of three languages or more. The first English-Assamese Vocabulary and Phrase book was prepared by Mr. Cutter in 1841. Then, Rev. Bronson published the Assamese-English Dictionary in 1867 which became the first substantial contribution to Assamese Christian pedagogic materials. But of all the missionary printed texts under Assam mission, according to the Rev. W. R. Hutton, the publication of the Ao Dictionary, translated and compiled by Rev. E. W. Clark was one of the greatest pedagogic productions of the American Mission in Assam. It took forty years for Clark to complete this dictionary and finally got it published in 1911 in a quarto volume of 977 double column pages.<sup>26</sup> Hutton who was regarded

---

<sup>24</sup> Bunyan artistically narrates the pilgrimage that a man undertakes in his dream. The pilgrimage started from the city of destruction to the celestial city symbolizing the lifelong journey of a good man, named Christian. Bunyan narrates the trials and adventures of Christian after he left home on the advice of Evangelist for the celestial city, also known as Heaven, as he was overcome by the ‘weight of his sins’ after reading a book, probably the Bible. He confessed that the burden of his sin was dragging him down to hell. But when he persuaded his family and people from the city of destruction, a few joined him initially but only to return after experiencing some adversities along the journey. Christian’s journey went through difficulties, distractions, deceit and tribulations. He almost got submerged in the Slough of Despond, had to be on hands and knees while climbing the Difficulty Hill, deceived by Morality to break his journey and settle in his city, imprisoned and almost executed at the Vanity Fair, and much more. But along the way, he also got help and direction from people like Evangelist who he got to meet even during the journey. As the journey progresses, Christian was found to be stronger and stronger in his faith as Faith has saved him from the Jaw of Death, like when he was almost devoured by the two lions near the beautiful palace. And he finally enters the celestial city with Hopeful whom he met on the way. Second part of the story comprised of Christian’s wife and family who remained at the city of destruction. Having heard of Christian’s successful pilgrimage to heaven, they also followed. Their journey was comparatively easier as Christian has ‘smoothened the way’. Along the journey, they were also able to take along other struggling pilgrims like Much-Afraid and Ready-to-Halt and eventually reach in a big group. John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim’s Progress* (Classics), Peacock Publication, 2016

<sup>25</sup> The Baptist Missionary Review, April, 1936, vol. XLII, p. 168

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 168-169

as one of the most hostile administrator<sup>27</sup> towards the missionaries described it as an “encyclopedia dictionary of the language, customs and ideas of the tribe”.<sup>28</sup> Interestingly, phrase books were also known as the ‘embryo grammars’ in missionary parlance. Perhaps, it was a metaphorical description of how the languages that were literalized by the missionaries were intended to give birth to standardized forms of vernacular languages, as the pedagogic factor could contain fluidity of oral languages.

Looking at the pedagogic circulation through translation to vernaculars and its impact on the locals, pedagogic translations certainly were not mere translation of books. In fact, it was cultural translation that was taking place. The term ‘cultural translation’ has been originally coined and more often used in anthropological studies to understand what Peter Burke calls “what happens in cultural encounters” when different parties try to make sense of each other’s actions.<sup>29</sup> The experience of cultural translation of Nagas is no different to such theoretical description. An important instance about the Garos who lived in the western hills of colonial Assam, brings out the way missionaries experiment with locals to figure most viable and practical mode of engaging with the locals. The Baptist Missionary Review of 1936 reported how translation in the Garo language was successfully undertaken. It was Miss Wetherbee who took the help of a non-literate Garo cook to prepare a Garo pedagogic primer. She did an experiment with her translated book on her cook, and apparently in no time he learned how to read well.<sup>30</sup> As Burke quotes, “learning to speak is learning to translate”.<sup>31</sup> This is an interesting insight into the manner in which the missionaries had used local agencies in their attempt to translate languages. Therefore, pedagogic translations were nothing short of cultural translations.

---

<sup>27</sup> Downs, *Christianity in North-East India*, p. 52

<sup>28</sup> The Baptist Missionary Review, April, 1936, vol. XLII, p. 169

<sup>29</sup> Burke and Hsia eds., *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe*, p. 8

<sup>30</sup> The Baptist Missionary Review, April, 1936, vol. XLII, p. 167

<sup>31</sup> Burke and Hsia eds., *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe*, p. 8-9



He argues that translation implies ‘negotiation’ to describe exchange of ideas and consequent alteration of meanings.<sup>32</sup> By negotiated translation, Burke explains how missionaries try to adapt Christian message to the local cultures in which they were engaged. He cited the example of how early foreign Catholic missionaries to China, particularly Matteo Ricci had to dress like the Confucian scholar to translate his social position into Chinese in order to influence them. Similarly, he even allowed the Chinese converts to continue certain traditional practices like the rituals of reverence to ancestors, citing it to be social rather than religious. Moreover, he appropriated the traditional Chinese term for ‘God’ *Tianzhu* meaning ‘Lord of heaven’ to translate the new Christian god. Evidently, *tian* became the neologism for the Christian god.<sup>33</sup> The Protestant Baptist missionaries in the Naga Hills had followed a similar strategy to penetrate into the recipient cultures. For instance, the name for the Christian god in Kuzhami Chakhesang dialect is *menopi* and *tenyidie* is *ukepenuopfu* and Ao as *tsungrem* which are all traditional references for spirits and gods. According to Eaton, the Aos believe in notions similar to ‘after life’, ‘idea of sin’, and an ‘apocalyptic vision’ which resembles the day of Judgment in Christianity. He cited Clark who used the Ao term *molomi* as a reference for great fire and end times similar to Christian concept of Judgment day.<sup>34</sup> Clark revealed in 1881 that “the old religion of this people furnishes a splendid basis for Christianity”.<sup>35</sup> However, in all of these vernacularized ‘translation of gods’,<sup>36</sup> which can be clearly seen in Eaton’s work on the conversion of Nagas to Christianity, both in English and local languages, the Christian message was safely embedded.<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p. 9

<sup>33</sup> Ibid

<sup>34</sup> Richard M. Eaton, Conversion to Christianity Among the Nagas: 1876-1971, The Indian Economic and Social History Review, Vol 21, Issue 1, 1984, p. 26

<sup>35</sup> Ibid

<sup>36</sup> Cited in Burke and Hsia eds., *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe*, p. 9

<sup>37</sup> Eaton, *Conversion to Christianity Among the Nagas*, p. 26-27

This experience is better understood through the idea of ‘decontextualization’ and ‘recontextualization’ which Burke has used. By this idea, he explains a cultural process of how alien practices are appropriated and domesticated.<sup>38</sup> But taking a broader view considering the Naga case, decontextualisation and recontextualisation can be also understood as a process of first detaching the historical and traditional affiliations of a society on its culture through rigorous institutional indoctrination and programming. This cultural process was implemented through the primary schools in the Naga villages which primarily resulted in a grave undoing of traditional practices. However, modified cultural practices translated from the western world, as well as from the local practices like the examples cited above, were circulated through these schools and churches in a recontextualised pattern. The details of how the locals had responded to such cultural displacement and replacement shall be discussed in the later sections. In the process of these exchanges, it may be conceded that pedagogic and cultural hybridity had been developed. One instance could be that the missionaries who had engaged in these ‘pedagogic works’ as they would refer to it had become conversant both verbally and writing in multiple vernacular dialects even as the students and villagers had picked up how to read and write in English and got converted. Therefore, cultural translation was never one sided but it took place both ways.

Importantly, as highlighted by Peter Burke, pedagogic translations had been phenomenally central to some major cultural movements in early modern Europe like the Reformation, Renaissance, scientific revolution and enlightenment.<sup>39</sup> It may be argued that the missionaries with the aid of the colonial administrators had brought about an extended reverberation of such cultural revolutions to colonized spaces like the Naga Hills since the middle of nineteenth century. It can be considered so because translations brought science, arts, ‘knowledge’, reason and

---

<sup>38</sup> Burke and Hsia ed., *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe*, p. 10

<sup>39</sup> Ibid

importantly a literate religion, which were some of the core tenets of the cultural revolutions of the west.

According to Burke, translations from English language too other languages had benefitted the recipient languages by enriching it with neologisms from the Bible and the classics.<sup>40</sup> Burke cites Mikhail Bakhtin's work to explain this process of language interaction as 'interorientation' and 'interanimation' of languages.<sup>41</sup> Burke also stated that English vocabulary expanded the most in between 1570-1630, which was referred to as a great period of translation.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, there is a strong cultural angle to language interaction through translations, which was not only additions of 'neologisms' in the recipient languages but also additions of 'cultural neologisms' to host cultures. Homi Bhabha pointed out that the English phrases and sentences which were translated to vernacular might be designed by the missionaries, in this context, to impart sentiments, which he argued in the long run could lead the 'natives' to pull down their own religion and raising the 'standards of the cross' in its place.<sup>43</sup> This cultural outcome can be substantiated with the process of 'decontextualizing' and 'recontextualization' that Burke proposed.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, study of translation is important in cultural history for Burke. Translations were also significant to secure a didactic space, secure economic interests and of course extract knowledge and information of other societies which was central to the western imperialist project.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p. 23

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, p. 36

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, p. 36

<sup>43</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 151

<sup>44</sup> Burke and Hsia eds., *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe*, p. 38

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p. 19

### 3.3 Tuning Voices and Cultures: Ethnic Musical Aesthetics and the Christian Shift

Another crucial area through which cultural impressions of certain sort had been taking place was through the medium of western church music. There could be other genres of music as well but it had been dominantly the church music that came along with the American missionaries. The missionaries had noted the strong musical traditions of the ethnic communities dotting the various locations of the Indian sub-continent. But looking at the context of the Nagas in particular, singing tradition in the form of folksongs was a significant pre-colonial cultural practice. Hence it is interesting to observe how certain values and practices of alien cultures could soothe the appeal and taste of the host cultures. Some of the earliest instances of how music had induced the Naga warriors and villagers alike through western Church music had been recorded in the Nagaland Baptist Church history. Firstly, an instance had been cited about Rev. Edward P. Scott who had encountered a group of Naga warriors in 1870 who raised their spears to strike him and his helper. According to his account, “he won their acceptance by playing on his violin and singing, ‘am I a soldier of the Cross’.”<sup>46</sup> Secondly, when Godhula Brown first entered Mulungkimong village in 1871 he was captured and jailed in a ‘mini-Philippian’ for days as he was suspected to be a colonial government spy. However, it was reported that “his strong prayers and singing gradually him freedom and trust of villagers”.<sup>47</sup>

In saying that Nagas had a strong singing tradition, it does not mean that they had been singing like the Americans, but the interesting point here is that the indigenous sense of music was appropriated to establish western music. This had been acknowledged by the Nagaland Baptist Church Council stating that,

---

<sup>46</sup> One New Humanity: Nagaland Baptist Church Council Celebrates Platinum Jubilee 1937-2012, Nagaland Baptist Church Council, Kohima, 2012, p. 169

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, p. 169

*“Christianity is a singing faith, and this faith is often enhanced with songs and music. No other religion has more songs than the Christian faith. The Nagas were already a singing people before their contact with Christianity. Perhaps the Nagas may have been more responsive to the gospel because of their love for music”.*<sup>48</sup>

Like the pedagogic script, music has its own arrangements like tonic solfa and staff notation. So, the texts of these hymns were normally arranged along with either tonic solfa symbols or staff notations. Such hymnals known as ‘tune books’ were used in the Naga Hills by the American missionaries. Interestingly, the title of the book implied how voices were tuned to the tones of western Church music. Therefore, it may be inferred that the ability to read musical notations also meant tuning the local cultures to the notes of the western traditions both literally and figuratively. Going back to history, most the Christian hymns were written in the eighteenth century, and the American hymnals with ‘tunes’ and ‘texts’ was published only in 1831. Prior to that, hymn singing was without staff notes and tonic solfa arrangements.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, in England, hymn singing was officially approved by the Church of England only in 1820.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, it has been recorded that Biblical literalism was moderated by a subjective spirituality, poetic appreciation and New Testament hermeneutic only by the end of eighteenth century.<sup>51</sup> Thus, the roots of hymnody in English could be traced only to the late eighteenth century.<sup>52</sup> These hymns were either written out of ‘divine inspiration’ or based on experiences and testimonies. For instance, one of the greatest hymns of

---

<sup>48</sup> Ibid

<sup>49</sup> The Golden Age of Hymns, Christian History, Christianity Today, Issue 31, Golden Age of Hymns  
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-31/golden-age-of-hymns-did-you-know.html>

<sup>50</sup> Ibid

<sup>51</sup> The Hymn Exposition, T Christianity Today, Issue 31, Golden Age of Hymns  
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-31/golden-age-of-hymns-did-you-know.html>

<sup>52</sup> A New Species of Christian Songs, Christian History Institute Magazine,  
<https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/new-species-of-christian-song>

all time, ‘Amazing Grace’, was originally written by the captain of a slave ship who eventually became an Anglican minister and worked to abolish the slave trade.<sup>53</sup>

The case of church music in the hills is significant to the study because it was another sacred text alongside the scriptures which had its own charismatic spiritual and emotional appeal. Therefore, the scriptures may be considered to be the skeletons of the mission, and church music may be considered its flesh. It was written that the ‘preached gospel’ and the ‘sung gospel’ went hand in hand in the Naga Hills.<sup>54</sup> Here, it must be asserted that western church music which was brought by the missionaries to these hills was one of the major spheres of cultural reproduction.

Rev. F W Harding wrote in 1939 that,

*“The hymns and hymn tunes of the indigenous church are largely from the west. This is especially true in the case of hill tribe Christians (Mostly the Nagas, under the American Baptist Mission). Western religious music have very largely grown out of the Christian faith itself. It would not have been had there been no Christian faith to express. It is at heart more Christian than western. It reflects the abiding Christian experience of the church through the centuries. In using these same hymns and these same tunes throughout the world, the Christian church unconsciously bears witness to a unity of spirit and to a common, inner spiritual experience deeper than any external unity. In Christian evangelism, there lies the key to all else, namely, that the message is more important than the messenger.”*<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>53</sup> Christian History, Christianity Today, Issue 31, Golden Age of Hymns  
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-31/golden-age-of-hymns-did-you-know.html>

<sup>54</sup> “One New Humanity”, p. 169

<sup>55</sup> Indigenous Christianity in Assam, Assam Christian Council Guwahati 1939 by Rev. F W Harding  
 BA DD, Page 4 (Conference of the Assam Mission – Nehru Museum and Library)

Harding had pointed out the close nexus between Christianity and church music in the sense that the cultural currency of music has been possible because of religion. At the same time, he tried to play down the cultural side of music by saying that it was more Christian than western. It may be true that without Christianity, the transfusion of music into the Naga local cultural repertoire may not have been possible but at the same time, music was also as much cultural as Christianity was. He also alluded to the expression of a larger Christian social imagination through the practice of Christian music. The process of how new cultural practices were slowly interiorized and indigenized through church music may be evidently visible at a baptism event. It was recorded that people kept singing songs of praise in the vernacular language and in English all the way to and from the venue.<sup>56</sup> In a way, it shows how western church music was translated and recontextualized to the local conditions through the singing of hymns. At the same time, the indigenous cultures were also laced with a 'modernistic' outlook not only through the singing of English hymnals but also by the very performance of singing itself. Because of which, it may be argued that music was considered as a cultural medium to not only interiorize alien practices but also bring about a universal spiritual, emotional, and communal space.

Looking at one of the experiences, Mrs. Wither reported about a group of young students in Guwahati, which was also part of the American Baptist Assam Mission. According to her, many of the boys would come to her place "first with the avowed desire to learn to talk and to understand English better", similarly some would come to read Shakespeare or Milton or some other authors. But she mentioned that it was impossible to read these great authors without knowing the Bible. This in a way suggests that either Bible was the core text of the times or the knowledge of Bible was to the missionaries too important for the students to know before reading these authors. She reported that she would pass the hymnal books to

---

<sup>56</sup>Governemnt of Nagaland, File no 4, Private (ABAM), special paper on Church activity, 1871,1896,1940, p. 3

these kids, sing and explain the hymns. In this way, she revealed that teaching went hand in hand with the songs.<sup>57</sup>

Music as a subject was also part of the educational curriculum, perhaps it was one of the core subjects. According to Tanquist, the music teaching dominated a large place in the school curriculum. During his time, the school choir most probably of the Kohima Mission High School had 70 members, met thrice a week, used 12 instruments and played all the entire 263 hymns in the Hymnal book.<sup>58</sup> Along with the sacred appeal of the Christian musical tracts, these songs and hymns which also contained artistic appeal, evidently fascinated and amused the students. It must be noted that music engages with emotions which adds a lively aspect to Christianity. Moreover, singing also helps in memorization of teachings of Christianity and the Bible itself.<sup>59</sup> Wither reported that the students would borrow the hymnals to take it home and read.<sup>60</sup> Therefore, church music tracts apparently had been one of the popular mediums not only for advancing the cause of Christianity but of culture itself.

The tradition of hymn singing was accompanied by a new performative tradition. It was recorded by Mead Clark that the first missionaries to the Lotha Nagas, W. E. Witter and his wife were the first to bring an organ to the hills.<sup>61</sup> It was also recorded that reed organs, which suited the tropical climates, were used by the American missionaries in their fields as pipe organs were not portable and needed electricity. Thomas also found that the piano was introduced only in the twentieth century in these hills.<sup>62</sup> In addition, gramophones, victrola and various

---

<sup>57</sup> Assam Missionary Conference of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Nowgong, February 1916, The Banerjee Press, Calcutta, p 7

<sup>58</sup> Assam Baptist Missionary conference report, Thirty Seventy Session, Jorhat, Assam, 1940, p. 27

<sup>59</sup> Christopher Hayward, Music, *Worship and the Church*, <http://www.jubilee-centre.org/music-worship-and-the-church-by-christopher-hayward/>

<sup>60</sup> Assam Missionary Conference of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Nowgong, February 1916, The Banerjee Press, Calcutta, p 7

<sup>61</sup> Mary Mead Clark, *A Corner*, 1907, p. 154; also cited in John Thomas, *Evangelizing The Nation*, p. 30

<sup>62</sup> Thomas, *Evangelizing the Nation*, Routledge, 30



other instruments were also used mostly in the ‘itinerant preaching’ events, which were organized by missionaries from village to village.<sup>63</sup> The display and performance of these instruments, also termed as the use of new ‘technologies’ by Thomas, created a rare spectacle and easily drew attention of people in the villages.<sup>64</sup> Among the active American missionaries, Rev. and Mrs. George Supplee were regarded to have contributed the most in music under the Kohima mission field. He was credited for introducing brass, wind and string instruments and importantly for giving music instructions.<sup>65</sup> It was recorded that in 1937 there were five choirs at the high school level, a mixed choir of one hundred members and an eleven instrumental piece band.<sup>66</sup> Supplee also compiled and translated Church hymnals and songs for the Naga churches. Some of these include ‘Alexander’s Gospel Songs’ (1908), ‘Redemption Songs’ (c1900) and ‘Sankey’s Sacred Songs’ and ‘Solos’ (1900-1950), etc.<sup>67</sup> William Pettigrew who worked in the neighboring mission field, the Naga Hills of Manipur, also listed songs like ‘Glory Song’, ‘Tell Mother I’ll be There’ and a few more as the legitimate “sounds of Christianity – the kinds of sound that need to be listened and echoed if one was to participate in Christianity.”<sup>68</sup> These evidences indicate that Naga Christian music had enormously drawn from the western repertoire of hymns and gospels songs.

John Thomas has stated that the employment of these ‘technologies’, referring to the musical instruments and which should also include musical notations and tonic solfas, had often turned ‘itinerant preaching’<sup>69</sup> and other

---

<sup>63</sup> Ibid

<sup>64</sup> Ibid

<sup>65</sup> “One New Humanity”, p. 169

<sup>66</sup> Ibid

<sup>67</sup> Ibid,

<sup>68</sup> W. Pettigrew, Jonah M. Solo, K. Mahangthei, *Forty Years in Manipur, Assam: An Account of the Work of Rev. & Mrs. William Pettigrew*, University of California, Digitized in 2006, p. 44; cited in Thomas, *Evangelizing The Nation*, p. 31

<sup>69</sup> ‘Itinerant Preaching’ was an evangelizing activity organized by missionaries and evangelists who toured from village to village giving out performances, play popular American gospel songs from the gramophones, display imaginative pictures of Jesus Christ, give medical treatment to the sick, organize ‘magic lantern’ in the evenings in prominent places of villages like the house of the Chiefs,

evangelizing programs into a spectacle attract and initiate new emotional, spiritual and cultural experience. All these astute technologies of engagement with the emotions of the locals made the process of cultural change a form of performance, where locals and missionaries alike, gave performances in the church pulpits to the church congregation after rigorous practices to deliver a good show. Thus, when cultural change is viewed from the perspective of a performance, the idea of cultural mimicry gets all the more relevant. In this way, music was a critical medium of cultural translation in the case of the Nagas.

### 3.3 Educational Reforms and Proactive Engagement

During the first decade of the twentieth century and the decades following, there had been considerable educational reforms at all levels of governance beginning from the highest offices of the colonial administration. The Education department had been functioning under the Home Department since 1857 dealing with all matters relating to education. However, with the growing importance of education in India, and to afford relief to the Home department, a separate education department was created on 9 Dec 1910.<sup>70</sup> On Feb 13, 1911, certain heads of work like Orthography of Indian names, congress of orientalist, ethnography, zoological gardens, commemoration of notable buildings, oriental languages, and linguistic survey were also transferred from home to the Education department.<sup>71</sup> A decade later, on 5<sup>th</sup> August, 1921, the new department was renamed as the Education and Health Department and included department of Lands on 16<sup>th</sup> April, 1923. Eventually, Education department was bifurcated on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1945.<sup>72</sup> A brief summary of the grounds upon which Lord Minto's government initially based their

---

whereby a large screen attached to bamboo poles would be placed, and stories from the bibles were projected and narrated. See Thomas, *Evangelizing The Nation*, p. 29-30

<sup>70</sup> Guide to the Records in the National Archives of India, Part IV, 1871-1957, p.. 7

<sup>71</sup> Ibid

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, p. 134

proposal for the bifurcation of education department from the home department has been discussed. According to the proceedings, the officials had deliberated as to how far the government should provide primary education free of cost, the training of teachers, systems/pattern for moral instructions, question of influences in order to improve character, the question of how far religious instruction should be permitted, etc. It also mentioned about the anticipated budget at imperial, provincial and local levels for the implementation of these and other reforms in consonance with a wisely planned and consistent education policy.<sup>73</sup>

Further, it also stated that “the extreme importance of the subject of education needed no demonstration.”<sup>74</sup> Therefore, the Governor General in Council had considered the subject for the creation of an additional membership of the Executive Council of the Governor General, with appropriate secretariat and clerical staff, to deal primarily, with the subjects of education and local self-government.<sup>75</sup> These reforms were also carried out in order to execute the extensive reforms initiated by Lord Curzon.<sup>76</sup>

Such educational reforms had found resonance across the colonial administration. In Assam province, particularly in the Naga Hills, colonial policies on education connived closely with the missionary endeavors on education. It was evident that a good number of primary schools run by the missionaries had been taken over by the government in the first decade of the twentieth century. This instance underscores that primary education was considered a necessity for both the government and the Baptist mission. But all the more to the missionaries as these schools were fundamental to more advanced trainings like the Bible schools for training of Christian workers, which the missionaries had termed as an ‘axiomatic requirement’ for a sound theoretical and practical training, and for further studies

---

<sup>73</sup> Formation of the Department of Education, File no 16, Proceedings, Government of India, Department of Education, General A, February, Calcutta, 1911, p. 3

<sup>74</sup> Ibid

<sup>75</sup> Ibid

<sup>76</sup> Ibid

in high schools, normal schools and industrial institutions.<sup>77</sup> Normal training schools were primarily established in order to train teachers from the Christian community on priority; therefore, it was given more importance than the high schools.<sup>78</sup> It was so because, as the missionary sources confirmed, the curriculum in the high schools had to be in conformity with the colonial government's curriculum.<sup>79</sup> Therefore, taking a cue from the missionary debates on the question of 'secularization' that was associated with the government educational system, it may be understood why the missionaries were least bothered to open high school in the Naga Hills. Till the late 1930s, the Naga Hills did not have a single High School. As a result, Jorhat High School was developed to accommodate the students from the Naga Hills. The High School in Kohima was established in 1939-40,<sup>80</sup> predominantly through the initiatives of the locals. At the high school level, the students were required to pay individual fees referred as 'self-support'<sup>81</sup> by the missionaries. And lastly, there were industrial schools which were run by the government. An industrial school was established at Kohima to provide students from High school, Normal school and Bible school with necessary skill training in at least one traditional occupation like agriculture, carpentry, cane work and blacksmithy, which were fundamental courses.<sup>82</sup> Thus, a systematic pattern of the system of education was developed by the early part of the twentieth century both under missionary and colonial establishments. This system of education in fact created an educational pyramid pooling students progressively from villages to colonial and mission stations. This new logic of education which by and large

---

<sup>77</sup> Assam – Historical – Mission Education Policy and Program in Assam – 11/14 16/49 (Microfilm) 712-2.3, p 1

<sup>78</sup> Ibid

<sup>79</sup> Ibid

<sup>80</sup> Government of Nagaland, Governor's Secretariat Department, File No. 675, 1941, pp. 2-3

<sup>81</sup> Assam – Historical – Mission Education Policy and Program in Assam – 11/14 16/49 (Microfilm) 712-2.3, p 1

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, p 2

resonated from colonial and missionary policies, created new social and cultural capital necessary for cultural adaptation and assimilation.

Tanquist mentioned that the only High School in Kohima established in the late 1930s had been supported by fees of students and ‘subscription’ from people.<sup>83</sup> By then, evidently the locals were beginning to shell out money for education which had never happened before. According to the report, the Impur mission station school had improved enrolment of girls with 121 in 1929. Also the sex ratio in village schools under Impur had reportedly improved. However, considering the literacy scenario of the Naga Hills in 1929, there was only one literate woman against 330 literate men whereas only 5 percent of the Naga population was literate.<sup>84</sup> Earlier, men had predominantly occupied the literary spaces which enabled them better access to new means and new worldviews. Women who were ignored education for a considerable time, lagged behind and remained in the traditionally constrained spaces. Significantly, according to Tanquist, the statistical data of 1940 indicated a marked change in the attitude of parents who formerly believed that education and literacy for girls were not necessary.<sup>85</sup>

As the educational system both under the mission and government was getting established with time, its impact on hitherto village societies had been drastic. An experiment conducted by a missionary in 1908 give a good contrast between those who had attended school and those who had never been to schools. Baker stated that the great work of the schools lie in training the mind of the masses to think logically.<sup>86</sup> Here, it is pertinent to dwell on the idea of being logical. The dictionary defines it as being capable of clear, sound reasoning. However, he cited the instance to make his point. He experimented with a village crowd asking them to describe what they had learned from the preacher and apparently none could

---

<sup>83</sup> Assam Baptist Missionary conference report, Thirty Seventy Session, Jorhat, Assam, 1940, p 28

<sup>84</sup> Second Survey of Fields and Work of the Northern Baptist Convention, Board of Missionary Cooperation, New York, Judson Press, Philadelphia, 1929 p 153

<sup>85</sup> Assam Baptist Missionary conference report, Thirty Seventy Session, Jorhat, Assam, 1940, p. 35

<sup>86</sup> The American Baptist Missionary Review, January, 1908, p 114

respond. On the other hand, his experiment with an audience composed of former pupils of schools proved him that they were able to follow simple lines of arguments and comprehend simple explanations. Based on this experiment, he stated that schools were important not so much for the schools themselves but for orientation of the minds of the congregation.<sup>87</sup> Thus, the capability to respond to the teachings and instructions precisely had been taken as the definition of being logical. Looking at this description, it suggests that schools and churches had been established as doorsteps to this new system of culture and beliefs.

The missionaries were positive that the educational measures were translating into 'Christian capital'. According to a report, 'school has gone hand in hand with evangelism' and further stated that the reach of literacy which technically preceded evangelism in most cases, had made the foundation of the church firmer.<sup>88</sup> Evidently, missionaries aspired to start a school in every village. Nevertheless, they also admitted that the government had its own limitations on funds, and at the same time admitted that the government turns to mission for supply of teachers.<sup>89</sup> This instance brings out the collaborative effort even more pronounced. It was stated that in 1934, out of 32 teachers in the government schools in the Ao area, the missions had trained 25 in its Impur mission.<sup>90</sup> The missionaries had also admitted their financial limitations but were resolved in principle that they must at least establish and supervise it. Evidently, there were about 114 village schools which had been established under the auspices of the American Mission which had about 3000 students by then.<sup>91</sup> It also revealed that most of these schools were ordinary village schools and out of which only four were grammar grade schools which

---

<sup>87</sup> Ibid

<sup>88</sup> American Baptist Foreign Mission Societies, Records, 1817-1969 (Assam, Kohima, General Material, 1924-46), Supplee, July 17, 1937, p. 6-7

<sup>89</sup> Ibid

<sup>90</sup> Ibid

<sup>91</sup> Ibid

could accommodate only about 165 students. To set up more grammar schools, it required better trained teachers which the mission admitted was not available.<sup>92</sup>

Missionaries also lamented about the lack of high schools in the Naga Hills. Mr. Supplee admitted that he was originally appointed as an educational missionary for the purpose of setting up such a high school at the Mission Station in Kohima.<sup>93</sup> Evidently, Kohima had been selected for the establishment of a high school seventeen years ago because of its accessible location but he also revealed that funds had not been provided by the mission.<sup>94</sup> However, looking at the report, organisations like the Naga Club had donated 1000 and another thousand had been contributed from the churches. The total estimated cost of constructing such a school along with dorms and other facilities had been 16, 536. Nevertheless, they were also overwhelmed at the way local support systems had been emerging. It stated that out of 57 schools under Impur mission field, thirty four had been entirely self-supporting. A sum of 31, 812 had been reportedly raised as school fees in 1934, which was an addition to 62, 647 donated towards mission work under the same mission field.<sup>95</sup>

Mr. Supplee stated that the story of the Nagas had been the most interesting and inspiring in mission history and he made this statement about the way in which the Nagas had changed over the span of sixty years, which to him was remarkable. According to him, the paths once trod by the feet of the headhunters served to help the evangelist and the teacher on their way. In these three score years, the educated sections of different tribes had emerged to petition for the establishment of a high school. He concluded by stating that the locals had spontaneously responded to the

---

<sup>92</sup> Ibid

<sup>93</sup> Ibid

<sup>94</sup> Ibid

<sup>95</sup> Ibid

gospel. Having said that, he also complimented the way the locals had reciprocated in supporting evangelism and education locally and individually.<sup>96</sup>

### **3.4 The Emergence of a Literate and a Didactic Space**

Extensive evangelism in the Naga Hills resulted in conversions which also contributed in the formation of early form of public sphere. In some cases, Christianity was embraced by collective groups of villagers.<sup>97</sup> This instance indicates that the proselytization processes initially had created tiny spaces of socio-religious convergences. As conversion statistics continued to take a gradual upward turn, Christianity furthered the shift of social and communal dynamics from the individuated experiences to a more composite Christian community. At the same time, an intriguing cultural phenomenon has been located as to the way these early religious spaces and spheres in the form of churches had emerged as spaces of pedagogic and didactic cultural dispositions. Looking at the church records and missionary accounts, it has been evident that both the missionaries and converts continually aspired to forge a literate and informed space within the churches. With the progressive emphasis of Churches on literacy and education, it has been observed that new ethical and moral systems had been upheld and legitimized gradually. As it shall be discussed, the production and adaption of these new moral

---

<sup>96</sup> “Within sixty years the paths once trod by the feet of headhunters now serve to help the evangelist on his way, the teacher on his way. In less than sixty years such change has come that a group of educated Nagas of various tribes meet together to present a petition for a high school, where less than sixty year ago there existed no writing for any language, no language which could be understood by more than one tribe, and no meeting, tribe with tribe, except for war. The Christian message among these people has met with no sluggish responses...the spread of the gospel by their own efforts, the support of their churches and teachers by their own initiative and sacrifice. We appeal for something which they cannot give themselves, for they have gone as far as they can with that they have.” in American Baptist Foreign Mission Societies, Records, 1817-1969 (Assam, Kohima, General Material, 1924-46), Supplee, July 17, 1937, p.

<sup>97</sup> American Baptist Foreign Mission Societies, Records, 1817-1969 (Assam, Kohima, General Material, 1924-46), Supplee, July 17, 1933



and ethical systems engulfed the Christian public sphere with new didactic and compunctious dispositions to perpetually alter cultural trajectories of the locals.

The practice of Church record keeping had commenced right from the establishment of the American Baptist Mission in Naga Hills. Looking at the Ao Church Records, every baptized member was registered in the church record book along with their personal testimonies.<sup>98</sup> Subsequently, the basic bio data and testimonials were recorded and preserved. Even the newly born children of Christian parents were listed in the church registers. By taking the membership of the church, a Christian convert enters into a literate space. Along with these records, a church pledge was regularly printed.<sup>99</sup> This evidence suggests that with registration, a form of regularization of membership was maintained through these pledge cards. Earlier, it was discussed that Christianity was an intellectual/literate religion and therefore, the medium of engagement and principal agency of dissemination had been always through the pedagogic.

A comparative mission experience between the Eastern Angami and Rengma, and similar reports from other mission fields brings out how significant the pedagogic capital had been to early churches in the way it reciprocated, perpetuated and sustained. In 1933, Supplee admitted that the gospel came comparatively late to the 'Eastern Angamis' (the present Chakhesang tribe and few Angami villages) but stated that they had been supportive in the evangelistic work by paying for one of the touring evangelists.<sup>100</sup> He also stated that their language was a dialect of the literalized Angami and therefore the missionaries did not plan to literalize it although mission outreach operated separately. The nearest church from Kohima was 30 miles away. The report also further mentioned that there were more than 50 big villages which had not embraced Christianity. By then, an

---

<sup>98</sup> Government of Nagaland, Impur (ABAM), 1881-1906

<sup>99</sup> American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Assam Baptist Missionary Conference Report, Thirty Ninth Session, Golaghat, Assam, 1941, p 30

<sup>100</sup> American Baptist Foreign Mission Societies, Records, 1817-1969 (Assam, Kohima, General Material, 1924-46), Supplee, July 17, 1933

evangelist was sponsored by one government employee for 6 months in a year and the American mission also supported another evangelist for Rs 18 per month. It was reported that through these two evangelists, two new churches were organized but strongly lamented the absence of any literate person among the forty to fifty members. Supplee however termed this mission to be in 'infancy stage' because there were no literate evangelists to lead the church members.<sup>101</sup> Around the same time, in the Rengma area, it was reported that there were three strong churches and had about 100 Christians in total. The missionaries were happy to mention that these churches were self-supportive. Moreover, one of the churches had been supporting one mission school teacher at Kohima and a number of boys studying in the Kohima mission school. Interestingly, the American mission sponsored evangelist was able to enter two new villages in two years. As a result, the missionaries wrote optimistically that two new churches would be organized soon. It was also mentioned that this particular evangelist was given the responsibility to ensure the wellbeing of these new churches by the American mission.<sup>102</sup> Studying these two experiences, a clear contrast can be established. The Eastern Angami churches did not have any literate converts while the Rengma had teachers, students and proactive evangelists. Consequently, the level of vibrancy in these churches also varied accordingly. It is hard to imagine how newly non-literate converts would know the Bible without being able to read it. More so, it would be difficult to sustain Christianity without really feeding the congregation about Christianity and about the Bible. This comparison brings out the functional significance of a literate space within churches that the missionaries had intended to create since the very beginning.

Similarly, the Kacha Nagas (Zeliangs) had only one organized church till 1933. The same year, 24 houses in a village converted to Christianity which according to the missionaries was one of the largest mass conversions under

---

<sup>101</sup> Ibid

<sup>102</sup> Ibid

Kohima mission history till then, but lamented that it did not have a literate pastor to lead them.<sup>103</sup> Likewise, the story of a number of mixed tribal settlements in the foothills of Naga Hills where the majority were Semas in some villages, but also had Lothas and other tribes had appealed to the American mission to send a common ‘pastor-evangelist’ as there were no literate person among them.<sup>104</sup> The missionaries had expressed that it was difficult for these villages to unite because of the language variation but stated that a ‘common paper’ published in ‘Angami Naga’ could be circulated to these churches. The missionaries had revealed that the Angami pedagogic language had been a common tie in many of these churches. In another neighboring village, nine houses converted and they were occasionally visited by a ‘pastor-evangelist’ as no one in the village could read or write.<sup>105</sup> However, during Christian conventions organized once in every five years, it had numerous interpreters.<sup>106</sup> These instances suggest the way new forms of commonalities had been forged at grassroots levels. The missionaries commended the way different groups of early converts had been supportive of each other and also by sponsoring the salaries of the evangelists.<sup>107</sup> These new Christian community expressions closely coalesced with the Naga communitarian values in the making of a new ‘Christian identity’.

Furthermore, it was reported by I. Anderson that large Konyak villages had sought for “instruction in the way to Christ.”<sup>108</sup> Evidently, knowledge about Christianity was central to the conversion processes. In 1938, the Impur Church had an addition of 22 new members who were students of Impur Mission School.<sup>109</sup> In the same year, there were about 366 boys in the hostels of Impur Mission School,

---

<sup>103</sup> Ibid

<sup>104</sup> Ibid

<sup>105</sup> Ibid

<sup>106</sup> Ibid

<sup>107</sup> Ibid

<sup>108</sup> One Hundred-Twenty Fourth Annual Report of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, 1938, New York, Judson Press Philadelphia p 57

<sup>109</sup> Ibid

with original capacity for only 200. The rest reportedly slept on the floors of the ‘cook-houses’ as reported.<sup>110</sup> Such instances continue to suggest that it was the people who had access to education and knowledge that were moving towards Christianity. It was reported that there were three Bible classes with an average attendance of about 400 students.<sup>111</sup> This further suggests that schools were also mini churches where scriptures were taught.

Interestingly, it must be noted that the instructions in schools were not only religious but also cultural. To the missionaries, cultural change was central. Needless to mention, the cultural background of the missionaries did influence their Christian missionary endeavours as they also operated from their respective cultures. The missionaries had to a large extent moralized such cultural dispositions as ‘Christian’ and in so doing, the American missionaries had not only become conservative in their outlook, but had ingrained huge western cultural baggage into the making of a ‘Christian identity’. Moreover, they also propagated religiously the Biblical idea of culture. Therefore, to be a Christian, one had to embrace a ‘Christian culture’ that the missionaries had propagated otherwise it would be a ‘sin’. Here, it must be understood that Christianity had been disguised into certain cultural expressions. Nevertheless, the role of culture in the process of proselytization and the perpetual sustenance of Christianity in these erstwhile ‘non-Christian’ societies were strategically paramount.

This pedagogic agency however created a new didactic space as those converts who could not conform to the moral and religious decorum of the Church were penalized and in most cases excommunicated from the church and on re-commitment, re-admitted to church. Therefore, it may be said that the practice of keeping church membership records had brought about an institutionalized form of morality. In the sense that, certain moral obligations had been generated and at the same time every individual was personally monitored through certain religious

---

<sup>110</sup> Ibid

<sup>111</sup> Ibid

machineries like church elders or deacons. This pedagogic dynamic of Christian institutions had been crucial in bringing about a Christian missionary bent of mind and character in the local converts. For instance, the church at Molungyimsen, the first Church in the Naga Hills had to be disbanded in the early 1890s due to gross indiscipline and poor understanding of the Christian faith. It was re-organized and new membership had been granted after careful scrutiny. Therefore, only those who claimed to have understood the Christian faith were granted baptism and accepted.<sup>112</sup> During the process of Christian Church re-organization in 1894, in a meeting with the villagers, a covenant on the basis of which the church was to be re-organized was 'reread'.<sup>113</sup> Rev. Perrine had also reported that the missionaries were trying to train the Christian members for better 'Christian service'. Therefore, in his words, "they had asked the churches to adopt no less a standard than that every Christian be able to read his Bible."<sup>114</sup> Here it was evident' that the cognizance of Christian faith was made a precondition to become members of the church. Primarily, bare literacy of most members and even high illiteracy of other members could have caused breakdown of the first church. Moreover, it also indicates a state of cultural impasse faced by the converts because even though conversions were taking place, the total departure from one's own culture may be considered a complex matter. After this experience, interestingly, even the incumbent Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills, advised the missionaries to scrutinize baptism requests carefully to see if the request had been genuine.<sup>115</sup> It may be argued that a systemic process of cultural indoctrination was required to ensure the stability of cultural change. In the process of such a cultural condensation, a sort of conviction, which of course is very central to the Christian

---

<sup>112</sup> Government of Nagaland, Impur (ABAM), 1881-1906, Ao Church History p. 4

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, p. 1

<sup>114</sup> Fifth Triennial Conference held at Dibrugarh, Feb 11-19, 1899, Calcutta Baptist Mission Press, p 42

<sup>115</sup> Church correspondence with government, Private (ABAM) 1912-41, p. 10

belief system, gets generated. From the cultural point of view, such formation was crucial in producing new socio-cultural dispositions and dialectics.

Here, it must be asserted that such moral and religious obligations and dispositions had been sustained through the pedagogic medium. It was evidently so because in the first place, membership was granted on the basis of faith, a profession and a vow to be faithful. In one of the instances, a girl was recorded to have shown ‘good evidence’ of conversion.<sup>116</sup> Such testimonies were scrutinized and recorded in the church book by the church workers and missionaries. As a result such members had assumed a new recorded identity. In the process, the pedagogic church records remained as witness to conversion, profession and practice. Interestingly most of the records were maintained in English, with some exception, as it was mostly done by the American missionaries. These church records included records from birth to death, or from conversion to exclusion, marriage, baptism, etc. In this way, pedagogic records created new sensibilities of accountability and self-restraint, which perhaps brought about new inclinations of individualism. Such, inherent obligations were central in the departure from one’s own cultural practices. Apart from the membership records, it is interesting to note that almost every church activity was recorded.

In 1908, Delta, the American missionary critic of higher education had admitted that missionary enterprises were essentially a moral and spiritual movement. According to him, Christianity was preached through rational appeals primarily to the ‘ethical instincts of mankind’. He stated that Christianity “meets men where their needs are greatest and their power weakest.”<sup>117</sup> He disclosed that

*“The role of the missionaries was to deliver the message that Christianity bring to the people (non-believers) the most painful thralldom of sin a*

---

<sup>116</sup> Government of Nagaland, Impur (ABAM), 1881-1906, p. 1

<sup>117</sup> Higher Education: A Criticism by Delta, Baptist Missionary Review, August 1908, p. 355

*gracious deliverance which contains the promise and potency of a perfect life and character.*"<sup>118</sup>

According to him, social betterment, political progress, education, physical culture and health were part of the Christian propaganda. He also reported that some former students of missionary schools and colleges, although did not convert to Christianity were grateful for their past training and were willing to help the missionary in any way they could.<sup>119</sup> Therefore, it must be noted that most of the people who had attended the mission schools had evidently begun to appropriate and appreciate the western world views. Looking at the early church in the Naga Hills, the situation had been largely a juggle between literacy and proselytism. The missionaries had engaged literacy as a medium of evangelizing the Naga villages. Evidently, with the spread of literacy, proselytization came about in the early engagements. As time passed, Christian activities reverberated across the non-literate spaces through the local agencies and as a result conversions began to take place without people even been literate. Nevertheless, these non-literate converts had constantly sought the help of missionaries for literate pastors and teachers in order for them to sustain their conviction. This aspect of incessant nurturing within Christianity is a unique feature compared to other religions which makes Christianity organic. The quest for a literate space and the pedagogic character therefore are not totally the design or strategy of the American missionaries *per se* but may be argued that such dispositions are within the grand design of Christianity itself. Moreover, looking at the evidences and the social and cultural processes of the pre-christian/pre-colonial through the colonial and missionary experiences, it was probable that the process of conversions/ proselytization could have assumed a 'civilized', 'modern', 'progressive' or 'literate' outlook to project a new 'spiritual aristocracy' which was originally proposed by Thomas Carlyle.<sup>120</sup> According to Raymond Williams, 'spiritual aristocracy' implies a 'highly cultivated' and

---

<sup>118</sup> Ibid, p. 356

<sup>119</sup> Ibid

<sup>120</sup> Williams, *Culture and Society 1780-1950*, p. 91-92

‘responsible minority’ who establishes new standards of values that societies must aim to accomplish.<sup>121</sup> This concept may be used as reference for the American missionaries at one level, who had defined new cultural and spiritual standards for the literates and converts, and had drawn them into a new imagination of a perfect society in posterity. At the local level, the early literates and converts constituted the spiritual and cultural aristocracy to command new socio-cultural, political and economic standards in the local spheres.

However, the progressive standardization of pedagogic capital in and by the churches over the course of time resulted in progressive internalization of western morality and culture.

### **3.5 Cultural Dialectics viz. ‘Non-Christians’ and ‘Converts; Administrators and Missionaries**

As evident from the above, the missionaries also employed their own discursive strategies. They understood the way the indigenous Naga villages resisted colonial forces who intruded with full military might. In 1879, the Battle of Khonoma was fought and perhaps, the Anglo-Naga conflict gradually receded since then. Thus, there had been instances as to the way the early missionaries had attempted to disassociate with the colonial government so as to protect and enhance their interest. Significant insight had been derived from the descriptions and observations during the initial encounters. According to the first missionary to the Naga Hills, “Nagas have a good name for truthfulness and for general purity of life, except that they are dirty and blood thirsty. They are probably as faithful friends as they are implacable enemies.”<sup>122</sup> Clark made another comment to make his point.

---

<sup>121</sup> Ibid

<sup>122</sup> Government of Nagaland, File no 4, Private (ABAM), special paper on Church activity, 1871, 1896, 1940, p. 8



*“Let the Nagas be convinced that a missionary is not a government spy, to see how the country can be seized; let them understand that he is only a missionary, desiring their welfare, and I believe that he would be safe from violence, even were he to live in the hills”. [sic.]<sup>123</sup>*

In the statement, it also alluded the way the government was associated with violence and how the missionaries realized association with the government was harmful to their interests. Therefore, the missionaries were shrewd enough to devise their own ways to get into the cultural and everyday lives of the indigenous people.

Gradually, it has been obvious through the official and ecclesiastical sources that the relationship between the government and the missionaries had undergone ups and downs. Nevertheless, it needs to be stated that by and large, these two entities had been mutually dependent and as a result their relationship remained mostly cordial. In saying that it does not mean that their association had not generated any dialectics. Moreover, as cultural tensions developed amongst the locals basically between the converts and the ‘non-Christians’ as they had been referred in colonial sources, the relationship between the government, missionaries, and locals became entangled in a complex web. This new tension may be referred to as a ‘tri-lateral dialectic’.

One of the earliest tensions recorded between ‘non-Christians’ and the converts had been about a case in the 1870s. Rev. E. W. Clark, writing on the beginnings of Naga Mission in Assam in 1913 just before his departure to America for good after working for more than four decades in the Naga Hills narrated an interesting instance. He reported that after the new village called Molungyimsen was formed, the invariable custom of sacrificing cattle to the great ‘village deity’ of the Ao Nagas had been omitted.<sup>124</sup> This omission did not go well with some

---

<sup>123</sup> Ibid

<sup>124</sup> Assam Baptist Missionary Conference of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Twelfth Biennial Session, Gauhati, January 4-13, 1913, p 54

people as they took it as a declaration of war on the old faith. Few weeks later, threats to exterminate the village were sent by the greatest village of the tribe. Interestingly the Christians replied that the new village earnestly desired to live in peace and amity with others. Moreover, they stressed that “they greatly enjoy the assurance of being accepted disciples of the almighty god who made the earth and all on it and who cared for his children.”<sup>125</sup> This is one of the earliest visible cultural shifts that had taken place.

In the local practices, there were certain days which were observed as *genna* or *menyi* and on these days people were forbidden to work, travel and sometimes even venture out of the village. The significance of these performances was to appease the spirits in order to contain epidemic, natural calamities, etc. In 1900, a report had been lodged to the government by the Goanburas of Lozema against the Kohima Nagas for obstructing their passage while bringing their agricultural produce for sale in the Kohima *bazaar*. The reason was that the Angami villages were observing five day *genna* and according to customs, no supplies such as rice, dal, salt, etc. could be brought or taken away from the village or through the roads that passes by. According to legends, violation of these rituals would lead to failure in crops. However, the Deputy Commissioner had ordered that they should not obstruct trade in the bazaar.<sup>126</sup> Later, a new sort of cultural tension had developed when Christians began to oppose these practices. It was reported by Longwell that the Christian converts were bothered about the imposition of *genna* (indigenous rest days as Longwell had put it) which were almost equal to the number of Sundays in a calendar year.

Moreover, it was reported that the government officials had been indifferent to the Christians in some cases. As written elsewhere, the government had used the indigenous system of oath to deliver justice in most cases. Missionaries in their own

---

<sup>125</sup> Ibid

<sup>126</sup> File No 445, Tour Diary of Lt W M Kennedy, ISC, officiating Deputy Commissioner, Naga Hills for July 1900, p6

way had forbidden Christians to indulge in these acts. As for them it was a 'heathen practice' and condemned the government for paying respect to the heathen religious ideas. However, the government on the other hand had been insisting to the converts to sign a form of oath.<sup>127</sup> Similarly, in a letter from the Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills to Dr. Bailey dated 18<sup>th</sup> November 1924, about the case of Sema Christians, revealed the tension between the Christian converts and the non-Christians basically with the chiefs. The Christians had evidently refused to cooperate with their chiefs.<sup>128</sup> The deputy commissioner had cautioned Dr. Bailey by stating that Sema Christians had been showing signs of disloyalty to the agencies of the government. He made a reference on the conflicts in some villages and blamed the Sema Christians for refusing to co-operate with the village chiefs and further pre-supposed that they could be carrying ancient grudges in the pretense of 'conscientious objections'.<sup>129</sup> Here, we see a conflict between different worldviews and domains that had emerged over time. It may be argued that when cultural tensions had arisen, it is evident that culture had begun to change. Nevertheless, we see a deeper problem with the tussle between the government and the missionaries on the one hand, and between the government and converts over the indigenous traditional practices.

In 1931, there was a case between the Christians and the 'non-Christians' as the colonial officials would call it. The issue was about the Christians who were not willing to contribute towards the purchase of a pig to be slaughtered during the event of cleaning the village ground in which the ceremonial '*bariks*' were to be changed. The SDO of Mokokchung, S. V. Lloyd Rees, had passed the order stating that Christians need not pay for any sacrificial offerings.<sup>130</sup> According to the

---

<sup>127</sup> Assam Baptist Missionary Conference of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Twelfth Biennial Session, Gauhati, January 4-13, 1913, p 50

<sup>128</sup> Government of Nagaland, Private Department (ABAM), (correspondence letters with government), 1912-41 (Letter dated 18<sup>th</sup> November, 1924)

<sup>129</sup> A missionary reference for opposition in principle

<sup>130</sup> Government of Nagaland, Private Department (ABAM), (correspondence letters with government), 1912-41, (copy of miscellaneous cases no 57 of Mokokchung 1931)

government order, Christians need not pay any ceremonial tax, an issue which had become a bone of contention for the two communities in the villages for a long time. However, Christians had been ordered to give their share of meat to the GBs as usual and were also asked to work in the field of the GBs as usual.<sup>131</sup> The order to pay the GBs perhaps was to show allegiance to their authority or precisely the government as the institution of GBs represented the government authority at the village level. While, working in the fields of the GBs evidently displayed a colonial manifestation of subjugation and exploitation, further, it may be said that the colonial regime had its own way of asserting authority and system of allegiance. This case may be seen as a bold manifestation of such colonial disposition. The government had also ordered that those Goanburas who had converted to Christianity would lose their customary rights of holding such authority, taking the instance of Inaho Kinimi.<sup>132</sup> Such cases had been asked to be reported to the SDO so that new GBs would be appointed according to indigenous customs, the government demanded. According to sources, the colonial government had subsumed the institution of village chiefs into the new Goanbura system. So in the Sema case, these GBs were entitled only to the chiefs and their blood relations. In the same order, it also ordered the Christians to observe 10 *genna* days in a year. Lastly, Christians were forbidden to take *ketse-shi* and *akumo-shi* to village fields.<sup>133</sup> Though, the missionaries and colonial administrators conflicted over their respective cultural imagination of the new modern subjects and Christian converts, both emerged as custodians of local cultures in their own ways in no time.

The relationship between the two entities had taken a new turn over the involvement of the government in the internal affairs of a village church. It was reported that the government had dismissed a pastor of a village in 1936.

---

<sup>131</sup> Ibid

<sup>132</sup> One New Humanity: Nagaland Baptist Church Council Celebrates Platinum Jubilee 1937-2012, Nagaland Baptist Church Council, Kohima, 2012, p. 188-189

<sup>133</sup> Government of Nagaland, Private Department (ABAM), (correspondence letters with government), 1912-41

Consequently, a letter was dispatched to the SDO of Mokokchung stating that the matters of the church relating to discipline and doctrines were the prerogative of the Church and not the government. The missionaries had alleged that the teachings of the Bible and the established customs of the Ao churches had been ignored and the village ‘elders’ had dictated upon the church. The government had authorized the Gaoburas of the village to arbitrate the case of the village church and pass their judgment. The missionaries were dismayed at this intrusion made by the colonial officials.<sup>134</sup> However, gradually it became clear that the government had prevailed over the missionaries and so it continued to pass orders and judgments relating to matters of the church.

Evidently the first ‘Baptist Christian Association’ which was a conference of Christians across regions was organized in 1897. Since then, local churches had been encouraged to host such Christian conferences.<sup>135</sup> As a matter of fact, it had become a contentious issue between the Christians and the ‘non-Christians’ in some villages. Therefore, a letter had been dispatched from the Deputy Commissioner, Naga Hills, C. R. Pawsey to B. I. Anderson of Impur mission, regarding permission to hold annual Christian Association meetings in villages. It was made clear to the mission that it should ascertain if the host village was a Christian village, taking into consideration the case of Saki, a Lotha village, which was largely a non-Christian village.<sup>136</sup>

Gradually, through a letter from Pawsey to Anderson in 1940, we could see how the government began to regulate Christian missionary activities, which perhaps had been rarely done before. In this document, some of the startling issues between the church and the government come to light. C. R. Pawsey, wrote this letter to Anderson on 26.4.1940 and set the records straight regarding certain things.

---

<sup>134</sup> Ibid

<sup>135</sup> 125 Years, Jubilee Reports of Baptist Work in North East India, p. 45

<sup>136</sup> Government of Nagaland, Private Department (ABAM), (correspondence letters with government), 1912-41 (Letter dated 5<sup>th</sup> Nov, 1941, Kohima)

According to him, the Ao pastors should not be sent to the Sangtam villages and that Sangtam church should be administered by the Sangtams. Evidently, even the government had restricted local converts and evangelists to go across the Dikhu river to preach the gospel as it was outside the colonial territory.<sup>137</sup> Secondly, Pawsey made it clear by saying that "...I hope you will make it quite clear to them that abstained from alcohol is not essential part of Christianity."<sup>138</sup> He cited the example of the Semas by saying that they had become weak after conversion to Christianity. They became incapable of carrying loads, could not do half the work in the fields like before.<sup>139</sup> This allegation made by Pawsey suggests that with cultural change, the expression of masculinity was also changing. Lastly, he passed a standing order that

*"No pastor or teacher employed by an Ao church will be made a member of any 'line committee' (tribal committee/council) or any similar committee which may be formed to carry out work for the good of the general public".<sup>140</sup>*

It may be argued that the government became critical about the missionary activities by the mid twentieth century. However, going by the verdicts passed over disputes and conflicts between the Christians and non-Christians, it apparently appears that the colonial laws had leanings to customary practices. Rev. F. W. Harding had written in 1939 that the local converts were like 'thorns in the flesh' to the local administration.<sup>141</sup> This is intriguing because it suggests larger questions about missionary enterprise as the arm of the raj.

---

<sup>137</sup> 125 Years, Jubilee Reports of Baptist Work in North East India, p 39

<sup>138</sup> Government of Nagaland, File no 4, Private (ABAM), special paper on Church activity, 1871, 1896, 1940, p. 1

<sup>139</sup> Ibid

<sup>140</sup> Ibid

<sup>141</sup> Indigenous Christianity in Assam, Assam Christian Council Guwahati 1939 by Rev. F W Harding BA DD, Page 6-10 (Nehru Museum and Lib-Conference on the Assam Mission) microfilms

Evidently there had been some cultural grey areas that resulted out of the interaction between traditional practices and Christianity. A few instances from the Ao churches were recorded by the missionaries. In the first instance, a young couple from the same clan had a love child but according to the indigenous traditions of the village, marriage between a man and a woman from the same clan was forbidden as part of clan exogamic practice.<sup>142</sup> This case had landed the village church in a serious dilemma as to how it should respond according to the scriptural teachings. There was another instance which was related to the separation of a married couple. The husband was growing old and needed care but according to the new Christian tradition, if the divorcee wife was still alive and not married to someone else, the husband could not marry again. The old man had approached the church to make his case exceptional and allow him take a wife. However, the church had no compromises on this principle.<sup>143</sup> Although, there were no such restrictions in the animistic traditions, the old man could not go against the church because he wanted to die as a Christian.<sup>144</sup> In another case, a person had divorced three wives prior to his appeal to convert to Christianity.<sup>145</sup> The dilemma was once again raised as to what the scriptures say about such a person? These are some of the inherent dialectics that had been generated in the process of internalization of 'Christian cultural practices' into the domains of the village cultures. The missionaries had lamented at the poor understanding of the Christian theology by the local converts, for which they admitted poor instruction on the scriptures. This dialectics also in a way indicate as to how local systems had been forced to adapt into the 'Christian culture'.

Rev. F. W. Harding had admitted that the Christians of Assam had occasionally backslided while trying to stand up between the tribal laws and

---

<sup>142</sup> Assam – Historical – Mission Education Policy and Program in Assam, (Microfilm) 712.2-3, p. 20-21

<sup>143</sup> Ibid

<sup>144</sup> Ibid

<sup>145</sup> Ibid, p. 24

customs and their Christian faith. He continued by acknowledging that the missionaries had quite often thrown the baby with the bath water while dealing with these indigenous laws and practices.<sup>146</sup> At the same time, he also pointed out that the colonial administrators had been shrewd enough to protect both the new and the old. Harding had also significantly pointed out that the colonial conquest and missionary occupation had disturbed the social and economic equilibrium as ideas and ideals got altered and therefore it was not easy for the tribe to maintain its *status quo*.<sup>147</sup> But more than that, it did disturb the socio-economic systems, the alterations that had been inflicted on the local cultures created massive contentions. Rev. Harding has also made an observation about the indigenous justice system by ascribing violence to it.<sup>148</sup> Therefore according to him, hill tribes of Assam were “feeling the urge of new situations...which is less crude than ancient tribal law provides”.<sup>149</sup> He continues to describe these laws as ‘out-worth’ and ‘ineffective’ which of course were more or less colonial in nature. He had pointed out that “indigenous Christianity often finds itself in tension with its environment”.<sup>150</sup> According to him, these tensions had been sparked between the Christians and non-Christians over the practice of local customs. As discussed earlier, the Christian converts had been somehow jeopardized between the new faith and old beliefs. So, going by the way these converts had been disciplined, even the indulgence in traditional practices had been reciprocated with exclusion from the church membership.<sup>151</sup> Although he admitted that some traditional practices might not necessarily violate the sanctity of Christian faith, it is possible that there had been larger issues that the missionaries wanted to address. Yet, the emotional, psychological and mental torments that these converts had undergone as a result of

---

<sup>146</sup> Indigenous Christianity in Assam, Assam Christian Council Guwahati 1939 by Rev. F W Harding BA DD, Page 6-10 (Nehru Museum and Lib-Conference on the Assam Mission) microfilms

<sup>147</sup> Ibid

<sup>148</sup> Ibid

<sup>149</sup> Ibid

<sup>150</sup> Ibid

<sup>151</sup> Ibid



these cultural and religious obligations imply not only a complex process of cultural conditioning but also the way cultural change was getting internalized.

Another peculiar yet significant cultural dialectic emerged out of cultural prejudices and conflicts. It was reported that beginning from the year 1900, persecutions against Christian converts became widespread. Many of them had to flee from their villages and settle elsewhere, starting with the formation of Molungyimsen, the first Christian village founded by E. W. Clark.<sup>152</sup> In one of such cases, people grew hostile towards “six families of Tamlu (who) accepted Christianity in 1933. They were not allowed to build a church in Tamlu. They were often threatened with expulsion from the village.”<sup>153</sup> Coming back to the persecutions of minorities in the villages, a new cultural phenomenon had been apparent. In the sense that, whenever, there were persecutions of Christians, the processes of conversions become evidently even more intense. Take the example of Khensa village in the Naga Hills in 1910, when the converts were building a church, people broke in and ordered the teacher to leave the village and warned not to sing hymns and to stop praying.<sup>154</sup> However, Longwell wrote that in spite of these persecutions, the Christians had shown unusual zeal and evidently the number of membership had increased. Longwell stated that “never before did the mission field shown greater promise.”<sup>155</sup> Decades later, when India attained independence, it was reported that the Government of India had suspected the foreign missionaries of patronizing the Naga National Movement. As a result, missionaries were ordered to leave India. Subsequently, similar allegations had been put against the Naga Christian leaders and many of them had been allegedly killed.<sup>156</sup> As the Naga political movement became more intense around the third quarter of the twentieth century, almost all the Naga villages had been burnt to ashes, some villages

---

<sup>152</sup> 125 Years, Jubilee Reports of Baptist Work in North East India, p 45

<sup>153</sup> Ibid, p 39

<sup>154</sup> Ninety Sixth Annual Report of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Chicago, Illinois 1910, p. 77

<sup>155</sup> Ibid

<sup>156</sup> 125 Years, Jubilee Reports of Baptist Work in North East India, p 46

evidently had been burnt more than once.<sup>157</sup> As a result, there had been massive displacement of people, outbreak of epidemics, livelihoods systems disturbed to extremes, widespread violation of human rights, etc. Nevertheless, it has been reported that Christianity had become intensified among the people around this time.<sup>158</sup> These are intriguing facts as to the way aggression and cultural tensions both internally and externally create diverging and converging cultural subtleties.

Such experiences had most likely produced the sense of conviction in the converts which perhaps had been the central to the departure from their own culture. The cultural change that had been produced out of this intricate dialectic probably had been part of the master plan of the missionaries. Harding, in a way was a more critical American missionary of his time. He continued to suggest that Christianity had come not to destroy the old, abolish racial and tribal law and custom but to enrich these heritages.<sup>159</sup> And he argued that “what was good in the local cultures, Christianity should try to keep it and perfect what had been destructive to the spiritual, physical and intellectual life of the community.”<sup>160</sup> Further, he argued that conversion need not change the inherent impulses and instincts but concluded by recapitulating the idea that it should change the imperfect laws.<sup>161</sup> Nevertheless, there had been a stark difference on what he had argued about the indigenous Christianity and the actual nature of evangelism in the Naga Hills in particular and Assam mission in general. In fact, the Christian missionaries in general had the presumption that the local systems were altogether imperfect and therefore needed better cultural and religious systems to improve it. Apparently, such ideas had been integral to the missionary consciousness right from the beginning. It had been so because, the Christian missionaries in the first place had identified this cultural and

---

<sup>157</sup> Besides many other villages, a village known as Porba in Phek District was burnt for fourteen times.<http://nagas.sytes.net/~kaka/articles/art011.html>

<sup>158</sup> 125 Years, Jubilee Reports of Baptist Work in North East India, p 47

<sup>159</sup> Indigenous Christianity in Assam, Assam Christian Council Guwahati 1939 by Rev. F W Harding BA DD, Page 6-10 (Nehru Museum and Lib-Conference on the Assam Mission) microfilms

<sup>160</sup> Ibid

<sup>161</sup> Ibid

religious difference and evangelism was reciprocated to this difference. Cultural change in this sense had been a deliberate attempt and effort on the part of the American missionaries. Likewise, their engagement with the locals and the process of proselytization may be understood as the missionary disposition of creating that cultural 'edge' to fill the imperfect gap.

The conversions and missionary advances were also partly psychological and emotional which by and large had been reverberated into the cultural practices. One of the missionaries had admitted to this by saying that he had used 'applied psychology' in solving a case of a bitter feud between two individuals. He had asked one of them to seek forgiveness being a good Christian and in so doing the other reportedly reciprocated in tears.<sup>162</sup> In another incident, it was reported that a case of misunderstanding had been settled and it was closed with a prayer and a hymn.<sup>163</sup> These instances intrigue questions about the emotional and psychological strategies that had been used in the process of conversion primarily and changing the characters of individuals subsequently.

### **3.6 Understanding Cultural Difference**

As been discussed above, understanding cultural difference and the way disparate cultural systems had emanated certain sense of cultural politics during the course of interactions is significant to locating cultural discontinuities. The interference of external cultural elements and forces into the local cultural domains had consequentially altered the state of cultural equilibrium. As a result, the breaks and continuities that had resulted out of these exchanges had produced both subversive and discursive cultural formations. These new experiences had left the local village cultures in a perpetual state of cultural chaos. The American Baptist

---

<sup>162</sup> Assam – Historical – Mission Education Policy and Program in Assam, (Microfilm) 712.2-3, p. 25

<sup>163</sup> Ibid

missionaries had exceptionally, and to a certain extent the colonial administration, benefitted from this cultural frenzy. But as for the local villagers, the idea of a village political, and cultural entity and identity and its religious systems and values had been forfeited progressively each passing day through a perpetual state of conflicts amongst the locals had permanently destabilized these societies. However, the appropriation of cultural dividends by creating a socio-cultural tensions by the foreigners may be considered as purely a colonial disposition and could be termed as unfortunate. Nevertheless, the disruption of local cultural systems had contrasted the cultural difference more than ever. This sense of difference had not only created subversive tendencies but also generated some sort of congenial sense in the form of reverential attitude to western cultures.

To mention one of the cases with strong resistance to colonial and missionary cultural advances had been the case of Zapami village (Formerly Eastern Angami and currently a Chakhesang village) which had reportedly resisted Christianity till 1958.<sup>164</sup> This case is interesting because, in the first place the village is located relatively close to the American Baptist mission station in Kohima and importantly, most of the immediate neighboring villages had embraced Christianity more than quarter of a century ahead. One of the factors over such strong resistance had been the socio-cultural and economic capital of the village. The village had been referred to as ‘Henima’ in colonial records and by some neighboring villages which translates as ‘economically affluent’.<sup>165</sup> Therefore, because of the economic wellbeing, there had been regular instances of ‘feast of merit’ hosted by the villagers basically for three cognate villages known as *kuzhanethoketsü* which includes Leshemi, Lasumi and Zapami. This feasts contributed to the socio-cultural capital within the village.<sup>166</sup> According to the Heritage of Zapami Village, a book published by the village, it mentions that the number of house horns (*kechike*) which had been earned through ‘feast of merit’,

---

<sup>164</sup> The Heritage of Zapami Village, published by the Village council, May, 2017

<sup>165</sup> Ibid

<sup>166</sup> Ibid

justify such claims.<sup>167</sup> Therefore, the missionaries and its local agencies could not penetrate the robust socio-cultural state. Eventually, both Christianity and education had been mediated by the local villagers after 1958.<sup>168</sup> But for some other villages, the process of cultural interaction was rather quick. As Rev. Clark had reported, the people of the Ao tribe, most probably in and around Mokokchung had been ‘amenable’ to the colonial English rule when it was brought under regular administration in April 1887. According to him, peace and quietness reigned in place of feuds and wars.<sup>169</sup> To make a basic comparison between the two instances, there had been a stark contrast in the way the culture brought about by colonialism and Christianity had been adapted into the local cultures.

Nevertheless, there were subtle indigenous cultural dynamics that operated to determine socio-cultural and political outcomes. On the morning of 18<sup>th</sup> November, 1901, when the Nagas met Lord George Nathaniel Curzon, the Viceroy of British India at Imphal,<sup>170</sup> they were paraded before him at the residency grounds. “His excellency expressed himself much pleased with them” the Deputy Commissioner reported. Further, it was recorded that the Nagas were immensely gratified by the interest the head of British colonial India had shown in them.<sup>171</sup> It has been apparent enough that the Naga villagers of that time were respectful of those who regarded them well. Since, the society came from an oral background, ‘spoken words’ were taken very sacredly. Prior to the colonial and missionary encounters, the society was totally bound by oral pronouncements. For instance, treaties, friendships, oaths, etc., had been conducted and observed with “spoken words”. Such pronouncements were held sacred. This sacredness had sustained the virtue of ‘trust’. Likewise, Lt. W.M. Kennedy, officiating Deputy Commissioner of

---

<sup>167</sup> Ibid

<sup>168</sup> Ibid

<sup>169</sup> The Assam Mission of the American Baptist Missionary Union- Triennial Conference 1889, p. 40

<sup>170</sup> <http://www.thesangaiexpress.com/lord-curzons-visit-manipur/>

<sup>171</sup> File No 445, Tour Diary of Lt W M Kennedy, ISC, officiating DC, Naga Hills for July 1900, (November, 1901), p. 13

the Naga Hills had recorded in 1900 that Khonoma had attacked a Kacha Naga village known as Tapama sometime in the late nineteenth century. However, the attacked village had laid a trap and two warriors got stuck inside the village, one of whom was known as Wu-utso. The other warriors panicked and fled. “Spears began to fly” mentions the report. Soon one of them had lost heart and escaped giving his shield to Wu-usto. However, it was considered “disgraceful” and a taboo to leave a shield with the enemy. So he could not abandon either of the shields but with two he could not open the door to escape. He however shouted abuse to the rest of his party for being cowards. After which, it was recorded that one of them returned to open the door for him. Eventually, the Khonoma warriors had rallied and attacked again razing the village to the ground.<sup>172</sup> In oral societies, “spoken words” were held with high sanctity. Therefore, it was attached with a strong sense of ‘disgrace’ and ‘shame’ if somebody would violate it. These cultural attributes are significant nuances to locate the way shifts had taken place. In this sense, trust had been a significant tool for indigenous justice system, political ties, trade and communication networks, etc. Any sort of violation was forbidden and in any case it was violated, it was disgraceful and generally responded with vengeance. Here, we could see that the Nagas were amazed at the kind gesture and warmth of the Viceroy and as a result it was reported that the Nagas had become better subjects than before. In a way, this experience had reaffirmed the allegiance to the colonial rule. This instance also proves how certain interactions could bring about difference between disparate cultures and consequently develop reverential attitude, and perhaps even cultural acquaintances. This may be further justified through one of the instances cited in the tour diary of A. W. Davis in 1891. He had commented about Mesolojuma (Mesulum) which was 7 miles from Tekhubama (Pfutseromi) that, “the people were a bit shy, as they have not been visited for some years by a ‘Sahib’”.<sup>173</sup>

---

<sup>172</sup> Ibid, p. 15

<sup>173</sup> File no 433, 1891-97, (1891) Tour Diary of A W Davis, Esq ICS, Deputy Commissioner, Naga Hills, p. 13

On the contrary, it may be noted that such had not been the case in the interaction with the Assamese language and its culture. On 5<sup>th</sup> August 1900, some of the officials had inspected the Themokidima *pathsala* where nine boys were present. The report stated that four of them could read Assamese fluently but further stated that ‘as usual they don’t understand the meaning of the words’.<sup>174</sup> Similarly, in October 1901, Kennedy, the Deputy Commissioner had inspected the *pathsala* at Khonoma. There were 20 boys on the roll out of which 16 were present. It had been recorded in the tour diary that Mr. Arbuthnott had been pleased with the Assamese reading of the pupils, at the same time disclosed that ‘they do not understand the meaning of the words as well’.<sup>175</sup> The government run schools were mostly known as *pathsalas* in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Evidently, most of these *pathsalas* had been taught in Assamese, except a few in Bengali. However, it had been generally recorded by the administrators that the students did not understand what they had been taught. These historical accounts intrigue larger questions of cultural difference and also question the success of the colonial hegemonic schemes and about the whole process of cultural interiorization. The way cultures had been synced together, taking the example of English in juxtaposition with Assamese and Bengali mediums. This may be understood from the way the locals had reciprocated to instructions and teachings in Assamese and sporadic cases in Bengali. Hence, it also explains the way diverse cultures interact with each other which apparently had resulted in convergences and divergences too.

Looking from another perspective is also crucial to locate this cultural phenomenon. Tezenlo Thong has made an interesting observation about the nexus between medicine, proselytization and education, which he calls it a ‘triploid’<sup>176</sup> to have a good view of how medicine was such a powerful force in influencing the

---

<sup>174</sup> File No 445, Tour Diary of Lt W M Kennedy, ISC, officiating Deputy Commissioner, Naga Hills for July 1900, p. 3

<sup>175</sup> Ibid, p. 10

<sup>176</sup> Thong “Thy Kingdom Come”, 2010

local populace.<sup>177</sup> To the locals, epidemics were thought to be work of the spirits. As a result, when medicine could heal the diseases, the people were awe struck. According to Bronson, the local people were surprised when his daughter who was gravely sick recovered, for the villagers thought that sickness was the result of evil spirits being angry with his family and they insisted on them to offer sacrifices to the gods. He refused and later said that, “the Nagas appear astonished at the recovery saying that I am not a man, but God”<sup>178</sup> Therefore, the association of the supernatural with medicine and practice had ushered in the ‘politics of reverence’ from the very beginning. Looking at the missionary works of Rev. Rivenburg who was stationed at Kohima, the necessity of medical knowledge and practice became very central. Thus, he went back to the US and acquired a medical degree and returned. He has been one of the most influential missionaries in the Kohima area. Sources suggest that he went from village to village to treat sick people. The missionaries ascribed the power of healing through medicines to God. In this way modern medicine was used as a tool to draw the imagination of the local villagers into a Christian frame.<sup>179</sup> Therefore, it was a strategic way of meeting their ends. Moreover, according to Bronson, many chiefs had consulted him and had been cured of diseases. This may be an interesting way of looking at the process of conversions. In a way, these missionary agencies had created a sort of aura of modernity around Christianity, which may be one of the important factors of cultural change.

Considering the manner in which the idea of cultural difference had brought about discontinuities primarily points to the socio-cultural and economic backgrounds of the local cultures. Some villages evidently had been more susceptible to new adaptations and others had resisted throughout the colonial and missionary occupation as mentioned above. James C Scott’s idea that nature of occupation was a political statement may be cited here. The colonial occupation

---

<sup>177</sup> Refer Miles Bronson’s Journal.

<sup>178</sup> Government of Nagaland, Private department (ABAM), File no 2, 1840, p. 5

<sup>179</sup> Clark, *A Corner in India*, p. 119; Rivenburg, *The Way to Health in Angami Naga*, 1904



began with Samaguting, shifted to Wokha and eventually settled at Kohima since 1878. These occupations had been more or less a forced occupation as the villages around Kohima had been hostile to foreign intrusion. The Anglo-Naga war which took place between the allied villages of Khonoma and the British forces took place in 1879. After the war, the hostility had been largely subdued but confrontations continued. However, looking at Mokokchung area, which was occupied by colonial government in 1887 on the request of missionaries for protection, had an altogether different experience. Rev. Clark had described the people of Mokokchung areas as ‘amenable’ to colonial occupation. These comparative experiences bring out a sharp contrast to the way colonial advances had been reciprocated. However, going by traditional experiences, the people living in around Kohima, known as ‘Angamis’ then, now split into Chakhesang and Angami tribes respectively, had been practicing terrace cultivations and whereas the people of Mokokchung practice shifting or jhum cultivation. Therefore, as James C. Scott has pointed out, the nature of cultivation in a way had evidently determined reciprocation to colonial advances.<sup>180</sup> The people who cultivate terrace fields seem to resist political occupation and resist change. Likewise, the case of Zapami village, situated in the midst of lush green terrace fields and its cultural resistance is itself a political as well as cultural statement. Therefore, it may be argued that the cultural systems largely determine the way local cultures had responded to western colonial and Christian advances. Interestingly, the missionaries and colonial officials had in a way understood these cultural subtleties and strategized their plans accordingly.

### **3.7 From Cultural Difference to Cultural Mimicry**

Rev. F. W. Harding stated that the indigenous churches had too ‘slavishly’ copied the western models of church architecture. He expressed how painful it

---

<sup>180</sup>James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*, Yale University Press, 2010

would have been to ‘imitate’! He had penned down a short poem to express his thought.

*“This is the church  
And this is the steeple  
Here is the parson  
And here are the people  
Runs the old jingle.”*

He continued by stating that ‘the indigenous church is carrying today too much impediments brought in from the west’.<sup>181</sup> Perhaps, as an advocate of indigenizing Christianity, he was lamenting that replication of western cultural traditions through Christianity. However, a new cultural mimicry had been generated by the locals itself, in the sense that, the Christian converts who had entered in the cultural domain of the Evangelicals and the colonizers had adapted foreign cultural practices which had been looked at by the non-Christians to be attractive cultural symbols. Geertz argues that individual culture patterns or cultural models as systems of symbols dwell in an inter-subjective space. The interaction between these models in the form of social, organic, psychological or physical systems, happens through processes like ‘paralleling’, ‘simulating’ or ‘imitating’.<sup>182</sup> This interaction of models provide a robust methodological frame to study and understand cultural adaptations and change, which all the more is necessary in religious discourse. An instance has been cited earlier about how Christian converts looked better in their appearances and keep their houses tidy, etc. Such changes in the indigenous/local spheres influence the aesthetics and emotional senses of their fellow villagers. In this way, certain forms of ‘localized mimicry’ had emerged and as a result cultural replications had bourgeoned the

---

<sup>181</sup> Indigenous Christianity in Assam, Assam Christian Council Guwahati 1939 by Rev. F W Harding BA DD, Page 6-10 (Nehru Museum and Lib-Conference on the Assam Mission) microfilms

<sup>182</sup> K. Craik, *The Nature of Explanation* (Cambridge, 1 952) cited in Clifford Geertz, *Religion as a cultural system,, The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, New York, 1973, p. 93

process of cultural turnover. Therefore, such subtle nuances bring out the nature of how intricate conversions to Christianity and cultural change had been entwined. In this sense, not every case of cultural change had been brought about by Christianity or missionaries *per se* but it had (re) produced other localized agencies which had been more or less equally significant.

The aesthetic taste of the people from the North east largely varies from other communities. Basing on that, no doubt the cultural change took place with interaction, but that could have been brought about by a strong aesthetic appeal to the dominant cultural traditions. In 1900, the Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills took an entourage of Nagas to meet the Viceroy at Manipur. Evidently, Kennedy had recorded that the Semas in particular had been initially dismayed at the length of the journey as they had to walk. But, according to him, they soon were amazed by the stone rest-houses and bridges along the way, which according to them could be built and erected only by a god.<sup>183</sup> From this report, it could be observed how the sense of awe for the British and for the west had altered the consciousness of the locals.

Like it has been argued earlier, the new material culture brought about a sense of awe in the sight of the villagers which was crucial in the derivation of a certain sense of submissiveness, which was in many ways manifested through undue reverence put up for the foreigners. This sense of aesthetic appeal for the west had been reciprocated even in the construction of church buildings as discussed above. Therefore, the aesthetic appeal had become a cultural dynamic in itself which in many ways had transformed the patterns of cultural consumption. Such inherent cultural dispositions make cultural mimicry possible.

Similarly, according to an instance, Rev. Manley while commenting on the Bengali educated class, stated that the *Babu* delights to cultivate the *Saheb's*

---

<sup>183</sup> File No 445, Tour Diary of Lt W M Kennedy, ISC, Officiating DC, Naga Hills for July 1900, (Nov, 1901), p. 13

company.<sup>184</sup> Similarly, on one occasion, Lt. W. M. Kennedy had been invited to join the observance of *genna* in a particular village and he responded positively stating that it was an interesting sight, moreover, the villagers had been ‘gratified if their *sahibs* attend’.<sup>185</sup> Even here, there have been visible changes taking place. In the olden times, like it has been mentioned above, during the observance of rituals like *genna* for instance, outsiders were not allowed to either visit or pass through the village. It was a matter of strict taboo. But going by this instance, apparently by 1900, the culture was beginning to take the performative behavior. Locals would invite the British *sahibs* and perform for them. This was in a way legitimizing colonial dominance. It may be also contended that the idea of cultural exoticism had crept in since this time. Therefore, the transition of culture as a way of life to that of performance may be considered a crucial break in the system of culture itself. The location of this break is significant because, the locals by then were gradually beginning to look at their own culture through the lens of the colonizers and missionaries. Therefore, they were beginning to asphyxiate their own cultures. This may be considered an epic instance of the progression of cultural mimicry towards the west and Christianity. It has been recorded in the Missionary review of 1908 that the things that were western had become a certain sort of vogue among the locals.<sup>186</sup> These instances affirm the subtle cultural breaks that were gradually taking place and which was becoming a new culture in itself. Unfortunately, most the locals had been blinded from this cultural reality and thus cultural mimicry in this way had attained popular trend. Subsequently, it may be argued that western popular culture had been established.

Another elusive area through which the reverential culture had been institutionalized had been the schools. Baker had attributed this reverential disposition to the Indians in general by stating that it was an Indian trait to respect

---

<sup>184</sup> Ibid p. 2

<sup>185</sup> Ibid

<sup>186</sup> The American Baptist Missionary Review, January, 1908, p. 240

the teachers, which gives the teacher a spiritual influence over the people.<sup>187</sup> But probably the colonizers too had been blinded to their own discursive strategies. They would generally think that education had been always and in all situations a 'public good'. No doubt it had been a public good but the cultural, religious and political undercurrents that had primarily driven these endeavors must be understood in its entirety. By and large education had been used as bait for Christian evangelism and colonial administration in these hills. The training of teachers and pastors, which the early missionary activities had been primarily devoted, was crucial to the emergence of class. The creation of this class had been basically the creation of hierarchy. Therefore, the creation of this hierarchy in the social, cultural and economic systems had generated a system of dependency. This dependency may be explained as a cultural politics of relegation of local cultures to the levels of being 'uncivilized' and 'inferior' and elevation of alien cultures as 'civilized' and 'superior' cultures. Hence, locals had been indoctrinated to believe such manufactured cultural systems as true. The proponents of this idea of a lopsided culture succeeded because cultural elements had always been supplemented with the Christian gospel. As a result, the teachers who had been trained were largely from missionary training schools. It was highly possible that the early teachers would replicate exactly what had been taught as a matter of limited knowledge. As a matter of fact, education had been evangelized. Therefore, the evangelical fervor in the teachers and education had to a large extent produced the excessive reverence for the teachers by locals. Subsequently, the teachers and pastors had become the new pillars of authority in the Naga villages to articulate a new hybrid culture.

---

<sup>187</sup> Ibid, p. 114

### 3.8 Naga Articulation of a Composite Hybrid Identity: 1940s

*“O Impur! You alone are the heart of the Ao land;  
 You are the greatest among all the 30 villages of the Aos!  
 Beginning from the time of the Elder Clark sab,  
 Where with the holy kingdom of God  
 The Ao religion-authority, songs and sayings  
 And a generation of learners/scholars  
 All new springs gush, and spread forth,  
 Of the new generation the second Lungtrok you are.”<sup>188</sup>*

The poem which was written by I. Ben Wati in 1942 as a eulogy to the American missionaries and its mission headquarters Impur, define the reconfigured new Naga hybrid identity through a new language of development and modernity in a Christian frame. This is a composite hybrid voice which addresses a new Christian self-location, for it hailed the missionary headquarters in Impur, as “the heart of the Ao land”. It also marked the phase of the first Western missionary—“Elder clerk sab” - as the new calendar which signified the arrival of civilization and the “holy kingdom of God”. The new dynamics had created a “generation of learners, scholars”, which in one sharp phrase conflated both the acquisition of literacy and the new-found confidence of scholastic excellence. The poet imbues this moment with great and unstoppable energy, which in turn produced new springs. These new springs had tremendous dynamism because they “gush[ed]” and they “spread” across the Ao community. This new understanding of inheriting the light of “academia”, surely meaning a combination of literacy and true religiosity,

---

<sup>188</sup> This poem was written in 1942 by I Ben Wati who grew up in the American Baptist Missionary Station. Wati, ‘*Impur Chanu*’, p. 4-5

that had rescued the Aos from “darkness”, spelt out clearly an internalization of the values that colonialism had brought to the Naga Hills.<sup>189</sup> It is significant that this early voice was an Ao voice, one of the first communities that had been exposed to the colonial forces of change.

We now turn to see how other Naga voices took up this articulation of a hybrid identity which exulted in its new cultural location.

---

<sup>189</sup> Wati, *‘Impur Chanu’*, p. 4-5

## Chapter IV

### The Complex Web of Interactions and Outcomes

#### 4.1 Institutionalizing Cultural Change

The last chapter had examined the project of formalizing key pedagogic texts across knowledge domains, elementary language skills including understanding and communicating various dialects of different Naga communities in the Roman script, on basic numerical proficiency (arithmetic) and of course, in the Bible as a central text. The schools have become the new touchpoints of this cultural imperialism. In fact, these institutions had been producing what Pierre Bourdieu had termed as ‘cultural goods’.<sup>1</sup> Looking at the missionary engagements in particular, the children who had attended schools had graduated to become teachers and local evangelists. There is therefore, a direct co-relation between basic education or basic literacy in the beginning and a more advanced education<sup>2</sup> gradually; and the new profession in which these local children had been introduced into, is itself a cultural question. Bourdieu stated that the academic qualification is a certificate of cultural competence which bestows its recipients with what he calls “a conventional, constant, legally guaranteed value” in terms of culture to produce certain forms of cultural capital.<sup>3</sup> Bourdieu’s conception of cultural capital refers to the distinctive forms of knowledge and ability that students acquire – whether at home, at school, or in relation between the two – from their training in the cultural

---

<sup>1</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. xviii

<sup>2</sup> Perrine had made it clear that by advanced studies, he meant that the school was designed to produce – trained teachers and preachers. See Eight Session of the American Baptist Conference, held at Gauhati, December 24, 1904 to January 1, 1905, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, 1905, p 60

<sup>3</sup> Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital”, p. 8



disciplines.<sup>4</sup> Rev. Baker illustrates this new cultural experience by stating that the teacher becomes a channel of communication for the village to a world outside,<sup>5</sup> to which he was alluding to the modern western world. He described the amusement of the villagers of how their children had progressed through conversion to Christianity to a position worthy of ‘government inspection’ in schools.<sup>6</sup> This reverence for Christianity and missionaries boldly manifested during occasions when the American missionaries would visit the schools. It was described that the entire village often combined to decorate the school with colored papers, white washing the buildings and people would come out to catch a glimpse of the missionary.<sup>7</sup> He further stated that,

*“As these parents hear their children sing the new songs and recite verses from the great Book, and read and cipher, their souls are filled with pride and they are delighted at any favorable comment.”*<sup>8</sup>

In a rare experience, Mr. Boggs was designated to undertake the program of theological education in the North-East by the American Baptist Missionary Union in 1905. It was reported that he settled in Jorhat and started a bible school there. Soon, Boggs discovered that the academic background of students was inadequate to receive proper theological instruction. To remedy the situation, he introduced a Middle English School to capacitate the aspiring theological students. However, by 1909 both the schools disintegrated.<sup>9</sup> A couple of years before this failure, Rev. W. F. Dowd wrote in an Educational Report in 1907 suggesting that,

*“We (the missionaries) must dig deep and lay a sure and firm foundation in mental and moral training, or we shall largely miss the very purpose for*

---

<sup>4</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. xviii

<sup>5</sup> The American Baptist Missionary Review, January, 1908, p 114

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> 125 Years, Jubilee Reports of Baptist Work in North East India, p 16

*which the Bible school is established.”<sup>10</sup> What was required, he said was “not a theological education only, but for those who are to be preachers, a practical, sound theological education after a good course of thorough discipline in the ordinary subjects of a high school and college.”<sup>11</sup>*

This was an alternative model offered by Dowd, perhaps a more broader and functional model giving importance to contextual specifics. However, Boggs’ deterministic approach could not succeed.

In fact, it took a while for the missionaries to establish its institutions and administrators to prioritize its interest towards education in these hills. As for the missionaries, their dependency on locals to sustain their ventures was initially heavy. As a result, their activities were largely calculative and cautious. But as the popular craze for the missionary education gradually started to expand, a certain degree of mutuality in relationship between the missionaries and the locals on one hand and even with the Colonial government on the other balanced out. This enabled the missionaries to exert command over the locals. As a case in point, the students, particularly at Impur Mission School were required to follow a certain standard of discipline and efficiency by about 1910, failing which, the pupils were not allowed to remain in the schools. Basically, this exercise had two fold purposes: Firstly, to reduce overcrowded students and secondly, to raise the standard of education,<sup>12</sup> which became necessary. This evidence indicated a visible shift in the behavior of students from being forced to attend schools by officials and missionaries. Nevertheless, this also suggests how education system became institutionalized by the first decade of twentieth century.

---

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p 17

<sup>11</sup> Ibid; However, vernacular trainings were organized to provide trainings for Pastors and evangelists who couldn’t pursue higher theological trainings. Interestingly, during the first quarter of second half of the twentieth century 13 vernacular bible schools had been overseen by the Theological Committee of CBCNEI. See Ibid p. 19

<sup>12</sup> Assam Baptist Missionary Union, Report of the Tenth Biennial Session, Gauhati, January 8-17, 1910, p. 86

The missionaries had openly expressed that one of the goals of missionary education from the beginning had been to train leaders rather than produce scholars.<sup>13</sup> So the schools were designed to provide ‘nursery-ground’ for actual and potential leaders.<sup>14</sup> This evidence suggests that the early literates were groomed to be more than mere literates. These students were trained to be ‘leaders’, and this leadership orientation of missionary education made the cultural and religious project all the more visible. Even the definition of the word ‘leader’ implies a person who leads or commands a group, organization, or country.<sup>15</sup> From the missionizing point of view, these so called ‘leaders’ were sent out to villages basically as local agents to teach, preach and convert, and of course train new leaders. The jubilee report of CBCNEI (Council of Baptist Churches in Northeast India), mentions former students of missionary schools evangelizing in unexpected places like the NEFA area, where Christian mission work was prohibited by the colonial government. This missionary construction of ‘literate leadership’ emerged as a robust local agency to aggressively take on traditional networks and establish Christian agencies, to redefine the indigenous idea of leadership.

It was also reported that Bible school graduates were exceedingly few and majority of the pastors had education equivalent to eight standard in America.<sup>16</sup> But as discussed above, the missionaries had mechanized a leadership agency through the literate and educated leaders. These literate leaders were trained, taught and conditioned in educational institutions on a totally new literary knowledge system. Looking at the core ambition of missionaries from foreign soil, the principal purpose of education was to establish ‘self-supporting’, ‘self-governing’ and ‘self-propagating’ churches.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, the shift from the leadership based on kinship to a leadership based on literacy and education may be considered a phenomenal

---

<sup>13</sup> 125 Years, Jubilee Reports of Baptist Work in North East India, p 27

<sup>14</sup> Ibid

<sup>15</sup> <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/leader>

<sup>16</sup> Assam – Historical – Mission Education Policy and Program in Assam, (Microfilm) 712.2-3, p. 3

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 2

shift. This may be regarded as the pinnacle of literate modernity in the Naga Hills. The strategy of literate leadership in many ways created a multiple effects at the grass root levels.

Similarly, an instance has been cited about a girl who was ‘quite undisciplined’ and yet turned over a new leaf after attending school that when she returned home at the end of the year, her pastor commented that “all could not believe that such a great change could take place in the life of that girl”.<sup>18</sup> The pastor describes that it was an inherent change as her attitude transformed after ‘knowing the love of Christ’.<sup>19</sup> It may be argued that the role of formal education and training were fundamental in the formation of new character traits and behavioral patterns. In another case, one Hindu girl from Nowgong wrote to a friend stating that

*“I wish you could come here instead of going to college. You would learn that you don’t know many things even after passing matric. They teach us everything from English and other subjects to cooking and being good hostesses.”*<sup>20</sup>

In fact the design of missionary education may be best described in one of the reports. It states, “With the well-rounded program, the girls grow mentally, spiritually, physically and socially.”<sup>21</sup> In this way, schools as missionary institutions had been successful in providing a window to the western cultures and values, not forgetting the way mission education had introduced literates to new material avenues. This argument can be further instantiated through the statements of one of the former students, working in an Agricultural Department who wrote,

---

<sup>18</sup> 125 Years, Jubilee Reports of Baptist Work in North East India- 1836-1961, p 31

<sup>19</sup> Ibid

<sup>20</sup> Ibid

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p 30

*“I shall never forget the west hostel and the institution which helped me so much in shaping my future. I can proudly say now that whatever good I have in me I owe to Jorhat Christian High School.”*<sup>22</sup>

Not only the testimonies but also the new material outlook projected a sense of amazement to others who were hostile and indifferent to the missionary and colonial advances. The institutionalization of culture through education resulted in the construction of a new identity.

Likewise, even the government began to alter its interest to promote education. Perhaps, the renewed interest on educational measures was more cultural than educational. In a letter to the Secretary, Government of Bengal, General Department 1903, it was conveyed that daughters of Christian converts who have adopted ‘European habits and mode of life’ may be admitted to the benefits of the European school Code, with regard to Scholarships, etc.<sup>23</sup> In a similar case, when the Code of Regulations for European Schools was revised in 1895, the committee recommended that those girls who had adapted the European habits and mode of life should be entitled to the benefits of the Code, basically scholarships.<sup>24</sup> The committee’s move suggested that those who had assimilated habits and norms of the Europeans were considered almost at par with the European students. The recommendations included a proposition that these girls should be allowed to compete with the European students to avail scholarships.<sup>25</sup> This evidence suggest an institutionalized form of cultural appeasement and subsequent subjection, although, it was also evident in some cases that the colonial officials had reprimanded the locals not to wear long pants so as to retain their cultural trademarks, which of course was more of an exertion of colonial prejudice.<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

<sup>23</sup> Government of Nagaland, General Department, File no 95, 1903, p. 591

<sup>24</sup> Ibid

<sup>25</sup> Ibid

<sup>26</sup> Ibid

For a long time, the missionaries on the one hand and the Anglicans on the other were consistently demanding the Government to recognize the importance of Christian Evangelism and English education in India. The resolution of Governor General in Council's meeting as published in its proceedings of February 1911 partly stated the reason for the creation of an additional membership of the Executive Council of the Governor General.<sup>27</sup> Though, it cited administrative and political expediency as primary causes in the first resolution, the second started with the statement that "the extreme importance of the subject of education needed no demonstration..."<sup>28</sup>

The resolution continued to harp on the extensive reforms that had been initiated by Lord Curzon's government with the emphasis on 'scheme of improvement' in all the institutions starting with the Universities and below. At the same time, it also lamented on the failures to execute Curzonian reforms. Nevertheless, the shift in colonial interest to improve education system all over the colony since Curzon's time substantiates the run up to formulation of new policies during Lord Minto's tenure. Although, schools were introduced since the 1870s by American missionaries, contribution of Colonial Government was negligent until the first decade of twentieth century. This renewed interest commenced with the Government takeover of a number of missionary primary schools. The formation of a separate education department in 1911 added impetus to this commitment. Resolution no 2 of the proceedings, mentioned the details of the 'scheme of improvement' and reforms beginning with the primary levels. However, the policy of the Government to provide primary education free of cost, way back in 1911, was a radical shift in colonial policy.<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> Government of India, Department of School Education, resolution no 5475-5507, General A, Proceedings, February 1911, No 16. p. 3

<sup>28</sup> Ibid

<sup>29</sup> Ibid

The arguments underlining this radical policy shift has been explained in the government proceeding. It states,

*“...the subject, again, of primary education; the question how far it should be provided free of cost; the training of teachers; the provision in the educational system of facilities for moral instruction; the development in it of influences which tend towards the better formation of character; the question how far religious instruction should be permitted- these, as well as the prosecution of the other reforms already mentioned, presented problems of the first magnitude, the successful solution of which would involve extensive expenditure both from imperial and provincial and local funds prolonged over a series of years and incurred in accordance with a wisely-planned and consistent educational policy. To assist in solving those problems and to direct that policy were tasks which, in the opinion of Lord Minto’s Government, might fitly claim the attention of a special department.”*<sup>30</sup>

Looking at the resolution, it is intriguing to see that one of the major agendas of the Government was directed towards a better formation of character, which overlaps with one of the core missionary educational objectives. The implementation of this new ‘colonial objective’ to primarily change the character of the students manifested a renewed commitment of cultural imperialism. The alteration of character as intended in the colonial and missionary educational policies subtly expanded cultural hegemony, as subtle as missionary influence, which may go a long way to change the patterns of consciousness of the subjects. This strategy of cultural change can be critically discussed from Gramsci’s formulation of cultural hegemony.<sup>31</sup> The progressive reciprocation of many villages pleading the government to establish schools in the villages by early twentieth

---

<sup>30</sup> Ibid

<sup>31</sup> Quintin Hoare, Geoffrey Nowell Smith, (eds.) *Selections from the Prison Notes of Antonio Gramsci*, International Publishers, New York, 1971, p. 57-58

century substantiates the internalization of cultural hegemony. For instance, when Pawsey visited Zulhami (Dzulhami) on 22nd March, 1947, the report says, “like all other villages they wanted (a) government school.”<sup>32</sup> The increase demand for schools is a symbolic expression of a new ‘cultural appetite’ that came about.

In fact, such colonial policies had been influenced by the missionary strategies of evangelizing the locals. Considering the colonial experiences, the thrust of colonial influence on locals had been as successful as the missionaries *per se*. For a long time, the colonial regime had attempted to prevail over the Naga villages through brute force and coercion. In the process, rampant punishments and other inhuman atrocities were perpetrated on the locals in order to subjugate and rule. The missionaries on the other hand synced their interests through the socio-cultural and religious agencies and therefore, their efforts of converting and influencing the locals had been comparatively far more successful than the colonial officials. Perhaps, the primacy attributed to education which is evident from this imperial resolution indicates the way colonial government had been trying to implicate its connivance for missionary systems. With this move, the Raj appeared to have reaffirmed its agenda of cultural imperialism. With this resolution, it may be contended that even though the missionaries had been more into the social and cultural business, the Raj had been complicit to the entire project of cultural change.

#### **4.2 Old Cultures and New Obligations: Locating Early Departures**

In 1851, the Baptist Association of Assam had recommended the occupation of Golaghat as “a door to the Nagas”.<sup>33</sup> Apparently, the Nagas did not cease to be part of the American missionary imagination even after the failed

---

<sup>32</sup> File No 451, Tour Diary of CR Pawsey, February and March 1941 & January and March 1947, p. 26

<sup>33</sup> Council of Baptist Churches in North East India, Thirteenth Annual Session, Nowgong, Assam, 1964, p 69



mission of Miles Bronson. It eventually succeeded in 1872. Almost a century later, it has been reported in the Assam Baptist Missionary Conference Report of 1941 that conversions to Christianity was taking place in ‘leaps and bounds’.<sup>34</sup> This is a strong instance of a rapid cultural shift that had taken place in less than a century. However, this shift caused new cultural and religious discontinuities at different levels. Take for example, the emerging tendency to subvert traditional and indigenous systems by the locals themselves and subsequently the craze to interiorize the values and practices of the ‘alien’ cultures may be considered intriguing. This shift was central to the breakage of traditional obligations and the production of new obligations. The divergence from traditional systems and formation of new affiliations had defined a new cultural dynamic, resulting in a complex web of interactions and outcomes.

One of the visible cultural breaks took place through proselytization to Christianity. This break by and large was the threshold to bigger ripples of cultural changes in the Naga Hills. Prior to the start of proselytization, the local cultures had limited socio-cultural interaction with other cultures and therefore, it was initially through colonial surveys and missionary forays that intrusions into these closed village societies began to take place. Even though it took some time for the missionary and colonial institutions to stabilize, reports and statistics indicate that the rate of conversions began to progressively favor the American Baptist Missionaries. In this way, as discussed above, a major shift in the cultural and traditional systems began to take place. Some archival records mention that besides genuine converts, there were others the likes of Aos who, who got converted to Christianity in order to break traditional sacrificial obligations.<sup>35</sup> Meanwhile, others joined the Church as part of a popular trend because to remain non-Christian resulted in exclusions from the ‘social swims’, as the missionaries would call it,

---

<sup>34</sup> American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Assam Baptist Missionary Conference Report, Thirty Ninth Session, Golaghat, Assam, 1941, p 32

<sup>35</sup> Assam – Historical – Mission Education Policy and Program in Assam, (Microfilm) 712.2-3, p. 43

within the village societies.<sup>36</sup> Therefore the social pressure exerted on a person who showed difference or defiance was intense in communitarian societies, as the idea of morality derived out of the social capital. Examples like social ostracism and stigmatization were common. This ‘majoritarian’ social dynamic was crucial to major socio-cultural and religious shifts in the Naga society. The gradual process of making the ‘Christian’ or even ‘modern’ culture obligatory among locals may be a perfect example of this shift.

One of the significant factors which characterized the emerging social dynamic was liberal values of Christianity over rigid conventional traditional practices. The practice of ‘oath’ taking as the ultimate level of Naga indigenous jurisprudence during the pre-Christian times and since proselytized experiences, explain a great deal of the shifting obligations. In case of an irreconcilable dispute, respective parties were asked to swear in stringiest terms keeping in mind the sanctity of such practices and the consequences of false oaths as well. As the precolonial Naga village societies upheld moral and ethical standards religiously, the space for dissent was limited. Yet, it cannot be referred to as autocratic because such moral standards were not imposed by individuals. But such moral and ethical standards were canonized into the corpus of customary laws which were generally interpreted and executed through a democratic process, consisting of a jury of elders to arbitrate. In this way, oath taking system as the utmost level of jurisprudence could not be questioned or further appealed. Therefore, this system of jurisprudence was more or less absolute. Whereas, on the other hand, the coming of Christianity brought along liberal notions of morality like that of ‘forgiveness’, ‘love’ and ‘grace’. According to the Christian practices, a sinner could be forgiven and saved through the grace of God.

As a consequence, a threshold to a new system of morality altogether had been instituted through Christianity on the local people and their practices. This

---

<sup>36</sup> Ibid

perhaps may be argued to have had huge bearings on the local societies. Probably, some people could have embraced Christianity in their pursuits for alternative and liberal practices as reported above. Of course, it must be stated that there had been genuine converts, perhaps majority of the early converts. Interestingly, with the coming of Christianity, Bible took a new symbolic representation of the truth. Thus, the oath taking practice got replaced with the Christian judicial system where parties involved were made to swear by the Bible. However, the coming of Christian values and western morality had immensely toppled (for that matter added a double consciousness) to these meanings and its implications.

Generally, the foreigners, be it missionaries or colonial rulers, termed certain local cultural practices, spiritual realms and the supernatural domains as superstitious and absurd. In a way, western science and Christian beliefs had influenced such one-dimensional observation of other societies. Thus, for western science, scientific proof is necessary to ascertain its validity and similarly Christianity tends to preach a singular world order to attain eternity. Subsequently, western science and religion has delegitimized other cultural practices as ‘heathen’ and ‘evil’. Such worldviews and cultural templates held by the officials and missionaries had been often manifested in their interactions with the indigenous village societies like the Nagas. Oath taking in the Naga society was (is) considered a very sacred practice to resolve conflicts, disputes and other forms of contestations involving individuals or communities. Interestingly, no authority neither pronounces punishment nor convicts anyone guilty. In traditional oath ceremonies, the parties declare self-infliction of bad fortunes in case of false oaths. It was in that context that an experience was recorded in the tour diaries of C. R. Pawsey in 1941.

*“Tsapomi (Ketsapomi). The village had a severe epidemic and there are many empty houses. Nor is the epidemic surprising. Someone died and poisoning was suspected. All in the village took oath as to their innocence, drinking the water with which the corpse had been washed mixed with the*

*blood of a fowl and other noxious substances. Naturally sickness followed.*<sup>37</sup>

In this context, the whole village came out to swear for innocence. But as the officials had recorded in amazement, massive epidemic soon befell on the village to the extent that many houses became unoccupied.

Prior to conversion to Christianity, people dreaded such eventualities on taking false oath. Oath taking was therefore an institution of indigenous justice system. The shift from pre-Christian to Christianity had brought about certain shifts in these practices. During the pre-colonial times, such oaths were undertaken in the name of gods and spirits nevertheless, the Naga Christians continued this tradition in the name of Jesus Christ and with the Bible. The idea of “eventualities and consequences” had also changed. From curses, the consequences had been replaced by the idea of ‘eternal punishment in hell’. This shift also showcases how the imagination of spiritual realms had changed.

Another visible aspect of these shifts had been the very institution of marriage. During the precolonial times, most Naga villages practiced extreme form of exogamy.<sup>38</sup> The system of marriage was such that two persons from the same community couldn’t marry each other. For instance, a Kuzhami Naga couldn’t marry another Kuzhami even if he or she was from a different village. But interestingly, people from ‘enemy’ villages, those villages which had been at war, intermarry.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, this insight gives a new perspective to the pre-colonial Naga social systems. This system began to shift since the colonial and missionary engagement. Gradually, the intrusion of colonialism and Christian evangelism not only altered but also produced socio-cultural prejudices to change the patterns of marriages leading to progressively endogamous relationships. As a result,

---

<sup>37</sup> File No 451, Tour Diary of C. R. Pawsey, February and March 1941 & January and March 1947, p. 1

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Mr. Chikhro Khutso, Mr. Dikha Khutso and Mr. Neisa Wetsah

<sup>39</sup> In conversation with Mr. Neisa Wetsah of Zapami Village.

exogamous marriages were aggressively discouraged to keep culture, language and values intact. The entry of cultural narcissism in this pattern into the local cultures may be considered a break from the traditional practices. Most importantly, marriage ceremonies became formalized. The first Christian marriage at Mulungkimong was held on 4 April, 1878 between an ordained Baptist missionary Hudhon Evans who was basically an Assamese and Noksangla, a Naga, ministered by E. W. Clark.<sup>40</sup> I. Ben Wati who wrote about his parents stated in his autobiography that when his dad Imchaba went to propose his mom Kariben, in July of 1917, his dad was accompanied by Namkenmeri, the Pastor of Chanki Baptist Church and the marriage was solemnized in December 1919 at Changki church.<sup>41</sup> Not only formalization of marriages, change in the burial practices amongst the Aos also came about as stated by Temsula Ao.<sup>42</sup>

Likewise, in the past, genealogies were traced through certain traditional practices. For example, Kennedy had recorded that the 'Angamis'<sup>43</sup>, Semas and Rengmas originally trace their dispersion to Mekrama (Mekhrore or Mikhel) village. Therefore, it was recorded that this ancestral village still sets the 'fashion' for the observance of *gennas or menyì*. Even during festivals *terhüni*, *sekrenyi*, *titsu*, etc. and even other important *gennas*, this village would be the first village to perform. After them the rest of the 'Mao Thana' group would follow, then the *Chakrima* section of the Angamis, and after them the *Tengima* and lastly the *Chakroka* division.<sup>44</sup> The sequential pattern of performance of these rituals recorded by Kennedy may not be correct, however, such practice was genuine. These were subtle ways of how ancestral relations had been traced and traditional

---

<sup>40</sup> Government of Nagaland, Impur (ABAM), 1881-1906, Ao Church History p. 9; Going by the early church records, it is intriguing to note that there were many instances of intermarriages amongst missionaries and locals.

<sup>41</sup> Wati, 'Impur Chanu,' p. 18

<sup>42</sup> Temsula Ao, *Ao Naga Oral Tradition*, p. 7

<sup>43</sup> Which includes both present Angami and Chakhesang tribes, formerly referred as Eastern Angami

<sup>44</sup> File No 445, Tour Diary of Lt. W M Kennedy, ISC, officiating DC, Naga Hills for July 1900, (Nov, 1901), 13

obligations were imposed. However, conversion to Christianity had apparently disturbed most of these subtle networks and replaced it with new obligations.

The increase in conversion to Christianity by the beginning of twentieth century sparked tension between Christian and non-Christian communities in the villages; besides other reasons, mainly over traditional obligations. As Christians were minorities in most villages, they couldn't contest the imposition of traditional obligations on them. Whereas, the missionaries discouraged the converts from indulging in any of the 'heathen practices' which caught the early local converts in a deep cultural predicament. However, the missionaries had no authority or control over the people who followed the traditional practices. It was only the colonial regime which had wholesome authority over all its subjects. As a matter of fact, the government could decide what was legal and what was not? Such, far-reaching authority of the colonial state was a strong cultural determinant as cultural practices, beliefs and way of life were regulated by the colonial regime. However, those practices which could not fit in to the colonial idea of 'civilization' had been stricken off from the new modern cultural imagination through 'orders' and 'directives'. The locals who were seldom aware of the legal procedures to secure rights had been mutely at the receiving end. Otherwise, any form of resistance had been expressed through other emotional excitements nevertheless ultimate compliance was the colonial rule. In this way, colonial rulers being at the helm of authority and control scrutinized and restricted a great deal of the cultural expressions and practices of the indigenous people. Colonial officials were 'cultural masters' as well.

On the other hand, the missionaries who were incapacitated to command orders and directives outside the Christian domain had to lobby officials to secure their interest. There were regular exchanges of written correspondences from mission stations to colonial offices almost throughout the entire occupation. The missionaries who were even more active cultural scrutinizers had their agendas up their sleeves. However, it was the distinctive cultural imagination of colonial

officials and American missionaries to establish their respective spheres of influence and domination – politically, culturally and of course, religiously, amongst the locals. This landed the two parties in constant debates and disagreements. One such intense and prolonged debate was the issue of consuming rice beer.<sup>45</sup> In one letter, Pawsey attempted to reprimand the missionaries for polarizing social groups both with and without the villages and correct some of the ‘missionary predispositions’ with particular reference to rice beer drinking, which according to him was not very consistent with Christianity.<sup>46</sup> Even matters about festivals, *genna*, religious tax, etc. gradually fell under the regulation and supervision of foreigners. The locals unfortunately became passive recipients because of the contextual and historical conditions as mentioned above. It is important to recognize this nuance historical condition under which new cultural conditions and obligations had been forged.

In a letter from Longwell to Major A. A. Nowell, IA, Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills, 13<sup>th</sup> September, 1900, the missionary tried to reason with the administrative official as to why a small minority Christian population should be compelled to violate their conscience by forcing to pay *aksu tax*<sup>47</sup> and observe *genna*<sup>48</sup> (*Amung* is the equivalent of *genna/menyi* in Ao), in addition to 52 Sundays/Christian Sabbath. The missionaries termed such imposition to be oppressive as it cuts down the productivity of these local converts.<sup>49</sup> He argued Christians had been forced to contribute time, money or kind for the ‘heathen’ religious rites. Therefore, Longwell persisted that the principle of ‘liberty of conscience’ and religion be allowed to Christians in the villages, where the majority in the villages had been dominantly non-Christians. According to him, if the

---

<sup>45</sup> Government of Nagaland, Private Department (ABAM), (correspondence letters with government), 1912-41

<sup>46</sup> Ibid

<sup>47</sup> *Aksu tax* basically was a annual tax collected for the entertainment of village guests. Ibid

<sup>48</sup> According to Longwell, *Genna* could be taken as a religious or ceremonial occasion of the locals ‘Non-Christians’. It may be compared to Sundays of Christians.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid

government would agree to pass an order directing Christians from paying such taxes, he was confident that non-Christians would heed to orders of the government for two reasons: firstly, people would accept the ‘dictum’ of the government, according to the Sub Divisional Officer, Mokokching. Secondly, the government could impose such orders.<sup>50</sup>

In 1912, there was another correspondence on the issue of celebrating *amung* (festivals) in the Ao areas. The missionaries had lobbied on the corridors of the district administration through correspondences to press the government to absolve the Christian community from all ‘heathen’ religious and sacrificial obligations during two main *amung* viz. *Moatsuamung* and *Tsungrem amung* which were celebrated for three days respectively.<sup>51</sup> The missionaries argued that until the fall of 1909, the Christians were freely attending fields during the *amung* occasions without reaction from non-Christians. However, some of the administrators had been indifferent to the issues raised by the missionaries. Instead, a confrontational case was recorded in which the SDO of Mokokchung had fined Christians a live hog and had given it to the non-Christians. The missionaries alleged that such instances had encouraged persecutions on Christians in other villages, when indigenous resistance to the new colonial and missionary transformations was still strong.<sup>52</sup>

The conflicts over divergent obligations were exacerbated with the increase in number of Christian converts in villages. By 1941 it was reported that evangelistic work under Ao mission field was almost entirely taken over by local pastors and evangelists, which expedited conversion process according to B. I Anderson.<sup>53</sup> In the same year the number of Ao Christians had risen to 13, 776, the

---

<sup>50</sup> Ibid

<sup>51</sup> Ibid

<sup>52</sup> Ibid

<sup>53</sup> American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Assam Baptist Missionary Conference Report, Thirty Ninth Session, Golaghat, Assam, 1941, p 25, 30



missionaries termed it 'flourishing'.<sup>54</sup> When Dr. Bor visited Ghukiya in September 1942, there were only few non-Christian houses left as the village almost entirely converted to Christianity.<sup>55</sup> However, with increase in conversion, there were regular instances of 'resistance' and 'agitation' by non-Christians, according to missionaries. Because of such cultural tensions, colonial government disallowed gatherings of more than one thousand people, especially during annual Christian conferences.

As a result of rapid conversion, locals began to depart from traditional obligations even more than before. The inherent characteristic of Christianity to create a distinct cultural niche inhibits other cultural forms and practices to operate parallel which contributed to this shift. Thus, those converted were more or less obliged by 'Christian conviction', which certainly was a difficult cultural negotiation. Rev. Howard Campbell argues that the most important feature of the missionary movement was 'conviction'.<sup>56</sup> Therefore, such convictions became inherent cultural determinants causing deep cognitive modulations. Consequently, the way new cultural forms had been consumed and reproduced had simultaneously created new cultural obligations both within and without the local systems and domains. The definition of the word obligation suggests certain sense of compulsion, responsibility and duty, which were generated by the shift in the nature of obligation *per se*. However, converts who were sandwiched between old and new cultures may be taken as a symbol of cultural break and a point of departure for new adaptations.

---

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, p 26

<sup>55</sup> File no 454, Tour Diary of Dr. N.L. Bor, August, September and October, 1942, p. 6

<sup>56</sup> The Baptist Missionary Review, February, 1908, Vol XIV, p. 54

### 4.3 The Construction of a New Cultural Competition and Class Formation

The new colonial cultural capital of education and religiosity was rewarded and enhanced through the education system, and through the elective affinity between the values of middle class households and those of the school and university, where the cultural competencies acquired in the middle class had resulted in higher levels of educational attainment, relative to other social classes. And these higher levels of attainment led to higher levels of recruitment into well paid and powerful occupations whose high status is publicly symbolized by high levels of engagement with legitimate culture (opera, classical music, literature and theatre as well as art). In this way, Bourdieu argues that class relationships are reproduced as the economic capital associated with professional and management class positions is converted into forms of cultural capital. For instance, educationally successful children from middle class homes are able to convert their holdings of cultural capital into economic capital at the point at which they enter the job market.<sup>57</sup>

According to Bourdieu, it is the role of these different forms of capital – economic, social and cultural – and their significance relative to one another in the strategies of different classes that govern what he calls the dynamics of fields. Borrowing the principles of field theory developed in the early twentieth century physics, he refers to the concept of field as a metaphor for visualizing the lay-out of social space- or the space of lifestyles, as he calls it – as one in which different classes compete with one another in a game whose outcomes are determined by the different volumes of economic, social and cultural capital they are able to accumulate as well as by the relative weighing of these different capitals in the overall capital holdings of different classes.<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. xx

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, p. xxi

This chapter will focus on the emphasis of character building by the missionaries and also the way churches had asserted to discipline those members who could not heed to the teachings, principles and Christian lifestyles. I argue that this is the new understanding of ‘cultural capital’ that changed the cultural aesthetics of highly visible sections of converted Nagas, with access to new sources to status, economic opportunities and self-betterment.

However, it was a slow progress. In one of the missionary documents it was stated that the problem commanding gravest concern and spiritual anxiety was discipline.<sup>59</sup> It also cited that the missionaries were directly in charge of the Christian communities. The reason according to most of the missionaries was “failure of the native Christians to live up to their conviction or to measure up to the light of their religious knowledge.”<sup>60</sup> The early church of Molungyimsen had experienced severe crisis over issues of conviction, adaptation and reciprocation of Christian teachings. It was only in the last decade of the nineteenth century when a new band of missionaries with radical approach arrived, resulting in reorganization of the entire church. Perrine belonged to this new batch of young American Baptist missionaries. His presence in the Impur mission field brought a radical shift in pedagogy and curriculum of missionary education and the organization of early church. To a great extent, he was instrumental in institutionalizing the Church. This institutionalization process was crucial to the way Church had convicted Christian faith, teachings and principles to the converts. Take for instance, the institutionalization of norms, habits and practices in the airports and the metro stations may be considered a good allegory. Apparently, people don’t spit or litter around these places as it is prohibited to do so. Subsequently, we could see that the public gets cultured. Therefore, taking a cue from this allegory, the institutionalization of the Church in the Naga case was a more rigorous procedure

---

<sup>59</sup> Assam – Historical – Mission Education Policy and Program in Assam, (Microfilm) 712.2-3, Introduction

<sup>60</sup> Ibid

in the way the congregation was educated and cultured. Perrine's logic becomes clear in the following discussion.

The new band of missionaries did not hesitate to openly contest some of the old missionary practices. It was reported in 1894 by Perrine about a radical move to disband and reorganize the church at Molung which resulted in turning away many former converts. Nevertheless, a few were able to 'take stand for righteousness'.<sup>61</sup> It was reported that a young man, who was refused admission to the reorganized Molung Church started a Christian religious movement along with a young friend, which expanded rapidly.<sup>62</sup> Another instance where an Ao man by the name Bendang reportedly preached at a village called Yazang later became a model Christian village. Apparently, he could neither read nor write but according to Rev. Perrine, he shared simple gospel stories and importantly borne witness to the truth of Christianity with an upright life.<sup>63</sup>

Perrine made a comparison between converts and non-converts and spoke about an ideal Naga Christian society. He wrote,

*"Some of the Christians keep their person and homes and food comparatively clean, perhaps I should simply say, cleaner than the heathen. They do not eat rotten flesh, and the money they once spent for drink, opium and false worship is making them prosperous. They are becoming more conscientious in the relation of the sexes and in regard to the charging of high interest and are discussing a number of other very important questions that make for righteousness. The power of an endless life seen in the lives of these rude and imperfect Nagas is making a large impression on the tribe. The most favorite word with the Nagas is "makeover" unable. The few*

---

<sup>61</sup> The Assam Mission of the American Baptist Missionary Union- Triennial Conference 1895, p. 43

<sup>62</sup> Fifth Triennial Conference held at Dibrugarh, Feb 11-19, 1899, Calcutta Baptist Mission Press, p 41

<sup>63</sup> Ibid

*Christians in the hills are proving to the rest that the Nagas can live very decent Christian life. When this is fully demonstrated large numbers of them will be gathered in.*<sup>64</sup>

Perrine asserted that they had a larger mission than mere planting of Christianity. He revealed that the development of 'Christ character' was the ultimate ambition of the missionaries.<sup>65</sup> P. H. Moore wrote in the introduction to the report of the Assam census in 1901 stating

*"To the Christian missionary and in the mission business generally, character is a chief asset- purified, sanctified, transformed character, perfected on the lines of the divine model, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. To the extent to which such character is realized, both in himself and the converts, is the missionary a success and his business a success."*<sup>66</sup>

He further wrote that human beings are raw materials for the production of character.<sup>67</sup> Thus, it can be observed that one of the chief objectives of the Christian missions had been character building. Moorie, figuratively compares the new converts to granite and marble and missionaries to sculptors.<sup>68</sup> Delta also suggested that through educational work, 'lofty ideals of life' were set forth to win admiration and 'awakening the emulation of class'.<sup>69</sup> He strongly advocated the role of missionaries in shaping the character of the pupils.<sup>70</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, p. 42

<sup>65</sup> Fifth Triennial Conference held at Dibrugarh, Feb 11-19, 1899, Calcutta Baptist Mission Press, p 43

<sup>66</sup> Seventh Session of the American Baptist Conference, held at Gauhati, December, 27, 1902-4<sup>th</sup> January 1903, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, p 71

<sup>67</sup> Ibid

<sup>68</sup> Ibid

<sup>69</sup> Higher Education: A Criticism by Delta, Baptist Missionary Review, August 1908, 357

<sup>70</sup> Ibid

Similarly, according to the Baptist Missionary Magazine for July 1901, the total number of active American missionaries under Assam mission field was fifty two, which included their wives and single ladies. Out of fifty two, thirty of them worked in the hills (dominantly Naga Hills) with a population of about seven lakh fifty thousand; fifteen were engaged among the plains people numbering about one and half million population and seven among five lakh fifty thousand immigrants.<sup>71</sup> The missionaries reported that response to missionary advances was much higher in the hills compared to plains. The problem for poor response in the plains was attributed to the ‘priest’ and ‘caste’ culture, while the hill people did not have caste hindrances according to missionaries.<sup>72</sup> However, the attribution to caste and religion alone may not suffice a convincing justification as the inhabitants of the hills followed strong animistic beliefs. Zapami village which resisted Christianity and education until 1958 is a strong case in point.<sup>73</sup> Nonetheless, P. H. Moorie analogized the entire missionary experience by stating that,

*“If we compare conversions to quarrying out the marble blocks and the process of Christian training to chiseling and polishing those blocks into model statues, we may say that we have found quarrying a much easier process in the hills than in the plains.”*<sup>74</sup>

In fact, Rev. Perrine hinted reasons for this marked difference in the nature of reciprocation to missionary advances. According to him, the mission of education would not be eventually successful without imparting a ‘rigid morality’ and ‘strong spiritual personality’.<sup>75</sup> In that light, missionaries enforced strict discipline to establish perpetual change in socio-cultural and religious spheres of

---

<sup>71</sup> Seventh Session of the American Baptist Conference, held at Gauhati, December, 27, 1902-4<sup>th</sup> January 1903, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, p 80

<sup>72</sup> Ibid

<sup>73</sup> Zapami Village Council, *The Heritage of Zapami Village*, 2017

<sup>74</sup> Seventh Session of the American Baptist Conference, held at Gauhati, December, 27, 1902-4<sup>th</sup> January 1903, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, p 80

<sup>75</sup> Fifth Triennial Conference held at Dibrugarh, Feb 11-19, 1899, Calcutta Baptist Mission Press, p 42

the local people. Perrine also confided that beginner evangelists were paid even less than the coolie wages to inculcate discipline and Christian ascetic.<sup>76</sup> In the process, some of these missionary dispositions were adapted as “Christian cultural practices”. A perfect instance would be the implication of sin to drinking rice beer, as mentioned in the previous chapter.

With the active missionary activities in the Naga villages, the traditional rice beer drinking became a contentious issue not only between local Christian converts and non-Christians but more so in between American Baptist missionaries and British administrators. The missionaries strongly advocated that rice beer drinking was sinful, whereas, according to correspondence letters, some of the administrators had questioned the propriety of such prohibition. The missionaries clarified that it was a policy and a regulation of the mission to maintain total abstinence. It further maintained that abstinence was essential part of ‘Christianity’ in the Assam hills.<sup>77</sup> This statement suggests a deliberate vernacularisation of Christianity by missionaries basing on contextual conditions, which is a vital piece of information to understand the process of cultural engagement. In addition, various allegations were leveled against the missionaries on the matter of rice beer drinking. The Semas, for instance, asserted that drinking rice beer prevents death from pneumonia, influenza and other diseases, to which the missionaries responded by saying that it needed medical practitioners to verify such claims.<sup>78</sup> Even Pawsey agreed with the Missionaries on this matter and he assured that he would not press further charges.<sup>79</sup>

However, the Government continued to be critical about the missionary ‘rule’ of abstinence from rice beer. Subsequently, the Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills through an official notice requested the missionaries to convey to the

---

<sup>76</sup> Ibid

<sup>77</sup> Government of Nagaland, Private Department (ABAM), (correspondence letters with government), 1912-41

<sup>78</sup> Ibid

<sup>79</sup> Ibid

Sangtams that “to abstain from alcohol is not an essential part of Christianity”.<sup>80</sup> The missionaries however expressed their inability to comply with such request. They further clarified that it was a rule and a policy to abstain from alcohol and rice beer to embrace Christianity.<sup>81</sup> It was found that C. A. Pawsey, in fact, quoted I Corinthians 5:11 and Ephesians 5:16 to counter the missionary assertions.<sup>82</sup> He distinguished intoxication which was condemned in the bible from total abstention. He reasoned if the missionaries were quoting the Bible to justify their policies. And Pawsey also expressed apprehension that the missionary literatures would suggest to Naga Christians that drinking liquor and rice beer was sin and such offenders should be taken care and disciplined.<sup>83</sup> However, the missionaries adamantly replied stating that total abstinence was far more Christian than moderate drinking as according to the opinion of missionaries, drinking does not promote the ideals of Christianity that ‘Christians hold precious’.<sup>84</sup> Official queries were dispatched to the headquarters of American mission field at Impur regarding certain Christian practices. Subsequently, a manual for pastors and mission work was printed in English containing information on mission policies, Christian teaching and supervision of the local churches.<sup>85</sup>

The way the missionaries had moralized the habit of drinking rice beer perhaps was a manifestation of a ‘selective cultural contiguity’. In the sense that, the missionaries, and for that matter even the colonial officials, in their own way,

---

<sup>80</sup> Government of Nagaland, Private Department (ABAM), (correspondence letters with government), 1912-41 (2<sup>nd</sup> May 1940)

<sup>81</sup> Ibid

<sup>82</sup> Government of Nagaland, Private Department (ABAM), (correspondence letters with government), 1912-41; 1 Corinthians 5:11 (NIV) “But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister<sup>[a]</sup> but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler. Do not even eat with such people”; Ephesians 5:16 (NIV) “Making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.” <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians+5%3A11>

<sup>83</sup> Government of Nagaland, Private Department (ABAM), (correspondence letters with government), 1912-41 (20<sup>th</sup> May 1940)

<sup>84</sup> Ibid

<sup>85</sup> Ibid



were selective in the way local practices were appropriated and restrained. For Instance, rice beer drinking was a way of life for the village folks but the missionaries wanted it to be forbidden for Christians. Perhaps, to the missionaries, use of rice beer was ‘uncivilized’ which could hinder the progress of conversions. In this way, it brought the Christian moral dimension to restrict rice beer drinking in totality. Interestingly, those who had converted vowed in principle to not touch the beer. Thus, abstinence became a Christian cultural marker, likewise, drinking rice beer remained a traditional marker for non-Christians. Such, ‘Christian discipline’ or ‘Christianizing’ process was central to a cultural departure point from a local way of life and belief systems.

A missionary had compared the ethical values of the west and the east and commented that accepting bribes and being little dishonest were not considered wrong by average Indians. Therefore, it was strongly emphasized that without a strong religious motive actuating a Christian’s life it was reported to be ‘exceedingly easy to relapse into old habits of behavior and thinking’.<sup>86</sup> However, the missionaries believed that the intolerant attitude towards sin was the result of genuine religious transformation and Christian conviction.<sup>87</sup> The process of conviction was essential to the way ‘missionary cultures’ were propagated and adapted, and a divine reverence was developed for the missionaries as the ‘ambassadors of Christ’.<sup>88</sup> This phenomenon may be regarded as a ‘politics of reverence’ theorized in the next chapter. This was an emotional game strategized to engage with the locals.

The missionary imagination of Christian morality reverberated over other spheres as well. A case was reported about a man employed in a tea farm in the plains, who rushed to his village after hearing that his village got burned by fire on

---

<sup>86</sup> Assam – Historical – Mission Education Policy and Program in Assam, (Microfilm) 712.2-3, p. 15

<sup>87</sup> Ibid

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, p. 16

a Sunday, was promptly excluded from the church for ‘marching on the Lord’s day’.<sup>89</sup> In another case, four men were excluded in 1931 for working in the fields very early on a Monday morning before the rooster crowed. The church had accused them of violating the holiness of the Lord’s Day.<sup>90</sup> By 1940s W. F Dowd had reported that villages had developed a strong feeling of keeping Sunday holy.<sup>91</sup> Marriages with unbelievers were punished with exclusion from church. Moreover, even in case of divorces that happened to Christian couples, the church penalized the guilty party with exclusion. The missionaries advocated the value of ‘pure’ and ‘unbroken’ Christian homes.<sup>92</sup> There was also objection to the Government marriage system, in which, vows were made in public and marriages would be registered.<sup>93</sup> This instance indicated overlap between the missionary and official domains.

Besides, the idea of a Christian decorum extended to the private spaces. According to missionary reports, it was easy to discern the difference between Christians and non-Christians based on tidiness of homes and bodies, described by missionaries as ‘better appearance’.<sup>94</sup> Such distinct appearance was probably produced as a result of constant orientations and teachings. During the annual Ao Christian Association gathering in 1897, the evening vespers were set aside to tackle personal hygiene, missionary idea of propriety, manners and conduct. It was recorded that Mrs. Clark gave an excellent talk on dirt, germs, etc. Mrs. Perrine spoke on how to clear the houses, Sarah spoke against traditional tattooing and Hattie gave a harangue on dress.<sup>95</sup> In the same event, there was an extensive

---

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, p. 20

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, p. 31

<sup>91</sup> Seventh Session of the American Baptist Conference, held at Gauhati, December, 27, 1902-4<sup>th</sup> January 1903, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, p 42

<sup>92</sup> Seventh Session of the American Baptist Conference, held at Gauhati, December, 27, 1902-4<sup>th</sup> January 1903, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, p 42

<sup>93</sup> Ibid

<sup>94</sup> Assam – Historical – Mission Education Policy and Program in Assam, (Microfilm) 712.2-3, p. 31

<sup>95</sup> Government of Nagaland, Impur (ABAM), 1881-1906, Ao Church History p. 9;

discussion on constructing beautiful granaries, improve village sanitation, ensure proper clothing for 'better Christian living' and burial of the dead.<sup>96</sup> These instances suggested a profound cultural indoctrination that was taking place within the church and the Christian domains. Like it was mentioned above, the conviction that was devoted to the church and to 'Christ' had brought about a divine sense of attachment to the production and reproduction of cultural ethos and practices. Such instructions percolated in the local habituation of norms and manners to articulate the missionary imagination of a Christian decorum. Apparently, the Ao had the habit of chewing beetle nuts and smoking tobacco pipes, however, it was observed that they would leave smoking pipes in the halls of churches like the Europeans peg their hats and discard betel nut cuds at the doorsteps like the Europeans scrap off mud from their shoes or throw their chewing gum away.<sup>97</sup> It was also revealed that missionaries usually take examples of local leaders to persuade people to give up old habits.<sup>98</sup> Likewise, the statistical data released by the government indicate that cases of syphilis were drastically reduced. According to the office inspection book, thirty years ago there were six-hundred to seven-hundred primary cases every year under Mokokchung. However, only three cases were reported in 1941.<sup>99</sup> Such cases probably declined not only with the intervention of modern drugs but also by the mode of engagement of missionaries on hygiene and cleanliness, as part of the Christian teachings and disciplines that translated in improved health conditions. Thus, the new sense of hygiene, clothing, and tidiness imparted through arduous process by missionaries had produced a new cultural politics around the body. As a case in point, Perrine admitted that Christians had adapted new burial practices and dressed better than the non-Christians.<sup>100</sup> This new body politics and new adornment for the body resulted in the formation of new aesthetic and cultural

---

<sup>96</sup> Downs, *Christianity in North-East India*, p. 208-209

<sup>97</sup> Assam – Historical – Mission Education Policy and Program in Assam, (Microfilm) 712.2-3, p. 31

<sup>98</sup> Ibid

<sup>99</sup> File No 451, Tour Diary of C. R. Pawsey, February and March 1941 & January and March 1947, p. 7

<sup>100</sup> Downs, *Christianity in North-East India*, p. 209

dispositions and manifestations critical to the creation and contestation of social-cultural identities, similar to what Hendrickson has discussed.<sup>101</sup>

A new phase of church disciplines commenced with the formulation of 'Ao Naga Church and Discipline', by R. Wickstand in September of 1933.<sup>102</sup> Even though, it was prepared by an individual missionary, to a great extent, the pamphlet defined the position of the church on critical matters. Wickstand specified two broad categories of discipline: under the first category, which he termed it as general he enunciated the teaching of the Apostle Paul from the New Testament. Secondly, the discipline cases were sub-classified as secular, moral, doctrinal and spiritual. In this way, most of the concerns relating to discipline were covered under broad categories. He went on to write about issues in detail taking into consideration the critical areas termed as 'discipline problems' identified in locals. He further categorized these 'discipline problems' under two categories: he referred the first as 'national characteristics' which perhaps were the areas in which locals were lacking behind. He specifically described the 'national characteristics' as 'proud and independent', 'liars and blunt speech', 'lazy', 'suspicious', 'ultra conservative', 'fond of tobacco and betel nuts' and 'cleanliness as foreign to the locals'. In the following category, he particularly pointed out three kinds of problems namely: 'ignorance', 'external influence' and 'administrative'. In conclusion, he suggested necessary measures to tackle the above mentioned problems and weaknesses under a sub-category known as 'pessimistic picture'. These measures included, the requirement for intelligent and spiritual leadership, more productive use of leisure, need for profound spiritual awakening, sympathy and wisdom required in 'follow-up' classes and finally mentioned that the missionaries needed to be called to task.<sup>103</sup>

---

<sup>101</sup> Hildi Hendrickson eds., *Clothing and Difference: Embodied Identities in Colonial and Post-Colonial Africa*, Duke University Press, 1996, p.

<sup>102</sup> Ao Naga Church and Discipline, By R. Wickstand, Sept. 1933, p. 1 (Conference of the Assam Mission-Nehru Museum and Library- microfilms)

<sup>103</sup> Ibid

According to Wickstand, he had drawn these conclusions basing on his personal experience and knowledge about the local people. He however, clarified that these measures were not intended to be dogmatic but rather suggestions.<sup>104</sup> It was reported that some of these suggestions were well received by the locals. However, he admitted that the disciplining of local believers was the most challenging task of the missionaries in foreign fields. Nevertheless, he suggested that the solutions to problems in Naga Hills mission field could be used as a model elsewhere because of the intricacies involved.<sup>105</sup> Even though, the engagement with Nagas in particular was difficult, perhaps, the missionary adage goes, ‘lack of courage in grappling a problem is traceable to failure’,<sup>106</sup> was the guiding principle for missionaries to execute their task of ‘disciplining’ the locals. This happened even if it was tantamount to jeopardizing its mission like that of disbanding the first and only established church in the Naga Hills in 1894.

As discussed, the task of transforming the local converts after conversion to Christianity did not come easy. Perhaps, the process of conversion to Christianity was relatively simple compared to the process of conditioning these converts to the ways and outlook of the religion, evident from the detailed formulation of a framework under which the converts had to be disciplined. However, in addition to these guidelines, most of the individual missionaries were operating beyond this framework. Take for instance the case of rice beer drinking and other matters pointed out in above discussion indicate a liberal imagination of Christian identity by respective field missionaries. Moreover, the individual missionaries were independent in the execution of church discipline within their respective mission fields. The lack of regularity in the way missionaries functioned produced divergent ‘missionary cultural traditions’ that were difficult to equate with Christianity *per se*.

---

<sup>104</sup> Ibid

<sup>105</sup> Ibid

<sup>106</sup> Ibid

In a critical discussion about the whole process of proselytization amongst the missionary circles, some people suggested that the missionaries should stop expanding its mission and devote time and energy in producing few good Christians rather than many nominal Christians. Some others evidently had termed some of the American Baptist methods and strategies as ‘unbiblical’. Still, some suggested that the mission should operate according to the ‘New Testament methods’ and more precisely, teachings of the Apostle Paul.<sup>107</sup> Wikstand referred Roland Allen, who had written a book titled ‘Missionary Methods: St Paul’s or Ours?’ as one of the proponents of the last missionary approach. The title of the book itself implicitly suggested a rigid approach to missionary expansionism, which in particular did not interest the American Baptist missionaries working in Naga Hills. However, some critics suggested that the local agencies could deliver more intensely in the expansion of Assam mission.<sup>108</sup> Wikstand made a bold statement that

*“If the church ceases to be militant or un-missionary in outlook, it will, very soon, become cold and indifferent to the cause of Christ both in their own lives, the community, and the wider sphere generally alluded to as the world.”*<sup>109</sup>

This response to the second group of critics, who suggested that the methods of mission should be limited to the teachings of St Paul, may reflect some of the popular missionary strategies of engagement.

The missionaries had compared the first generation Christian converts as ‘childlike’ in their conduct and faith.<sup>110</sup> Therefore, the missionaries made it a point to ensure ‘strict discipline’ on offenders and those who falter in their conduct, so that such stern actions would keep others away from indiscipline in future. They

---

<sup>107</sup> Ao Naga Church and Discipline, By R. Wickstand, Sept. 1933, p. 3 (Conference of the Assam Mission-Nehru Museum and Library- microfilms)

<sup>108</sup> Ibid

<sup>109</sup> Ibid

<sup>110</sup> Assam-Historical-Mission Education Policy and Program in Assam, (Microfilm) 712.2-3, p. 11

had categorized the types of discipline as secular, doctrinal, moral and spiritual.<sup>111</sup> One of the missionaries equated the mentality or IQ of adult Christian converts to the American children and argued that the converts should be disciplined like a child.<sup>112</sup> One thing which the imperialists and the missionaries had in common was the preconceived idea of their cultures and knowledge systems as being superior and universal. With such predispositions, the missionaries and the imperial rulers had developed almost total disregard for other cultures. In this way Christian missionaries who proclaimed to have brought the message of the 'Great commission', manifested strong cultural prejudices.

In the process of constructing a distinct cultural decorum, the missionaries and officials, indoctrinated a strong sense of hate, disdain and condemnation for local cultural ethos. Therefore, the process of proselytization was not only religious and spiritual but also a cultural turnover.

#### **4.4 Shifting Loyalties and Legitimacies: Authority Structures**

While dealing on cultural dialectics, it is also pertinent to see how the colonial government had established agencies of rule and authority at different levels in the society. It is evident that the traditional loyalties and legitimacies were gradually shattered by new power networks and agencies, created and replicated by the colonial officials and missionaries. These new networks negotiated with the local customary and traditional structures and progressively prevailed because of colonial and missionary patronage. For instance, the institution of 'dobashi' which means (interpreters) was a creation of colonial officials, but 'Goanbura' (village elder) system may be considered more or less a replication of traditional authority structures. Similarly, the missionaries introduced institutions like pastors and

---

<sup>111</sup> Ibid

<sup>112</sup> Ibid

teachers hitherto alien to the local cultures, which catered new status and authority in the villages.

The Goanburas, which literally means village elders, had worn red blanket clothes as symbols of colonial authority in the villages. A report of 1928 stated, "...red cloth as an outward and visible sign that he is a man having authority".<sup>113</sup> The government had legitimized the local power networks by appropriating traditional structures like the usurpation of the institution of village chiefs in the case of the Semas.<sup>114</sup> In other communities like the 'Angami' (which included present Chakhesang tribe), existent authority structures were appropriated and accosted as Goanburas and so, they were democratically chosen from the clans. The institution of Goanburas emerged as the principal source of contact between colonial officials and villagers. As recorded, the colonial administrators exchanged correspondences, engaged 'coolie', collected house taxes also known as 'khezhanuokhro', etc through the Goanburas.<sup>115</sup> Evidently, the role of the Goanburas in the administration of Naga 'country' became crucial. Therefore, though no monetary benefits in terms of salary were mentioned anywhere in the official documents, such positions were highly sought after. The significance attached to the Goanburas by the colonial government had generated certain sense of reverence from the villagers.<sup>116</sup> The villagers were officially obligated by the government to offer Goanburas ceremonial 'meat' during festivals and work in their fields as a way of showing allegiance to government.<sup>117</sup> At the same time, it is also evident that the institution of Goanbura was used by the colonial administration to ransom demands and delivery of colonial justice.

---

<sup>113</sup> Government of Nagaland, File no 452 Nov-Dec, 1928-February 1929, p. 18

<sup>114</sup> Government of Nagaland, File No 324, Hutton's Letters & Diaries, 1916

<sup>115</sup> Government of Nagaland, File No 456, Lt. D. H. Durrett, Assistant Commandant, 3<sup>rd</sup> Assam Rifles, 1944, p. 5

<sup>116</sup> See File no 454, Tour Diary of Dr. N.L. Bor, August, September and October, 1942, p. 4-8

<sup>117</sup> Ibid



Few instances of how Goanburas were sandwiched in between government and local villagers were recorded. On December 7, 1898, according to the tour diary of Captain Cole, the Satakha coolies had run away. Subsequently, Cole asked Captain Shakespeare to dispatch a party of ten sepoy to arrest and warn the coolies that if they cause any further trouble, he (Deputy Commissioner) shall be forced to take severe measures.<sup>118</sup> These laborers were conscripted through the local Goanburas and were forced to work for the colonial regime. In fact, the village Goanburas were generally given ultimatum to supply laborers. Failure to reciprocate such demands resulted in collective punishments like 'punitive labor'. In any case, the Goanburas were at the receiving end. Another case in point, when cattle was stolen from Nankam village in August 1900, the Sub Divisional Officer had sternly reprimanded the Goanbura of that village and eventually ordered him to penalize double value of the stolen animal from the accused Khel.<sup>119</sup> However, the circumstances faced by these village officials resulted in a double jeopardy. In this way, the services of the Goanburas were used across the colonial territory of Naga Hills to secure imperial ends. Such nature of the job and circumstances these Goanburas had experienced indicate that this institution was an extra-judicial and an extra-administrative agency of the colonial government. Nevertheless, the Goanburas were indispensable to the colonial administration.

The administrative officials, along with the Goanburas, were constantly on tours. Hutton mentioned in one of the administrative reports that he was on tour for 176 days in that particular year. Likewise, Pawsey, the then Deputy commissioner of Naga Hills, like his predecessors was constantly on the move. In most of these tours, besides attending regular administrative works, officials constantly enumerated houses in villages and settle disputes.<sup>120</sup> As a result of such tours,

---

<sup>118</sup> File no 443, Tour Diary of Captain HWG Cole ISC, Deputy Commissioner Naga Hills – 1897-98, p. 17

<sup>119</sup> File No 445, Tour Diary of Lt W M Kennedy, ISC, officiating Deputy Commissioner, Naga Hills for July 1900, p2

<sup>120</sup> File No 451, Tour Diary of CR Pawsey, February and March 1941 & January and March 1947, 3-4

Hutton, Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills, for one was well acquainted with details of local systems, information, villages and even people. As a case in point, Hutton foiled a fake claim, when a Sema came from a far flung village claiming to be the village chief to ask for red blankets.<sup>121</sup> Likewise, as evident in Pawsey's diaries, collection and dissemination of information from the lowest levels of administration and also from every nook and corner of the colonial territory through local agencies as arteries and veins of control proved beneficial. Most of the tour diaries of these officials also indicate that villages were routinely visited and disputes were settled.<sup>122</sup> Evidently, after hearing from different parties, judgments were delivered and guilty parties were either awarded fines, rigorous labor, excommunicated or even their villages burnt.<sup>123</sup> Therefore, in a way, it must be noted that the colonial justice system of that time was routinely settled, perhaps once in a year when officials visit.

All these shifts may be profoundly encapsulated by the structural turnover of a few specific cultural experiences. Interestingly, the villages which fiercely opposed the colonial rulers became agents of the colonizers and their agendas for instance Khonoma and agents of Christianity for instance Khezhakenoma.<sup>124</sup>

#### **4.5 Evangelizing Culture and Cultural Evangelism: The Phenomenon of the 'Sacred'**

As much as the colonial officials had rejected the traditional authority structures, the missionaries were simultaneously proactive in the deconstruction of traditional authority structures in their own whims and caprices; but they were

---

<sup>121</sup> Ibid

<sup>122</sup> File no 443, Tour Diary of Captain HWG Cole ISC, Deputy Commissioner Naga Hills, 1897-98

<sup>123</sup> Ibid

<sup>124</sup> See Lucy Zehol, Kevakha Kevin Zehol, *The Legendary Naga Village: A Reader (Khezhakeno)*, 2009, p.22

comparatively subtle. This subtle process of transformation shall be referred to as the evangelization of culture.

Evidently since 1902-03, 'Assam for Christ' was one of the rallying war cries in the American Baptist Mission fields in Assam. In fact, the slogan was borrowed from the motto of the Baptist Home Mission Society which goes "North America for Christ".<sup>125</sup> Eventually, 'Nagaland for Christ' emerged as a religious and progressively political rhetoric since mid-twentieth century to this day. Therefore, John Thomas had rightly captured this phenomenon as 'evangelizing the nation',<sup>126</sup> which perhaps is a comprehensive take on the idea of nation and its 'connexions' with Christian evangelism. Nevertheless, it is pertinent to also look at the way culture was evangelized in the first place. Indeed, the process of evangelizing culture commenced right from the start of American Baptist Missionary engagement with locals, and it became a perpetual phenomenon ever since. To define the idea of 'evangelizing cultures', it may be understood in two broad ways: First, as a process of transmitting certain ideology, behavioral patterns, customs, belief systems - Christianity in this context, through the medium of the local cultures. Secondly, by strictly calculating the local cultures in such a way that censorship and restrictions were placed on indigenous practices and customs. Therefore, the command over local cultures gradually obtained through active local agencies, defines the extent of cultural evangelization.

Apparently, around the early part of twentieth century, the differences between the hills and the plains were circulated in the missionary circles. Missionaries like P. H. Moorie analogized the 'plains people' with a historic past and an organized religion as an ancient civilization and comparatively ascribed a 'glorious future' to the 'hill people' who had converted to Christianity,<sup>127</sup> to which

---

<sup>125</sup> Seventh Session of the American Baptist Conference, held at Gauhati, December, 27, 1902-4<sup>th</sup> January 1903, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, p 83

<sup>126</sup> Thomas, *Evangelising the Nation*, p. 5

<sup>127</sup> Seventh Session of the American Baptist Conference, held at Gauhati, December, 27, 1902-4<sup>th</sup> January 1903, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, p 83

reference was ostensibly made on Naga Hills. Such opinion of some missionaries was prompted by the success rate of Christian evangelism and education in the hills. In fact, the American Baptist mission in Assam plains was reported to be a 'frustrating experience', except for a section of immigrants.<sup>128</sup>

Evangelizing cultures may be explored from a new perspective by looking at the shift in cultural specifics and values. As a case in point, the coming of Christianity to the hills caused a break in the idea and manifestation of the 'sacred'. Subsequently, missionaries used the notion of sacred as a device to budget and scrutinize culture as a way of capturing the imagination of the locals. The missionary idea of sacred was professed through texts, prayers, teachings, education and institutions. The idea of redemption, which means 'deliverance', emerged as a powerful evangelizing rhetoric. The ascription of sacred may be considered the epitome of the process of evangelizing cultures and to some degree, understood as 'cultural evangelism'. Jonathan Draper has discussed about the sacred experience in colonial Africa. He argued that the idea of sacred was influential to the imperial domination and even contained local resistance to colonial advances.<sup>129</sup> However, the Christian experience in the Naga Hills was different in the sense that evangelism was not basically patronized by the colonial state. Of course, there was a close nexus between the imperials and the missionaries, yet they remained as two separate entities. This equidistance relationship was possible because the American Baptist missionaries were basically not the representatives of the Queen, although, they were part of the larger idea of conquest and control.

Even so, a grey area still remained in between the colonial regime and the Baptist mission, in the sense that the latter used the government's permission to operate. Yet it did not strictly operate within the colonial geographical space. Take for example, although E. W. Clark took permission from government to venture

---

<sup>128</sup> Ibid

<sup>129</sup> Draper, *Orality, Literacy and Colonialism*, p. 5-6

into the un-administered areas in the 1870s for evangelizing the Nagas, only after about fifteen years later the colonial administration extended its jurisdiction to the missionary areas under Mokokchung subdivision.<sup>130</sup> Having said that, the American Baptist mission operated, more or less, independently. Moreover, the kind of local resistance to the missionaries was different too. Of course, as discussed above, there were serious differences between the sacred idea of the orient and the occident. Yet, going by the historical experiences, these dialectics were directed towards the missionaries in a way of thwarting them directly like the case of Africa as discussed by Draper, but the tensions remained more between the local converts and non-Christians and of course between the officials and missionaries.<sup>131</sup> The larger question on cultural dialectics however requires a detailed discussion. Nevertheless, it is important to underscore that the missionary and even colonial experiences were different in different societies. For instance, out of the many cultural interactions, the difference in the notions of sacredness, cut across societies, determine the way it reciprocates. As a result, any attempts to generalize and regularize these experiences across societies and cultures undermine historical subtleties and nuances. Observing the Naga society in particular, the staunch ritualistic cultural past caused a mutual resonance to the idea of sacredness propagated in Christianity.

Gradually, with the discursive formations that took place and the emergence of new socio-political institutions since the early twentieth century, the idea of sacredness was evidently ushered into the public sphere. Soon it evidently became part of the larger identity discourse in the form of the 'idea of nation'. It has been evident that the 'sacred' was appropriated as part of the political rhetoric. For example, in the early nationalist narratives and pamphlets, Israel, Jews, New Jerusalem and other prophecies like that had formed the crux of the political and the religious rhetoric. The interweaving of religion and nationalism perhaps

---

<sup>130</sup> Bendangyabang Ao, *History of Christianity in Nagaland*, p. 95-96

<sup>131</sup> Draper, *Orality, Literacy and Colonialism*, p. 5-6

expanded not only the religious consciousness but also the political aspirations. The idea of a sacred Christian nation not only resuscitated the inherent sensibilities of distinctiveness but also gradually sewed the individuated sensibilities into the popular consciousness. This popular consciousness probably had expedited the process of proselytization in the Naga Hills. The way scriptural passages were quoted in the political speeches and narratives manifested such popular experience. Evidently, such rhetoric had captured the popular imagination not only of the early literates but also the masses.<sup>132</sup> Looking at the conversion statistics of the Nagas, it shows that massive proselytization took place during the peak of Naga political movement. Thomas' work becomes all the more relevant to this dual political and cultural imagination.<sup>133</sup> The early Naga literates, like the missionaries, became proactive proponents of such 'sacred ideologies'.

In 1940s, the missionaries had attempted to ensure that the spiritual growth was not hindered by the successful conversions.<sup>134</sup> It must be noted here that the mission vision of the missionaries had surpassed mere conversion. For them, to sustain Christianity, the spiritual aspect was crucial. Interestingly, the spiritual aspect could have had far reaching consequences on the cultural systems of the locals. Here it may be stated that the missionaries had used divine means to bring about and also retain shifts. A missionary by the name Phillips revealed a classic allegory which perfectly captures the very idea of evangelizing cultures. According to him, it was not appropriate to quote the 'Ten Commandments' from the Bible to convince that all men were sinners. But it was rather more convincing and relevant with the story of parents assuming the responsibility for the wrongs of their children.<sup>135</sup> From this allegory, it may be understood that condemnation of non-Christians as 'sinners' in the first place was crucial for deriving a Christian

---

<sup>132</sup> Nuh and Lasuh (eds.) *The Naga Chronicle*, p. 118 and 128; Khutso, "Shifting Democratic Experiences of Nagas", p. 9

<sup>133</sup> Thomas, *Evangelizing the Nation*, p. 5

<sup>134</sup> Assam Baptist Missionary conference report, Thirty Seventy Session, Jorhat, Assam, 1940, p. 24

<sup>135</sup> Baptist Missionary Review, August, 1908, p. 487

conviction. For this, the cultural logic was primarily the instillation of guilt as ‘sinners’ in the local non-Christians. The Christians’ believe that sinners would be condemned to eternal death whereas those who repent and follow would be saved by God’s grace<sup>136</sup> probably had insinuated ‘fear’ in the psyche of the barely literate locals. Therefore, in all probability the local societies were condemned to ‘nothingness’ in order to initiate the Christian sacred experience. Such missionary schemes had created emotional hysteria across villages and perhaps had stimulated large scale conversions. In fact, the way rhetoric and emotions had interfered in the proselytization processes makes conversions to Christianity all the more cultural.

The element of sacred was not only limited to the church and evangelistic spaces alone. However, a close observation of the interplay of ‘sacred’ with the political had generated experiences of alternate realities, or perhaps, a sort of magical or spiritual realm. Although, it may be challenging to strictly cross examine these experiences with the available historical methods, it is pertinent for a historian to discuss and explore isolated experiences in order to better locate nuances and arrive closer to the history itself. Geertz succinctly presents how sacred symbols operate to amalgamate people’s ethos, by which it means, character and quality of their life, moral and aesthetic trends and mood, and their world view.<sup>137</sup> According to him, “religious symbols formulate a basic congruence between a particular style of life and a specific metaphysic, and in so doing sustain each with the borrowed authority of the other”.<sup>138</sup> As far as Christian experiences in the Naga Hills was concerned, these spiritual experiences in the form of ‘prophecies’, ‘dreams’, ‘revelations’, etc., were often instantiated, which of course cannot be validated. The sacred aspect of the new belief system, besides others, had manifested a strong indigenized sense. This indigenized experience had not only redefined Christianity

---

<sup>136</sup> “Made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.” Ephesians 2:5 New International Version (NIV);

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+2:5&version=NIV>

<sup>137</sup> Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, p. 89

<sup>138</sup> Ibid, p. 90

but also that of culture. Nye argues that particular religions are shaped by particular cultures and vice-versa.<sup>139</sup> This may be referred to as a case of cultural hybridity.

Besides the contextual socio-cultural dynamics of Naga society, the socio-cultural phenomena created by the idea of sacredness had, and even continues to have huge bearings on the society. The same way, the new culture propagated by the church and evangelists was closely embraced. This perspective may provide a new threshold to unraveling some of the cultural ambiguities and phenomena to intrigue larger questions on the overlapping and double standards of culture and Christian evangelism. For the purpose of this research, cultural evangelism may be explained as a form of ‘cultural imperialism’, perhaps a more subtle form, which has Christian basis and intent. For instance, all the missionaries, be it the Americans or others, operate from their respective cultures and so culture becomes part and parcel of Christian evangelism. Therefore, in this sense, evangelizing culture may denote appropriating localized systems and cultural evangelism as embedding the outsider’s cultural systems.

#### **4.6 The Question of a Double Consciousness**

During the recent times, it may be observed that there has been a resuscitated interest among scholars, especially the foreign scholars, on the oral discourses of the North East.<sup>140</sup> Themes like lived experiences, alternate realities, supernatural encounters, belief-worlds etc, have been framed to engage the oral

---

<sup>139</sup> Nye, *Religion: The Basics*, p. 5

<sup>140</sup> Themes like “Ritual flows and ruptures in Northeast India”; “Supernatural’ Encounters in Northeast India: Belief-Worlds and Alternate Realities”; were explored at the International Conference on ‘Locating Northeast India: Human Mobility, Resource Flows, and Spatial Linkages’, 9th-12th January, 2018



domains.<sup>141</sup> In fact, starting with the American missionaries to the present day research methodologies in the academic systems, had more or less choked the oral experiences. Such lackadaisical approach to local cultural systems had been suppressive so to say. It had produced a sense of double consciousness in the local minds and therefore, indigenous cultures were relegated into the grey domains. To a large extent, the locals had lost primacy of their own cultures in their consciousness and new socio-cultural assumptions had progressively prevailed. Likewise, orality has been assumed as a ‘cultural misfortune’ in the ‘academic world’ which has probably given birth to a sort of disposition for cultural cringe.<sup>142</sup> Yet, even if the new cultural forms had asserted its dominance, total cultural amnesia is almost impossible. For which, most of the locals especially those who had leaned towards Christianity and western cultures, experience a predicament of being caught in between two cultures. This produces a sort of double consciousness as defined by W. E. B. DuBois. According to DuBois, double consciousness is a psychological state in which there is a feeling of belonging to more than one identity which makes it difficult to develop a sense of the self. It has been also referred to as always looking at self through the eyes of others.<sup>143</sup> DuBois tries to explain the case of the Black Americans who had been sandwiched in between multiple cultures during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Perhaps, such consciousness may persist perpetually. This concept of double consciousness shall be borrowed to critically explain some of the recent socio-cultural processes that have taken place in the Naga society. I Ben Wati’s case may be a perfect instance. At his birth he was given an English biblical name called Donald by an American Baptist missionary, Mrs. Muriel Massey Dowd. When he grew up, he was deeply

---

<sup>141</sup> International Conference Locating Northeast India: Human Mobility, Resource Flows, and Spatial Linkages, Department of Sociology, Tezpur University 9th-12th January, 2018, <http://www.tezu.ernet.in/event/CONCEPT-NOTE-AND-CFP.pdf>

<sup>142</sup> Khutso, “The Socio-Cultural Situation and the Ambiguity of Double Consciousness”, 2015

<sup>143</sup> William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, Prabhat Prakashan, 1965

baffled as to why an English name was given to him in the first place. He asked the following questions to understand a state of double consciousness.

*“But why was a foreign name given to me? Why did my grandfather and grandmother failed to give me a family memorial name, an honorific or a good namesake? Did my mother and father do this to make the white (American) people happy? Was it to imitate some others that an Ao name was not used for me? Or was this a new wind blowing in, a step into a new generation, a different culture, or a sign of the times? Or was it the God of our destiny leading us into a new road? Thus, asking the question “How?” I start this book.”<sup>144</sup> (Start writing his autobiography)*

As mentioned, the concept of double consciousness captures a cultural grey area irrespective of the contextual differences. Beginning from the colonial to the post-colonial, the Naga society hinges in between similar social and cultural dilemma – a dilemma between one’s own cultures and so to say ‘alien’ cultures. The emergence of this cultural complex may be seen as a new cultural marker.

It locates double consciousness in the Naga society, basically on the overlapping of two kinds of consciousness. Firstly, a kind of consciousness that identifies with the Naga indigenous socio-cultural systems and practices which were sustained by oral culture in the past. And secondly, the colonial and missionary engagement with the Nagas that brought about a new consciousness of the West and its multiple cultures, which also includes spiritual consciousness. This new consciousness was insinuated on the Nagas through literary culture. As a result of the overlapping of these diverse patterns of consciousness, a sort of cultural ambiguity has been produced. Even at the level of spiritual consciousness, there had been constant interaction and fusion between the traditional and the western notions of spirituality which had produced ambiguities. All the more, when the traditional belief systems had been relocated from a Christian metaphysical and

---

<sup>144</sup> Wati, *Impur Chanu*, p. 6

emotional frame.<sup>145</sup> It is in this situation of ambiguity that literary culture has engendered a popular perception of according preeminence to ‘western’ or even ‘Christian’ consciousness as the ‘mainstream culture’. As a result, this new ‘mainstream consciousness’ instilled fondness for the western cultures and embedded superior and progressive imagination in the minds of the Nagas. Accordingly, the Nagas progressively embraced western cultural goods while the indigenous practices slowly tend to lose its place in the society. This couldn’t be a better expression of the colonial design.

It is vital to understand contemporary social and cultural processes from the perspective of the receiving end i.e. the Naga indigenous culture. It is important to therefore locate indigenous cultures and its networks when the ‘Western’ culture had become the cultural yardstick; a situation in which the locals had been indoctrinated to look at their own culture as inferior; A situation in which cultural change had become the new normal and traditions had been faulted; A state in which even the understanding of morality had been fixed to the ‘west’, perhaps as universal; When the ‘western’ cultural traditions in this case, had been popularly perceived as ‘modern’ and the local as anachronistic; A scenario in which emulation of the west had become progressive and success statements; Hence, it may be argued that the socio-cultural situation has reached critical levels. The question remains, if the locals could identify themselves as English because they speak and write like them? Or even Americans, because the Nagas and other communities had reciprocated to the Christian gospel brought by them? Where do we locate the ‘self’? Perhaps the liking for the ‘good news’ had probably pushed the locals to the shadow of rulers and missionaries, and not realizing their own shadows. Nevertheless, the process of this cultural consumption much at the cost of indigenous cultures indicates if the Nagas had accepted ‘Western’ culture rather than the gospel. In fact, there is a fine line which differentiates culture from religion

---

<sup>145</sup> Geertz explores the nature of spiritual consciousness of a people by which it is importantly the moods and motivations on one hand and metaphysical conceptions on the other which determine the spiritual consciousness of a society. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, p. 113

and even connects the two. This ambiguity had somehow produced a perplexed cultural situation. This is how the concept of double consciousness is explained.<sup>146</sup>

To sum up, the double consciousness, in this context, may be understood as a cultural phenomenon which had progressively developed since the colonial and missionary engagement. It may be explained from the perspectives of cultural hybridity of Homi Bhabha. This phenomenon had emerged as a result of deep cultural interaction, assimilation and adaptation in the course of which multiple cultures and even people were weaved into the making new cultural conditions. Therefore, the primacy to the traditional or indigenous cultures was lost over time. Perhaps, it may be argued that a sort of popular culture had prevailed over the traditional systems and hence, the local cultures gradually fell into the normative zone. This cultural situation brings out a clear contrast of breaks and shifts in the cultural systems. In fact, the modern educational system had given birth to a new cultural capital known as 'class'. With this new consciousness percolating into the Naga society, cultural change had become all the more linear. It was so because, class had become an emulated social and economic category and therefore, education became more or less a necessary evil. This process had produced a new socio-cultural dynamic which had effected perpetual change.

#### **4.7 Cultural Change as a Continuous Process**

With the advent of literary culture, there has been huge cultural shift for the Nagas. Perceptions and thought processes of the people had infinitely changed since the experience of colonialism and evangelism. Therefore, the question is that, even though, oral culture and literary culture may be cultural norms of respective societies, the pattern of consciousness are surely different. And as such, what makes

---

<sup>146</sup> Khutso, "The Socio-Cultural Situation and the Ambiguity of Double Consciousness," 2015

the 'new consciousness' of the literary culture so overwhelming is intriguing.<sup>147</sup> Looking at the evidences, it has become palpable that the flow of cultural exchange has remained constant, if not accelerated. In fact, the structures and agencies that had been set up since the beginning of contact with outside cultures continue to channel the cultural flows. This is where Althusser's exposition of 'ideology' becomes relevant. According to him, ideology is the set of discourses by which people understand their world citing the instance of how a Christian understands his life as "a moral progression towards eternity."<sup>148</sup> Importantly, the way ideologies, especially dominant ideologies like Christian missionary and colonial in this context, had been built into the consciousness of people determine their spontaneous thoughts and speech, taking the instance of the proletariats who express their protest in terms of dominant bourgeois ideologies.<sup>149</sup> Here, it may be understood that the agencies and structures were indigenized and localized and therefore, it has been absorbed into the local cultural systems. In this way, the 'alien-ness' and 'foreign-ness' of these new cultural elements continued to remain elusive with the passing of each generation. It is important to argue that in the oral societies, the interiorization of new norms and systems is relatively easier as resistance and traditions decrease along with preceding generations. Likewise, it may be safely assumed that the succeeding generations were born to the contemporary cultural norms in a way that pervades the younger generations from their actual and ancestral indigenous cultural knowledge and practices. Therefore, a sort of discontinuity may be located from these generational lapses. Nevertheless, the local cultural systems had become all the more dynamic in embracing new cultural forms through the new structures and agencies as stated above. This state of cultural interaction shall be understood as a continuous process.

As discussed above, the colonial and missionary institutions had become the touch points of this perpetual exchange. Besides other institutions, schools and

---

<sup>147</sup> Ibid

<sup>148</sup> Ferretter, Louis Althusser, p. 78

<sup>149</sup> Ibid, p. 80

churches were exceptional in introducing new cultural forms and grooming it through various spiritual agencies like that of the 'sacred'. Moreover, cultural change as a stream of consciousness may be further explored. First, it may be looked at from the perspective of structural institutions as stated, which may be understood as mediating a continual flow of knowledge, information, values, beliefs, etc. Secondly, it may be also understood as a process of cultural reproduction through the local agencies. For instance, missionaries had actually imparted basic literacy and considerable knowledge of the bible to the students from the very start and sent these graduates to different villages as teachers and literate missionaries, who were tasked to introduce schools and plant churches in villages. Evidently, by the early part of the twentieth century, the American Baptist missionary movement had stabilized and the missionary and education zeal were heightened, which prompted literate locals to venture outside of their communities to preach and teach. This missionary design of education during the early engagements was quite linear and goal oriented, in the sense that, the sole purpose of education was to train local evangelists and teachers, of course, with some few exceptions. This makes the process of cultural reproduction linear. It has been documented that by 1939, the Aos had assumed responsibility to take up the mission work in the Sangtam areas.<sup>150</sup> Most of these areas had remained outside of the colonial territory of the administered Naga Hills. Like it has been argued above, the missionaries always recognized the primacy of the 'local agencies' in taking forward and penetrating into the local and traditional spaces. The example of the Ao churches shows a profound sense of this cultural reproduction. From this perspective, it may be argued that the expansionist tendency of the American Baptist Mission has been justified.

Thirdly, the stream of cultural flow may be located in the literary culture itself. Writing had become a new medium through which cultural exchanges continually took place. Walter Ong calls this as a modern grapholect, in which

---

<sup>150</sup> Assam Baptist Missionary conference report, Thirty Seventy Session, Jorhat, Assam, 1940, p 23

languages like English had become a dominant medium. According to him, writing and print could establish huge communication networks and argues that the process of writing itself restructures consciousness.<sup>151</sup> In arguing for the literary tradition, it does not mean that the oral cultures and mediums had lost its relevance in the process of cultural change. In fact, it must be argued that orality remains as the most dominant medium. It is only that literary culture as a new cultural medium was negotiating cultural space in a different way. Moreover, it may be contended that the literary had emerged as to be the mother of multiple streams through which cultural capital had been produced, disseminated and absorbed. This is where, the concept of a new form of orality may be defined. The nature and content of orality had changed as a result of cultural interaction, assimilation and adaptation. Therefore, even though the system and networks of oral exchanges in the local spheres remained more or less unbroken, the contents became infused with new cultural knowledge and information. In this aspect, the fluidity in between orality and literary may be understood as complimentary tributaries in the stream of consciousness, even though, on a broader frame, it remained parallel cultural systems.

#### **4.8 The New Class of Nagas**

The complex cultural interaction between the Western imperial cultures and the indigenous cultural systems progressively resulted in class formation in the Naga society beginning from the twentieth century onwards. These formations were clearly visible in way most of the early ‘literates’ and ‘converts’ had clung to the socio-cultural and economic changes propagated by the missionaries and the colonial officials. As the conversion rates shot up since the beginning of the new century, the ‘literates’ and ‘converts’ emerged as a new category of Nagas, who had distanced from traditional cultural understanding of a way of life and

---

<sup>151</sup> Walter Ong, *Literacy and Orality*, p. 105-106

progressively embraced the ‘Christian’ and the ‘modern’ way of life to define a new composite identity and culture. This category of young Nagas steadily picked up the missionary zeal from the missionaries and became Christian evangelists within their respective community circles, neighboring villages, tribes and even outside of the Colonial Indian sub-continent to Burma. Thus, for the first time, the American Baptist Missionaries found active assistance from the local agencies to teach literacy and preach Christianity by transcending their village and tribal centric identities. A few notable instances of some of these local evangelists who had actively worked as field evangelists and converts and baptized thousands, embody the voices of this new composite culture and class.

One of the early Eastern Angami converts (now Chakhesang) by the name Sülüho joined the Baptist Mission School, Kohima, at the age of 28 when he was persuaded by the American Missionary, Dr. Rivenburg and a local Angami evangelist Sieliezhu in 1906. He completed four years of study at the mission school and later went back to Kohima to get one year of Bible Training. Soon, he was recognized as a ‘licensed evangelist’ to administer water baptism, Holy Communion, marriage and funeral rites. His wedding was the first Christian marriage in the present Chakhesang area and the second in the Kohima field held in 1912 officiated by one of the American missionaries. As a local Christian evangelist, he reached out to many tribes including Mao, Rengma, Lotha, Sema, Kuki, Zeliang, including Angami and Chakhesang areas. In between 1924-26, he supervised all the churches under Kohima Elekha after Rivenburg left Naga Hills for good. He converted and baptized thousands of people, including the daughter of an American Missionary G. W. Supplee, by the name Helen, sometime in 1936-1937. Moreover, in between 1927-47, he held pastoral responsibility over several churches spread across areas mentioned above. He was also referred to as a ‘Missionary Educationist’ as he often spoke of the value of education for the Christians to Church congregations during the course of his evangelism. In 1930s, he invited the Goanburas of the present Chakhesang area, which was formerly Eastern Angami, to a meeting and impressed them about the need of education. As



a result, an education committee was set up and two schools were introduced at Chozuba and Phek respectively, and were upgraded to Government Middle English Schools in short time. He is remembered as a forceful preacher of the “Living Word of God” by those whom he converted.<sup>152</sup> Another evangelist by the name Lhutsuwu, who converted in 1911, received foundational education in between 1906-1909 from Kohima Mission School. He went on to become one of the pioneers of Christianity and educationist amongst the Chakhesangs and Sumi tribes.<sup>153</sup>

Similarly, a Sumi evangelist by the name Ashu Kushe who converted in 1921 reached out to distant villages like Zunki and Longmatra of Sangtam tribe, and tribes like Yimchunger, Eastern Angami (now called as Chakhesang), Angami and Rengma areas.<sup>154</sup> Another Lotha evangelist by the name Chenchio Ovung who joined Furkating Mission School, Assam in the year 1925, was deeply influenced by what he was taught in the school, “you are the light in the darkness” which reportedly motivated him and his evangelical endeavors throughout his life.<sup>155</sup> Imlong Chang who received education from Mokokchung in between 1919-1923 married an Ao lady and went on to become an evangelist. He was instrumental in bringing together elders of his community to organize the Chang Tribal Committee in 1945 which gradually resulted in the formation of Chang tribe. Chang barely attended school but went on to become an ardent advocate of literacy and ‘fundamental education’, the kind of education which the missionaries imparted through its village primary schools. He also translated portion of the New Testament of the Bible, gospel hymnals, and published several pedagogic texts for school children in between 1928 and 1957 under the supervision of American Missionary B. I. Anderson at Impur.<sup>156</sup> Another evangelist-teacher by the name

---

<sup>152</sup> One New Humanity: Nagaland Baptist Church Council Celebrates Platinum Jubilee 1937-2012, Nagaland Baptist Church Council, Kohima, 2012, p. 190-191

<sup>153</sup> Ibid, p. 184

<sup>154</sup> Ibid, p. 202

<sup>155</sup> Ibid, p. 199-200

<sup>156</sup> Ibid, p. 205-206

Megosieso Savino attended Kohima Mission school and received theological training from Cherrapunji and Insein Bible seminary in Myanmar and returned to Kohima in 1943. The American Missionaries sent him to Chayaba near Chozuba to open a vernacular bible school in 1943, then sent to Pughoboto under Sumi mission centre to train Christian for evangelists, started the Witter Bible School at Vankhosung, under Wokha. Later, he was sent to Phek as the first field director to establish the Mission Centre for the Chakhesang tribe, which separated from the Angami tribe in 1947.<sup>157</sup>

There were notable women evangelists who contributed to the growth of Christianity. Jongmayangla, who was a student of the first school started by Mary Mead Clark at Molungyimsen, learned 'English alphabets' (roman letters) using cut-out pieces of card-board paper, and class attendance was accounted by number of beads issued by Mead Clarks, which were worn as necklace. Jongmayangla was one of the most sincere students and went on to become a teacher in the same school in between 1881-1884, and actively assisted Mead Clark in her tours to evangelize women under the American mission field. She became a full time evangelist in between 1884-1894. As a recognition of her service, the American missionaries conferred her the title "Woman Church Leader". She had been described as, "courageous enough to take on the pulpit not only as a public speaker, but also as a reformer of primeval traditions and animistic culture which were contrary to Christian principles".<sup>158</sup> Another Ao missionary lady teacher by the name Jepdakyangla, who attended Impur Mission School in 1910 and drew the attention of not only the missionaries but also the colonial officials because of her academic performance at school. The visiting Commissioner from Kohima granted her a Merit Scholarship. She went on to become a missionary teacher at Impur Mission School, in charge of World Wide Guide Service under American Mission, first

---

<sup>157</sup> Ibid, p. 203-204

<sup>158</sup> Ibid, p. 185-186

chairperson of Aotzur Telongjem Mundang (Ao Women's Congregation) which was formed in 1945.<sup>159</sup>

According to the Nagaland Baptist Church records, one of the greatest local Evangelists in the Naga church history was Rev. Inaho Kinimi. He briefly attended government primary school sometime in 1900-1903 and later became a Dobashi under the British Government. Prior to his conversion to Christianity in 1927, he was a persecutor of Christianity. After his conversion, he resigned from the colonial service as Dobashi to which C. R. Pawsey, SDO Civil of Mokokchung, was bitterly disappointed and out of anger chopped off Inaho's hair and discharged him from the colonial state service. While on his way back from Kohima to his native village, he got baptized by Rev. Viliezhu Rengma and soon became the first recognized Sumi Evangelist under Mokokchung Elekha. He along with few other Sumi Christians formed the Sumi Naga Church Association in 1929. According to records, during his tenure as Evangelist in between 1928-1949, he baptized about 12, 000 Sumi Christians. In recognition of his faithful works Rev. Anderson, the American Missionary designated for the Sumi tribe described Inaho Kinimi as "the Paul of the Sumi Tribe" (In Christian history, Paul, who was one of the dreaded prosecutors of Christians and later converted to become one of the greatest Christian leaders).<sup>160</sup>

These local evangelists who had administered across tribes were instrumental in breaking down tribal differentiations to gradually bring together different villages and tribes under 'one body' in the evangelical sense. The minutes of Ao Naga Baptist Association which was held at Merangkong in 1936 mentioned that five Angami church leaders who exhorted the gathering stated that "Nagas would not join a council with the plains but would rather come together as 'one' Naga group". The prominent church leaders namely M. Savino from the Angami Association, and L. Kijungluba and Longri Ao from the Ao Association were

---

<sup>159</sup> Ibid, p. 196

<sup>160</sup> Ibid, p. 188-189

instrumental in the formation of the Naga Hills Baptist Church Advisory Council on 5<sup>th</sup> April, 1937.<sup>161</sup> In 1959 it was recorded that there were fourteen Baptist Churches Associations under the Naga Hills Baptist Church Council.<sup>162</sup> The coming together of these communities was a significant exercise in the construction of a composite class identity of the early ‘literates’ and ‘converts’. The testimonials of above mentioned local evangelists strongly imply that it was through the ‘foundational education’ most of these evangelists received that not only introduced them to Christianity but also imbibed them with a new literate and evangelical consciousness, which was also very much a class consciousness. The class consciousness in the literate and evangelical consciousness may be succinctly located in an instance of a fifteen year old Sumi by the name Ghonito Zhimomi, who walked all the way to Kohima from Nehokhu village to attend the first Naga Christian convention held in 1938. He was converted and baptized in this convention and came to be called as

*“A foot soldier for the Lord”. It was written about him that “even at such a tender age, Ghonito felt a strong desire to lead others to God so he asked fellow believers to keep themselves clean, to put oil on their head and to maintain clean and neat appearance so that by looking different, they would attract others to their company of believers.”*<sup>163</sup>

Thus, Christians and literates constituted a new composite culture – the new modern class of Nagas. Mr. A. Kevichusa, the first Naga graduate captures this new social, cultural, spatial and political shift by referring the transition of Kohima from a village milieu to a colonial town which became a ‘melting pot’ of various villages and tribes in the Naga Hills.<sup>164</sup> This new modern identity was defined by literacy,

---

<sup>161</sup> Ibid, p. 15

<sup>162</sup> Ibid, p. 17

<sup>163</sup> One New Humanity: Nagaland Baptist Church Council Celebrates Platinum Jubilee 1937-2012, Nagaland Baptist Church Council, Kohima, 2012, p. 205-234

<sup>164</sup> A. Kevichusa, the first Naga graduate quoted in Government High School Magazine, November 22, 1954, in Government of Nagaland, *Heralding Hope*, p. 28

productivity and culture became part of the everyday and oral practices slowly receded to occasional practices.

## Chapter V

### Different Locations of Modernity

*“My grandfather was a headhunter, but towards the beginning of 1909, he sent my father Imchaba to the Impur Mission Training School. That fifty graduates have emerged from among my grandfather’s grandchildren in the last ninety years reveals a great change.” I. Ben Wati<sup>1</sup>*

#### 5.1. Critical Understanding of ‘Alternative Modernities’

The previous chapters have examined the creation of a new social group in the Naga Hills. As the Nagas were gradually introduced to a new historical and cultural past through the missionary pedagogic strategies and Christian texts, especially the holy bible, it led them to progressively draw cultural values and historical affiliations from Christianity. Thus, a critical assessment of the traditional perceptions of an ethnicity, both narrowly community centered, and based on a martial patriarchal language transmitted orally, became integral to a new Naga rationale. Behind a new modern sense of socio-cultural stratification and difference in economic status, also lay a critical self-consciousness of their ethnic origins. In this new social group, differences in ethnic groupings or different spatial locations began to take a backseat: common factors of literacy and access to the socio-cultural as well as economic resources began to mark a new class of ‘Nagas’, modern, and located within a ‘world-religion’ that possessed a deep intellectual history. By the eighteenth century, as Christianity had claimed an imperial ascendancy over the globe, the history of the Church also became a new entry point for new converts

---

<sup>1</sup> Wati, *Impur Chanu*, p. 20

who would read the temporal depths lying deep in Church history. The new literate class could claim this history as their own turf, which deepened their conformed position within this new modernity. The question, therefore, that this work raises, is the very 'nature' of Naga modernity.

Certainly, the discourse on modernity is complex and perpetual. It is complex, for the definition of modernity is subject to the local and individuated conditions. Therefore, modernity may be best understood in close consideration to the temporal, spatial and contextual condition on particular societies. It is even argued that modernity as a phenomenon is dynamic, and this position on modernity may allow critical takes on dominant schools of thoughts. Dilip Parameshwar and Dipesh Chakrabarty, besides others, have done notable work on the alternative understanding of modernity.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the context of this study is an emerging area. The frame of alternative modernities in the form of subaltern studies, or post-modern approaches, have intellectual and theoretical lacuna. These cannot thoroughly explain the process of modernity of the hill people like the Nagas and the Mizos. It may be stressed that the way James C Scott had categorically defined the nuances of what characterizes the hills and the plains may be critically borrowed to map contextual methodologies employed by these communities in order to navigate a middle position between predominantly oral cultures and a new literate consciousness that was refracted through an imperialistic and hegemonic religious prism.<sup>3</sup>

The regularity of applying dominant methodological parameters on these hill societies and in particular on the Nagas, present a manufactured historical approach. It must be clarified that the hills and the plains had experienced antagonistic relationship historically. Therefore, there are certain levels of

---

<sup>2</sup> Parameshwar (ed.), *Alternative Modernities*, 2001; Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Habitations of Modernity*, Orient Blackswan, 2004; Chakrabati, "Adda, Calcutta: Dwelling in Modernity" in Parameshwar (eds.), *Alternative Modernities*

<sup>3</sup> Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, 2010

prejudice that exist in the perception and rejection of ‘cultural goods’ and demographic engagements that had circulated in pre-colonial times between the hills and the plains. Studies that underline these fundamental and mutual prejudices may be useful to accentuate these cultural anxieties that are still prevalent amongst these ethnic communities.<sup>4</sup> Thus these are inherited antagonisms that did not disappear with the arrival of colonial modernity. Moreover, the integration of indigenous communities within Christianity did not happen in exactly the same way. Thusly, the American Baptist mission in the plains of Assam and South India had stark differences in comparison with the Naga Hills.<sup>5</sup> It may be duly argued that even within the jurisdiction of the American Baptist Mission in colonial India, the idea of colonial modernity and experiencing colonial modernity had been different across different regions across the Indian sub-continent. Similarly, the experience of modernity among the hill communities of the then Northeast frontier region, differed. For instance, it was reported that the articulation of what missionaries called ‘self-reliance’ by Nagas evidently ‘surpassed’ other hill communities like the Garos.<sup>6</sup>

Even the strategies of engagement were largely impromptu, dictated by the local conditions and contexts. Accordingly, as discussed above, the discussion on modernity of then Assam and Naga hills itself cannot be totally generalized on the same terms. This historical situation calls for the location of varied socio-cultural phenomena through the perspective of alternative modernities. In an attempt to do that, the research delves into different historical terrains starting from the precolonial state of society through the complex web of interactions and outcomes. Evidently, it has been found that there were multiple forms of modernity that were produced in the course of interaction. From a perspective, the historical experiences

---

<sup>4</sup> Gynendra Pandey, *A History of Prejudice: Race, Caste, and Difference in India and the United States*, Cambridge University Press, 2013

<sup>5</sup> Second Survey of Fields and Work of the Northern Baptist Convention, Board of Missionary Cooperation, New York, Judson Press, Philadelphia, p 154

<sup>6</sup> Assam – Historical – A Century of Service by Wikstrand, 712-2.4, p. 7



suggest that one of the alternating phenomenon was the way modernity was dictated and forced. The foreigners had forced their way in and subsequently, their institutional systems, control and command apparatuses. The systems of culture were also evidently dictated according to colonial and evangelical terms. This brings out a strong critique to some visible discourses on the subject, which understands modernity to be a cordial phenomenon. For instance, the proposition of modernity to be a ‘rule of institutions’,<sup>7</sup> which has been critiqued by Chakrabarty as well.

Likewise, the aesthetics of material culture had also produced a new disposition of modernizing cultures and societies. This particular conduit of modernization had generated a consensual process of transition to modernity. Moreover, the way the notions of ‘cultural difference’ was built into the popular consciousness had generated a new cultural dialogic which had defined a binary of superior and inferior cultural complexes. This cultural dynamic has been referred to as the ‘politics of the reverence’. Similarly, there are other subtle agencies and structures which had defined discreet forms of modernity. Nevertheless, by all means, the dominant form in the Naga Hills by and large was the literate modernity. The phenomenon created by literacy and education in fact had made modernity as a necessary evil. It may be argued so because conquest and proselytization began with literacy and by the end of colonial occupation and missionary engagement, the Nagas in particular had changed beyond irreversible measure, not forgetting the perpetual sustenance of shifts across temporal and spatial domains through literacy.

Nevertheless, the location of the parameters of modernity within the historical context perhaps may be vital to the whole discourse on modernity. The question of what constitutes modernity is significant. Like it has been contended above, the parameters of modernity ought to be located from within colonization and proselytization and its enormous negative cultural baggage. This complex

---

<sup>7</sup> Chakrabarty, *Habitations of Modernity*, 2004

cultural situation of the Nagas within which modernity should be discussed pose a daunting challenge to modern scholars. A similar complex experience has been captured by Jonathan Draper where he states,

*“It is fascinating that despite all that the indigenous peoples suffered in the hands of colonialism, one finds to date no scarcity of analysts who assert in various ways that colonialism did (to these ‘poor people’) more good than harm—thereby (unwittingly) justifying current forms of colonialism.”*<sup>8</sup>

For instance, the case of some reformers like Ram Mohan Roy may be taken into account to make this point. There should be individual Naga converts and literates who could fit into Draper’s category.

Across the various linguistic regions of the sub-continent that came directly under colonialism, the liberal socio-cultural ideas of political rights and freedom, of fundamental equality of all human beings, and a new espousal of modern knowledge systems, integral to European enlightenment, came to play a huge part in the recasting of indigenous literate imagination. In Bengal Presidency, in the modern Madras and Bombay Presidencies, in the United Provinces – even in princely India. These western values fundamentally altered the way in which individuals and communities understood their location within their vernacular languages, domestic domain, in modern political processes, in the capitalistic market economy and other arenas that had a familiar cultural root, but had altered under the pulls and pushes of colonialism.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Draper eds., *Orality, Literacy and Colonialism*, p 171

<sup>9</sup> Cohn, *Colonialism and its forms of Knowledge*, 1997; A. Ira Venkatacalapati, *In Those Days There was No Coffee: Writings in Cultural History*; Sumit Guha, *Beyond Caste: Identity and Power in South Asia, Past and Present*, Brill, 2013 (Reprint), Vasudha Dalmia: *Hindu Pasts: Women, Religion, Histories*, Suny Press, 2017

## 5.2 The Problematic of Cultural Change in Modernity

Christianity maybe understood from two aspects —‘faith’ and ‘culture’. Accordingly, the reception of Christianity may be understood from these two aspects. As the first literate Nagas were trained by the missionaries, the educated folks returned to villages with a totally different impression about their own culture, for many of them returned as teachers or evangelists.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, their ability to emulate the ‘whites’ / sahibs/ mam-sahibs brought about new sensibilities in the new converts. To cite one example, the missionaries consistently harped on the sense of ‘civility’ by sternly ‘civilizing’ the local cultures and practices. Therefore, it may be said that the local cultures were deconstructed and reconstructed by the missionaries. In the process of reconstructing a new cultural framework for the local Christians, those who had attended schools and other institutions consumed cultural goods and subsequently expressed in the way they dressed, spoke and thought. Such practices of the early converts and educated Nagas allude certain sense of elitism and high culture. In fact, Christian and literate elitism in this context started with a waving admiration for the suits and boots. Similarly, even the impression of the non-literate village folks for the educated had progressively changed over the course of time, which had been exemplified through the experience of S. C. Jamir. When he returned to his village after completing his law degree from Allahabad in the mid-1950s, which was also a time of critical political activity in the Naga Hills District of Assam, it coincided with the second Naga Peoples’ Convention that was about to be held in his village, Ungma in 1958.<sup>11</sup> The village elders not only sought his advice and guidance but also the Ungma village council, (Village councils were normally very conservative and traditional), had conferred the responsibilities and authority to this young and fresh law

---

<sup>10</sup> Refer the accounts of early Naga Evangelists in *One New Humanity: Nagaland Baptist Church Council Celebrates Platinum Jubilee 1937-2012*, Nagaland Baptist Church Council, Kohima, 2012, p. 176-241; *125 Years, Jubilee Reports of Baptist Work in North East India- 1836-1961*, p 39

<sup>11</sup> S. C. Jamir, *A Naga’s Quest for Fulfillment*, Apurba, Bhubaneswar, 2016, p. 124-125

graduate, to organize the second Naga Peoples' Convention.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, the transformation of 'masculinity' in the Naga society from a patriarchal, warrior, phallocentric perhaps, to a gentlemanly expression of masculinity through the new literacy and socio-cultural and economic capital may be considered a drastic shift.

Here, it may be argued that modernity operates mostly from an alien culture and thus, the language of modernity becomes cryptic to host cultures. When modernity comes in such enigmatic form, the capacity to adapt or afford or even understand such new cultural systems and phenomenon were fundamental to manifest a 'modern outlook'. Therefore, the cultural 'outlook' itself becomes a crucial cultural agency. This aesthetic agency in many ways generate emotional and hysteric cultural excitement leading to a contagious social euphoria (ism). Such euphoric social behavior were central to the removal of traditional cultural standards of societies. This is how, hegemonic subtleties became significant 'technologies' for cultural change. When such internalized agencies are operational, popular resistance to change normally doesn't take place. That way, societies become vulnerable to turn into passive consumers/recipients of new cultural elements; a perfect instance of cultural mimicry. This phenomenon of perpetuity may be understood as an inherent characteristic of modernity.

The essence of class and elitism and the social phenomenon that modernity produces through its complex web may be understood as fundamental to the currency of modernity itself. I must argue that such elitist and classist cultural dispositions generates cultural difference between various cultures and within cultures. As a result, such differences create dialectic interactions/ relationships, in the Marxist sense of dialectical materialism.<sup>13</sup> Interestingly, in the process, the technologies that modernity employ creates certain basic/everyday necessities and capacities, and perhaps even access in societies and cultures. Such notions of necessity, capacity and access, which may be objective or even subjective in nature,

---

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

<sup>13</sup> Ferretter, *Louis Althusser*, 2006, p. 40

develops a sort of dependency in people. This path-dependence generated by modernity in the regular affairs of societies garnered a superior cultural position. Therefore, the novelty and relevance that modernity continually creates, relegates normative systems as irrelevant and traditional. Such cultural processes consumes old norms and (re) produces new norms. Nevertheless, the novel nature of modernity engenders a perpetual cultural phenomenon but a phenomenon which is not repetitive. Therefore, modernity may be understood as being perpetual in nature. When we look at history, colonial and missionary experiences in particular, it may be wrong or inappropriate to associate colonialism and Christianity with modernity in entirety. However, it is also difficult not to associate modernity with colonial and missionary engagements. Here, I have argued that modernity is a phenomena which is present in the colonial and missionary systems and institutions – cultural, religious, epistemic and hegemonic elements.

However, it must be argued that the oral traits of a society cannot be totally overcome by literary cultures. In the context of Naga society, literary culture partly reoriented the cultural tastes and practices of the people by altering the content and expressions of oral culture. Like the proponents of '*Tabula Rasa*'<sup>14</sup> advocates, the perception and experience shape knowledge systems. In this way, new experiences and new perceptions through the literary medium had replicated an indigenized forms of western knowledge system. However, it must be noted that there is always a duality of the oral and the literary in a literate society.

### 5.3 The Idea of a 'Dictated Modernity'

Looking at the colonial documents, the administrative officials were most of the time on the move to adjudicate justice in the different parts of the Naga

---

<sup>14</sup> [http://www.age-of-the-sage.org/philosophy/john\\_locke\\_tabula\\_rasa.html](http://www.age-of-the-sage.org/philosophy/john_locke_tabula_rasa.html)

Hills.<sup>15</sup> This colonial practice explains how colonial legality was used to secure colonial subjection by penalizing defaulters with punishments, which has been discussed in chapter two. A. W. Dawis, recorded his own experiences of how he imposed fine on villages of money and cattle or even by razing the villages to ashes. According to a report of 1891, Dawis stated, “this morning I burnt Ghovishe’s village and all his granaries, many of which had been emptied of grain...”<sup>16</sup> as a punishment for killing two men from another village. He further stated that the Angami villages were well built compared to the Semas and therefore, burning the village was a real punishment for the former. But the real colonial nature gets epitomized when these officials would not only burn the villages but also the granaries which consisted their livelihood. Therefore, such draconian punishments meted out to the indigenous villages who could not fall into its imagined cultural, legal and administrative domains displaced locals from their ancestral homes. These experiences were nothing short of the imposition of ‘arbitrary cultural scheme’ by an arbitrary power.<sup>17</sup> Some of these experiences were well documented in A W Dawis’ tour diaries covering almost entirely the last decade of the nineteenth century.<sup>18</sup> Such colonial disposition in some sense juxtapose the idea of modernity that colonial rule is generally associated with and reinforces ‘colonial despotism’.<sup>19</sup> The extremity of these punishments to dictate modernity on the indigenous villages probably resulted in two consequences – either the villagers were forced to surrender and seek refuge from the government by depending on its

---

<sup>15</sup> Look Government of Nagaland, File no 433, 1891-97, Tour Diary of A W Davis, Esq ICS, Deputy Commissioner, Naga Hills, 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> November, 1891, p. 7; As witnessed in the colonial documents, particularly the tour diaries of colonial officials, land disputes between villages and also village feuds for these disputes and even other issues, were very common.

<sup>16</sup> Government of Nagaland, File no 433, 1891-97, (1891) Tour Diary of A W Davis, Esq ICS, Deputy Commissioner, Naga Hills, p.18

<sup>17</sup> Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *Reproduction: In Education, Culture and Society*, Sage, 1990, p. xvi

<sup>18</sup> Governemnt of Nagaland, File no 433, 1891-97, (1891) Tour Diary of A W Davis, Esq ICS, Deputy Commissioner, Naga Hills

<sup>19</sup> Lange talks about how state structures had been used to promote despotism. Matthew Lange, *Lineages of Despotism and Development: British Colonialism and State Power*, University of Chicago Press, 2009, p. 8

ration supply and become colonial subjects, or were pushed farther, out from the colonial spaces. A new perspective to the discourse on colonial modernity may be instantiated by these instances to understand modernity as a ‘dictated modernity’ as far as this context was concerned.

There is another instance that may substantiate the very idea of ‘dictated modernity’. In some Kacha Naga villages (present day Zeliang) namely Dupema, Phuima, Tapama, Kenduma, Bopugwema, there was a custom of female infanticide, which was related to work culture. According to the custom of these villages, when a mother gives birth to a female baby, the mother was forbidden to work for a month. Therefore, during any season of hard work, such as harvesting, the villagers generally kill the infants. As a result the sex ratio of such villages had become very low. For instance, in 1891, the sex ratio in Phuima village was 70 female against 119 male, owing to which there were men above 40 years who could not find wives.<sup>20</sup> The colonial officials had warned these villages to stop such practices. Subsequently, Phuima villagers were paraded by colonial officials to confirm if the practiced had ceased. According to the report, there was a very marked absence of girls above three years of age, which indicated that female infanticide subsided since last three years.<sup>21</sup> The Deputy Commissioner warned by stating that,

*“I shall (make) this village as well as other villages carefully censused ...if the people find that attention is being continually directed to this point, the custom is pretty certain to be abandoned, if this has not been already done (Sic.).”<sup>22</sup>*

The action of the colonial officials against this traditional practice indicate that they were capable of awarding brutal punishments which evidently altered the

---

<sup>20</sup> Governemnt of Nagaland, File no 433, 1891-97, (1891) Tour Diary of A W Davis, Esq ICS, Deputy Commissioner, Naga Hills, p. 8

<sup>21</sup> Ibid

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

customary practices of these villages. As a matter of fact, customs and traditions of the indigenous villages were held 'sacred', therefore, to desacralize it by external forces suggests the enormity of authority these officials commanded. On this account, one can say that modernity was forced upon the subjects on the terms of colonial masters.

Moreover, A W Dawis had recorded how colonial officials had appropriated oath taking practices, which was a central part of local justice system, to deliver colonial justice and bring about colonial modernity. According to Dawis' report, "the Chaduma (Most probably Chedema) headmen took oaths on behalf of their respective khels that they had no unlicensed guns in their possession..."<sup>23</sup> An interesting event in the report states that during an oath taking ceremony to swear that the khel did not possess any guns, the headman (probably the Goanbura) from Viswema village quit in the middle of the ceremony as courage did not allow him to curse himself and the whole men of his khel. Consequently, he stepped out of the rope circle and professed his inability to swear.<sup>24</sup> It was also reported that some villages like Kerkrima (Kikruma) were reluctant to take oath. In the olden times, oath taking was considered a sacred and dreadful practice and therefore, it was exercised judiciously. The indigenous Naga society accredited oath taking as the ultimate justice. However, the foreigners entered into the spiritual realms of the indigenous villagers in the process of consolidating its rule. In this way, the colonial administrators had aggressively utilized the indigenous networks and institutions to produce imaginary modern subjects.

Precedently, the Deputy Commissioner had ordered to arrest two village headmen of a khel in Kegwema village in order to exert pressure on the villagers to produce an alleged murderer by the name Mosenyi who had been absconding.<sup>25</sup> The colonial rulers were shrewd enough to utilize indigenous institutions to draw

---

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p.12

<sup>24</sup> Ibid

<sup>25</sup> Ibid



‘defaulters’ to its domains. The ‘politics of ransom’ may be more apt to comprehensively capture the very experience of how the politics of control was secured. These instances strongly capture how colonial rulers had subtly appropriated the tenets of communitarian societies to negotiate space for colonial modernity. The discourse on modernity in this particular context, had divulged the very fact that modernity by its nature is multiple. And to understand modernity in its singularity may be incomplete.

#### **5.4 The Missionary Logic of a ‘Capitalist Modernity’**

Perrine had reported that the Nagas were making fairly good progress in what he calls ‘educational self-support’ as well as ‘religious self-support’.<sup>26</sup> By ‘self-support’, he means that the villages were given responsibility to manage their own ‘village schools’ and ‘local churches’ by 1897. Out of the six primary schools under Impur mission station, four schools were evidently self-sustained by 1899.<sup>27</sup> Likewise, in 1898, some Naga villages had contributed directly a sum of Rs. 126.5 and indirectly Rs. 313 towards the management of village primary schools. Evidently, Government contributed a sum of Rs. 780 and the American Baptist Mission for the same purpose contributed Rs. 730.<sup>28</sup> As the missionary logic of capital continued to percolate more and more in the local literates and converts, evangelization and education received a trilateral support. W. F Dowd reported that half of the village schools which fed the Station School at Impur were self-supported by the last decade of nineteenth century.<sup>29</sup> By 1910, Rev. R. B. Longwell

---

<sup>26</sup> Fifth Triennial Conference held at Dibrugarh, Feb 11-19, 1899, Calcutta Baptist Mission Press, p. 39-40

<sup>27</sup> Ibid

<sup>28</sup> Ibid

<sup>29</sup> Seventh Session of the American Baptist Conference, held at Gauhati, December, 27, 1902-4<sup>th</sup> January 1903, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, p 42

had reported that most of the village schools were left at the management of the local teachers without much missionary oversight.<sup>30</sup>

It may be highlighted that after the arrival of new missionaries like Perrine and a few others in the last decade of nineteenth century, there were changes in the strategies and standards of mission activities. By and by, these new reforms and enthusiasm were translated into progressive outcomes. In 1909 the number of Baptisms for the first time reached 716 under the Impur mission field.<sup>31</sup> With the increase in the number of local literates, the existing churches started employing regular pastors without totally depending on missionaries. Referring this steady expansion, Rev. W. F. Dowd had written that the villages were becoming self-reliant and independent.<sup>32</sup> Later in the nineteen-thirties an appeal was made to the local Christian community under Kohima mission station to extend financial support out of their church budget to schools. Accordingly, the Church council suggested that every church would contribute one paise per month to patronize the Kohima mission school.<sup>33</sup> After which, J. E. Tanquist reported that all the 74 village churches collectively sponsored the extra teacher for class V in the mission school.<sup>34</sup> In the same year, as there was no High School in the entire Naga Hills, the educated Nagas made monetary contributions to introduce it.<sup>35</sup> The role of locals in education and evangelism became substantial by then.

In 1902, Kennedy, the officiating DC recorded in this tour diary which states,

---

<sup>30</sup> Assam Baptist Missionary Union, Report of the Tenth Biennial Session, Gauhati, January 8-17, 1910, p 86

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p 87

<sup>32</sup> Ninth Biennial Conference of the American Baptist Missionary Union, held at Gauhati, January 5 to 12, 1907, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, 1907, p. 52

<sup>33</sup> One Hundred-Twenty Fourth Annual Report of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, 1938, New York, Judson Press Philadelphia p 33

<sup>34</sup> Ibid

<sup>35</sup> Ibid

*“I have given the Viswema people a school on the condition that they build the school house and pandit quarters, and keep them in repair, and this they are quite willing to do. I am making all Naga villages at which there are pathsalas keep them in repair, as the grant given is not sufficient to repair the schools and supply books, slates, etc., which latter is done in the case of the Nagas. Besides it is a good thing to teach the Nagas that if they want assistance, they must also be prepared to help themselves and not sit with their eyes shut and mouths open waiting the government to fill the latter.”<sup>36</sup>*

This evidence, may conjure the argument that one of the strategies of the government and perhaps even without exception of the missionaries was to demand or ransom reciprocation of locals in terms of cultural adaptation, political resonance in the form of colonial subject-hood, submission to colonial economic and political demands like labor, tax and other services and most importantly, buy the legitimacy of the colonial domination and rule with certain advances. Material culture was thus used more or less as a bait to secure such interest. In the process, the colonial-missionary jargons of ‘welfare’ and ‘public good’ were somehow used as colonial rhetoric to imply communitarian notion of collective social good. As mentioned in the MPhil dissertation, by the late nineteenth century, villages had sought the colonial government and missionaries to set up schools and send literate preachers. Evidence suggest that in few cases, government had acceded to such demands on the condition that the local villages would construct the infrastructural needs. In the second quarter of the twentieth century, Pawsey has recorded that the local people of Pfutsero had dug out a magnificent playground for the school which had been upgraded to Middle English Standard.<sup>37</sup> Similar instances were quite abound in many places.

---

<sup>36</sup> File No 445, Tour Diary of Lt W M Kennedy, ISC, officiating DC, Naga Hills for July 1900, (Jan 1902)p 25

<sup>37</sup> Government of Nagaland, File No 451, Tour Diary of CR Pawsey, February and March 1941 & January and March 1947, p. 21

Considering the case of Naga Hills, Jones made an interesting revelation in 1908 that aggressive progress in Christian mission was possible only through the local workers.<sup>38</sup> Even though it may sound clichéd, the local agency was phenomenal in interiorizing Christian ideas and foreign cultural forms into local societies. The missionaries had openly admitted that there was no easier way than for a school going son to convey the message of Christianity to his father.<sup>39</sup> Not only did they appropriated but they created new agencies and structures out of the local systems. For instance, the Christian missionaries recognized thousands of primary school students as most influential agencies of dissemination of the gospel.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, it was also pointed out that there should be more deliberate effort on the part of the missionaries to free Christianity in India from ‘unnatural manners’ and customs which came from the west.<sup>41</sup> This is an interesting fact to locate the way some missionaries looked at Christianity, processes of proselytization and also the profession of an indigenized Christianity. Seemingly, it may be observed that Christianity had already defined itself as a new cultural expression for the locals.

In the process of these appropriations, the colonial and missionary experiences had generated a distinct experience. In 1908, Jones stated that

*“Nothing was more fundamentally important to a self-respecting, self-governing Indian Christian community than the training of men and women who shall be its worthy and inspiring leaders”.*<sup>42</sup>

From the cultural perspective, it may be argued that the attempt to reproduce cultural forms and ideas by the missionaries through the local networks not only indigenized unfamiliar cultural systems but produced hybridized cultures. If culture

---

<sup>38</sup> Baptist Missionary Review, August, 1908, p 311

<sup>39</sup> Refer Baptist Missionary Review, August, 1908, p 312

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p. 311

<sup>41</sup> Baptist Missionary Review. Baptist of Bay of Bengal. November-December, 1955, p. 182

<sup>42</sup> Baptist Missionary Review, August, 1908, p 311

is considered one of the core aspects of modernity, it may be safely contended that modernity came about as a result of these subtle cultural interactions.

Even on the part of the colonial state, the idea of local 'self-governance' was circulated. Looking at the colonial history in India, the idea of local self-governance was introduced as a policy in the early 1880s under Lord Mayo and later it was further institutionalized with Lord Ripon who is still referred to as the father of local self-governance in post-colonial India.<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, the percolation of such colonial policies had rather been gradual to these fringes of colonial territory of India. Thus, the bureaucratic expression of such policies were evident only in second quarter of twentieth century. By 1940s the socio-cultural state of the indigenous locals had changed enormously. When Pawsey visited a village in March 1947, the villagers who were supposed to go to the church spent the day listening to cases disposed by him and discussed about local self-government.<sup>44</sup> Around this time, looking at the tour diaries of Pawsey, he seemed to have been constantly engaged with the locals on local self-government agendas. Also, it was apparent that such topics were abuzz in the public sphere. One such evidence has been found in the tour diary of Pawsey who was posted in the Naga Hills for a long stretch of time. He had reportedly toured all the Southern Angami villages and met all headmen, 'tribal leaders' and discussed local self-government.<sup>45</sup>

A comparison of the missionary and the colonial engagements on the subject of the modern 'selfhood' presents a contrasting picture. Even if these evidences suggest similar cultural dispositions between the colonial and missionary entities, the level of engagements were different. The missionary engagement may be categorized as evangelistic, whereas the colonial regime executed by and large

---

<sup>43</sup> Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, *From Plassey to Partition: A History of Modern India*, Orient Blackswan, 2004, p. 220

<sup>44</sup> Governemnt of Nagland, File No 451, Tour Diary of CR Pawsey, February and March 1941 & January and March 1947, p. 27

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p. 19

through bureaucratic systems. Consequently, the outcomes were significantly different. Even so, looking at the archival sources, the spheres within which the missionaries operated and the subsequent outcomes were largely oriented towards the personal and the private. Whereas, the official engagement with locals on the subject of ‘selfhood’ oriented more towards the political public sphere. Nonetheless, it may be noted that the missionary experience in this regard was by far holistic than that of the bureaucratic engagement. The reason probably was the way missionaries intimately work with the locals and its cultures. And so, even if the idea of selfhood may be primarily evangelical and personal, it had percolated in way of life of the locals because of the way evangelism and new cultural forms were internalized and entwined.

The idea of ‘indigenous education’ as propagated by some scholars may provide a cue to the way these notions of ‘selfhood’ were further produced and institutionalized. For these scholars, indigenous education is spiritual as well as a physical or mental learning process— it embodies and transcends both the world of the present as well as the spiritual or metaphysical world that includes life before birth and after death of the mortal body. In this way, the indigenous education process is better understood as an eternal reciprocal, interactive, and symbiotic learning process.<sup>46</sup> From the above statement it may be inferred that the process of indigenization of education as well as Christianity in the Naga hills were primarily because of the complex web of primary education system with evangelism and vice versa. Therefore, the way missionary advances were internalized basically through evangelism and literacy hyphenated the different cultural systems together. Subsequently, it may be argued that the notions of ‘self-support’, ‘self-affirmation’, ‘self-reliance’ and ‘self-government’ which were basically appropriated from communitarian values emerged as new tenets of capitalist modernism. This ‘logic of capital’ in terms of social, cultural and economic, was set operational by the

---

<sup>46</sup> W. James Jacob et al, *Indigenous Education: Language, Culture and Identity*, Springer, 2015, p 3

missionaries and relatively by the colonial administrators' right from the commencement of occupation which resulted in progressive translation into capitalist modernity.

An institutionalized blueprint of the American missionaries through the educational system presents a systematic and functional logic of capitalist modernity. According to this blueprint, the missionaries had categorized their mission work into spiritual, intellectual, manual and industrial: by spiritual training, it meant training people to undertake spiritual service in the mission, by intellectual, it referred to the general training of a mind which qualifies one to think well, and engage in higher intellectual service, by manual, it meant imparting technical training of the hand and eye which gave physical dexterity, and by industrial education, the missionaries implied a training that prepares one for trade, such as carpentry or farming and enables one to earn a living. The missionary education according to Jones, had focused on these aspects to envisage a self-sustaining and self-supporting Christian community.<sup>47</sup> These self-sustaining measures and protestant work ethics were inculcated through intensive 'routines' in mission schools. I. Ben Wati had written about his experience at Impur mission school in the 1920s and 1930s. They attend classes in the morning and after lunch there was a study time from 1 to 3 pm, which was immediately followed by 'social work time'. He describes that all the classes were divided into different groups and engaged in different works for example, some swept the streets of Impur mission station, some constructed or repaired teachers' quarters, some went to fetch firewoods, some dug earth for new building sites, some carried timber, some made stone chips to be used in concrete, some were engaged in carpentry works, etc. He reported that all these activities were done under respective supervisors.<sup>48</sup> All these missionary strategies were central to the way new lifestyles, work cultures and capitalist notions were built by interfering into the cultural specifics.

---

<sup>47</sup> Baptist Missionary Review, August, 1908, p 315 & 317

<sup>48</sup> Wati, '*Impur Chanu*,' p. 43

Therefore, the logic of modernity in the context of Naga Hills may be understood to have been infused in the local systems to generate a vernacularized/indigenized form of modernity. Of course, as evident the cultural interaction left a heavy visible impact on the local cultures with predominantly western and Christian inclinations. Nevertheless, the adaptation of new cultural forms by the locals at different levels of interaction may not be purely a western cultural reproduction or replication. No doubt, it was a form of adaptation but more of a cultural production out of the complex web of interaction leading to the emergence of a hybridized culture. This make the modern experience of Nagas different from other cultures, and at the same time offer a critique to the dominant discourses on the subject.

### **5.5 Theorizing the ‘Politics of Reverence’ as a Modern Cultural Dynamic**

The missionaries observed and lamented that illiteracy and limited literature had impeded ‘progress.’<sup>49</sup> In this way, most of the cases of delinquency were attributed to the mundane nature of work and interest of people by drawing examples from their own experiences. It was reported that singing had encouraging results. Both young and old would sit for hours and sing hymnals.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, it was opined that a change in the content and nature of work refreshed the mind. It was analogized that whenever a missionary reads a new book it refreshes the mind, and further stated that “work of a different kind is interesting”.<sup>51</sup> Such subtle observations on the life of the locals enabled the missionaries to locate the mental and psychological paradigms and devise astute strategies to soothe such subtle gaps

---

<sup>49</sup> Assam – Historical – Mission Education Policy and Program in Assam, (Microfilm) 712.2-3, p. 42

<sup>50</sup> Ibid

<sup>51</sup> Ibid



in the cultural, social, economic, educational and religious systems, in order to command cultural eminence.

Moreover, as western cultural practices were imbibed with a spirit of ‘adventure’ and ‘novelty’, the presence of missionaries and foreigners generated ‘progressive’ vibes. Literary sphere was one of the prominent spheres which showcased and defined this cultural eminence in the context of the Nagas. As a matter of fact, literacy became a modern phenomenon. Here, it may be stated that the creation of basically two socio-cultural categories, which may be understood in terms of class formation, was phenomenal for the ‘politics of reverence’ to operate. This reverential politics also contributed to cultural mimicry. Subsequently, the politics of appropriating indigenous agencies to imbibe Christian and western knowledge systems and practices ran contingent with politics of reverence. As a case in point, the missionaries divulged that they must befriend the locals first as their friends and in the aftermath it was revealed that the locals reciprocated for advices.<sup>52</sup> Such discreet strategies were phenomenally crucial in the perpetual cultural exchanges within and outside of the villages and more so in the urban spaces of colonial towns.

As part of this reverential politics, it is also important to discuss how dependencies were produced. In the first place these dependencies were produced through the process of colonial and missionary subjection. However, dependencies were progressively generated at multiple levels of colonial governance and evangelization during the entire occupation. The gradual consolidation of colonial and missionary ideologies probably spiralled down new forms of dependencies as may be seen in one of the documents. On 28<sup>th</sup> August, 1942, when Dr. N. L. Bor, IFS, Addl District Magistrate Naga Hills visited Phekrekedzema (Present Phek), there was a great deal of sickness, mostly cases of Malaria and fever. Interestingly, it was recorded that “the responsibility for this illness was ascribed to the failure of

---

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, p. 43

the government to supply mosquito nets.”<sup>53</sup> Therefore, the shift from independent villages to become dependent on the government for their needs is a phenomenal cultural break.

To a great extent, dependency and also interdependency became another dynamic to define colonial Naga subjectivity. For instance, while the locals had depended on the missionaries and officials for education, religion and material culture for the entire time, such nature of dependencies also changed with circumstances to redefine existing dependencies. As a case in point, during the crucial battles of Burma Campaign of World War II which culminated in Kohima, the physical assistance and information networks of locals greatly enabled the allied forces to win.<sup>54</sup> The circumstances during the war made the colonial ‘masters’ to heavily depend on the locals who kind of became the new masters. Therefore, it may be argued that if modernity is a form of control and domination, it perhaps operates through a logic of dependencies, which operates in contingent with politics of reverence.

Perhaps, it may be said that the generation of dependency by the colonial rulers and missionaries alike was in itself a perpetual process of subjection. The construction of a superior cultural assumption by the missionaries and colonial administrators, also suggests the question, if at all modernity should be understood as a superior cultural system?

---

<sup>53</sup> File no 454, Tour Diary of Dr. N.L. Bor, August, September and October, 1942, p. 4

<sup>54</sup> It was reported that ‘tens of thousands of Nagas were employed as labour.’ Government of India, Confidential Department., National Archives of India, File no. 497, p.2; Government of India, Confidential Dept. File no.496, p.23. Nagaland State Archive. Fergal Keane, Road of Bones: The Epic Siege of Kohima 1944, HarperCollins Publishers Limited, 2011, p. 363

## 5.6 Projecting Modernity as a 'Superior' Cultural System

As missionaries and colonial officials continue to negotiate their presence and occupation in the Naga Hills, new hegemonic manifestations were visible particularly in the cultural domain. By way of creating a sort of a cultural gap, a superior assumption of colonial and missionary culture was fostered in the consciousness of the locals. Although social scientists critiqued colonialism by pointing out that difference did not always mean either superiority or inferiority.<sup>55</sup> Even Parameshwar argues in the context of provincializing western experience of modernity by stating that it is necessary to think with a difference in order to deconstruct 'universalist idioms', 'historicize the contexts', and 'pluralize the experiences of modernity', although he admitted to the difficulty of pinning down the exactness of this 'difference'.<sup>56</sup> In fact, such 'difference' has to be culture centric and context specific. However, in this context, the construction of a superior culture through politics of cultural difference represented the crux of modernity propagated by the colonial and missionary agencies.

The missionaries revealed that the west had gained eminence and had been able to assert its will over the rest of the world for some of the 'great truth' that had been realized.<sup>57</sup> Interestingly, the ideological and cultural takes of the missionaries on the west was basically defined by a sort of 'enlightenment' defined by a 'truth value'.<sup>58</sup> This truth could be spiritual, ideological, scientific or even historical or it could be all together. However, the missionaries prided with this enlightenment rhetoric to define a superior cultural assumption. Accordingly, the westerners had extended its hegemony by proclaiming superiority of its knowledge systems over others. A perfect instance may be located in one of the experiences of Clark. It was

---

<sup>55</sup> Craig Calhoun, et al. *Classical Sociological Theory*, Blackwell publishing, 2007 (second edition), p. 9

<sup>56</sup> Parameshwar (ed.), *Alternative Modernities*, p. 15

<sup>57</sup> Baptist Missionary Review, May, 1922, p139

<sup>58</sup> James Schmidt, *What Is Enlightenment?: Eighteenth-Century Answers and Twentieth-Century Questions*, University of California Press, 1996, p. 243

reported in the Baptist missionary review about an instance narrated about Dr. Clark and his wife when they first ventured into the hills. One day a hostile party came to Dr. Clark with the message that a white man's blood flows as easily as a black man's blood. For which Dr. Clark replied by saying that "yes, I know that, but if you kill me – and I know that you can – you must remember that you will have the white man's God to deal with."<sup>59</sup> It was reported that they went away not to return. Later, it was assumed that the very experience could have attracted the people of Chungtia village to Christianity.<sup>60</sup>

The missionaries had often compared the east with the west. For them, the 'east' had been engrossed into the material world and would not attain its eminence without the mental and physical indulgences of the west. They opined that it was difficult to attain such eminence when the knowledge system was either incomplete or incorrect.<sup>61</sup> By shedding such views, the missionaries had typically manifested a colonial mindset which Tagore had strongly criticized. It was in 1922, when a young missionary wrote to Rabindranath Tagore to ask his advice to come to India as a missionary, Tagore reciprocated and pointed out that the western mind was too obsessed with the idea of conquest; the inveterate habit of proselytism was another form of it, he said.<sup>62</sup>

Rev. Campbell had pointed out a form of social processes that was engendered as a result of conversions in the villages, taking the case of the Panchama community. Evidently, the Christian converts were associated with not only material wellbeing, education and progress but also more 'cleaner', comfortable, and assertive against caste and other various forms of social oppressions, according to Campbell.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, he had observed that the non-Christian population had perceived that they could be "condemned to a position of

---

<sup>59</sup> The Baptist Missionary Review, April, 1936, vol. XLII, p. 161

<sup>60</sup> Ibid

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, p 139

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, p. 138

<sup>63</sup> The Baptist Missionary Review, February, 1908, Vol XIV, p. 54

hopeless inferiority if they had not given up their old beliefs and embrace Christianity.”<sup>64</sup> By doing that, the missionaries had drawn a boundary between Christians and consequently the non-Christians population which normally resisted advances of education, literacy and other ‘affirmative’ measures were marginalized on different aspects be it social, economic and cultural spheres. For example, Campbell had cited an instance that Christians discourage intermarriages with the non-believers.<sup>65</sup> These subtle observations had made it clear that Christianity brought about certain superior notions and importantly the notion of a new community – Christian community. Bourdieu argues how such revered cultural practices sustain forms of privileges and how these practices translates into ‘cultural capital’ by which the privileged groups, Christians and literates in this context, could outline their practices as superior over others.<sup>66</sup> Campbell also pointed out that under no circumstances, these people would sap the old bonds of traditional community relationship. There is a clear indication of the way which local village societies were culturally divided to fracture collective resistance against Christian evangelism. This strategy of segregating Christian converts and the non-Christians within many Naga villages consequently split the ‘social capital’.<sup>67</sup> This may suggest the way ‘social peripheries’ were constantly negotiated and bridged.

The clichéd ‘white men’s burden’ thus did carry some power in this context. Evidently, the administrators and missionaries exerted a strong cultural hegemony towards the people and societies they categorized as ‘savages’ and ‘heathens’.<sup>68</sup> Further, their preconceived ideas of other societies besides their own made the colonial rulers and missionaries’ remain completely bound to their own socio-cultural categories and understanding. Nevertheless, the missionaries and colonial rulers also exhibited a strong commitment for retaining their moral hold over their

---

<sup>64</sup> Ibid

<sup>65</sup> Ibid

<sup>66</sup> Cited in Tony Bennett et al, *Culture, Class, Distinction*, p. 9

<sup>67</sup> Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital”, p. 3

<sup>68</sup> Thomas, *Evangelising the Nation*, p. 14

subjects. This could be because most of the European imperialist countries were also nerve centres of Christian faith and puritan movements. Such cultural and religious aura created by the colonial administrators and missionaries interfered with the cultural systems of the ethnic communities. These communities not only registered superior cultural notions but also the indoctrinated universalizing tendencies of the foreigners. Such factors and historical precedents had progressively dawned the colonized societies to the imperialist and missionary societies in terms of culture, knowledge, world views, progress, and importantly on the power to access new storehouses of opportunity and knowledge. To a great extent, the idea of access was identified with the new power of literacy.

Significantly, a major prerequisite for the construction of a superior cultural assumption was extensive knowledge and information about the colonized societies. It was only by understanding and recognizing the indigenous networks and subtleties that domination and control could be commanded. In the process of constructing the colonial and missionary apparatuses in the Naga hills and internalizing Naga Hills as a frontier space into the idea of a greater colonial territory, varied agencies like census, ethnographical surveys, linguistic classification and information about natural resources were undertaken by the colonial officials. As a matter of fact, the colonial officials were constantly on the move from village to village not only to adjudicate disputes and educate the public about local self-government but primarily to collect information. Lt W M Kennedy reported in 1900,

*“I spent two busy days getting specimens of the Dzuna and Kehena dialects of Angami for Dr. Grierson. Dzuna is spoken by Puchama, Phesama and Kiwgema. Kehena by Jakhama, Viswema, Khuzama, Kidima and Kezoma.*

*The dialects differ considerably from each other and from Angami proper. The Kehena dialect is very guttural.*"<sup>69</sup>

In August of the same year, Kennedy wrote in his diary that he was going to Mokokchung to collect linguistic specimens for Dr. Grieson and some anthropological notes for Mr. Allen.<sup>70</sup> On the way, he spent the afternoon recording the Rengma customs for census purposes on 4<sup>th</sup> August. Then, at Wokha the then Deputy commissioner had spent the entire day taking down sentences in Lotha for Dr. Grierson and collecting information about the Lotha customs for the census.<sup>71</sup> In January 1902, Kennedy visited Pholami and collected information on wood carving for Mr. Majid's monograph on that subject. He reported that these villages were noted for wood carvings in front of the houses.<sup>72</sup> On 26<sup>th</sup> July, 1902, Kennedy spent all evening to record Memi customs for the ethnographical survey.<sup>73</sup> From these reports, it is evident that the colonial administrators were constantly on tours in order to collect information from the villages. With exception to the works done by the American Missionaries, Dr. Grierson was the first person to broadly classify the Naga languages. This classification in the first decade of the twentieth century was adopted by the then colonial government and as a result gained official currency. Through this classification, social categories were clustered outside of the villages and like-tribes were constructed and officially institutionalized. The missionaries on the other hand were proactively extracting cultural information to establish its institutions and mission. Therefore, the collection of information about the subjects were significant to the colonialist and missionary construction of a modern society and identity.

---

<sup>69</sup> Governemnt of Nagaland, File No 445, Tour Diary of Lt W M Kennedy, ISC, officiating Deputy Commissioner, Naga Hills for July 1900, p1

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, p. 3

<sup>71</sup> Ibid

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, p. 25

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, p. 20

The superior construction of colonial and missionary culture through subtle procedures and agencies over the course of time significantly determined the cultural, religious and also economic trajectories. These interventions and also extensive circulation of cultural goods developed a new path dependence to determine the choices, tastes and behavior of trade exchanges to perpetually emboss the ‘superior’ socio-cultural construction which I call class. The construction of this new cultural gap progressively became a modern cultural dynamic.

### 5.7 Locating Modernity in ‘Path-Dependence’ and ‘Capitalist Exchanges’

When the Deputy Commissioner visited Henima<sup>74</sup> school on 28<sup>th</sup> October, 1891, bordering Kacha Naga territory, inhabited mostly by Kukis, it was found that

*“A couple of the boys read and wrote in Bengali very well. The difficult is to know what to do with these boys. As soon as they have learnt a little, they expect to be provided with appointments as muharrirs (overseers) and unless I can find something for at least one of the boys to do, the school here is in danger of collapsing.”*<sup>75</sup>

This evidence suggest that Bengali was the medium of instruction in the late nineteenth century in some village schools such as this. But the dependencies that missionaries and colonial rulers had produced over the course of time generated a new path-dependence created through new material culture based on money was a significant point of reference to understand the nexus between education, colonial modernity and the idea of progress. Moreover, the evidence also alluded a sort of

---

<sup>74</sup> Henima post was established in order to deal with the raids perpetrated on the Kacha Naga territories under the Naga Hills. See File no 433, 1891-97, Tour Diary of A W Davis, Esq ICS, Deputy Commissioner, Naga Hills, p. 11

<sup>75</sup> Government of Nagaland, File no 433, 1891-97, Tour Diary of A W Davis, Esq ICS, Deputy Commissioner, Naga Hills, p. 11



missionary zeal and burden in the colonial officials. They wanted the education project to sustain and for which they had to be cautious in displeasing its students.

The new path dependency that was generated by colonial and missionary education resulted in unemployment across colonial India since early twentieth century.<sup>76</sup> The logic of capital by which colonial and missionary apparatuses operated had evidently landed some educated and converts, jobless. Therefore, the government had ordered a review of the existing educational policies. In one of the colonial documents of 1935, it has been found that the Indian Legislature had expressed dissatisfaction with the state of educational system in India and prompted the government to take steps to render it more ‘practical and useful’.<sup>77</sup> As a result, during the third university conference held at Delhi in March, the Inter University Board adopted the following resolutions: Firstly, in order to resolve the problem of unemployment, a large number of students were to be diverted to vocational institutions. The second resolution aimed at dividing the school system into certain definite stages with clearly defined objectives. It recommended that the pass course in a university should be three years. Moreover, it divided educational system into four stages namely, primary, middle, higher secondary and university education. In the middle stage, it was mandatory to use vernacular in non-language subjects. Even in higher secondary, the medium of instruction had to be in vernacular.<sup>78</sup> This structure of education formulated in 1935 became an essential structure of education system throughout colonial India and perpetually into the post-colonial India. The formation of a new path dependence through education system was crucial in the way perpetual dependencies were created.

Moreover, while dealing with the adaptation of new material culture, the two wars which involved local Nagas in different ways had enduring socio-

---

<sup>76</sup> Government of India, Home Department, Public, Educational Reconstruction, File No. 272/35, 1935, p 1

<sup>77</sup> Ibid

<sup>78</sup> Government of India, Home Department, Public, Educational Reconstruction, File No. 272/35, 1935, p 1-2

economic and political effects. For instance, it was reported that the price of Naga woven clothes had gone up by over 50% partly because of inflated price of wool in Kohima and probably because of the return of labor corps from France with money.<sup>79</sup> The report also mentioned that demand for clothes had greatly increased. A piece of cloth which used to be Rs 8/- prior to the war was increased to Rs 16 after the World War I. Consequently, Hutton stated that the old and the poor were finding life unusually hard.<sup>80</sup> Interestingly, the statement of a Labor Corps returnee from France was recorded in the tour diary which reads, “When Hutton visited Chuntia in 1918, one of the coolies who had returned from France asked if there are any more wars he could go to...”<sup>81</sup> This instance in a way succinctly captured a drastic shift in the perception about material culture by the Naga villagers.

The coming of money into the trade system as a new medium of exchange had altered the local mentalities to a great extent. In fact, the sustained circulation of new cultural goods had resulted in alteration of traditional trade patterns to progressively capitalistic exchanges. Dr. Bor had recorded in 1942 about what he calls ‘war of price’ between the Rengmas (Present Pochury tribe) who make salt but do not weave and the ‘Angamis’ (present Chakhesang villages) who weave but do not make salt. As the price of salt went up, subsequently, the price of cloth was also raised.<sup>82</sup> Evidently, the indigenous trade networks were disturbed with the aggressive intrusion of capitalist behavior of exchange. Even the export of goods outside of Naga Hills had been recorded to have substantially expanded. In the early 1890s, the manager of Wokha Garden, Mr. Butler had reported to Dawis, the Deputy Commissioner, that about 1000 to 1200 maunds of cotton were annually taken down to the plains to trade.<sup>83</sup> Even within villages, gun trade became a lucrative business. By 1890s Kikruma village was reported to have possessed about

---

<sup>79</sup> File No 390, Tour Diary of Hutton, 14-18<sup>th</sup> Jan, May & June, 1918, p. 12

<sup>80</sup> Ibid

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, p. 7

<sup>82</sup> File no 454, Tour Diary of Dr. N.L. Bor, August, September and October, 1942, p. 5

<sup>83</sup> File no 433, 1891-97, (1892) Tour Diary of A W Davis, Esq ICS, Deputy Commissioner, Naga Hills, p. 25

twenty unlicensed guns which were purchased from neighboring villages like Viswema, Jakhama and Kigwema, originally bought from sepoys. It was also reported that Kekrima villagers further merchandised these guns to other Eastern Angami villages in the Political control area.<sup>84</sup> The idea of exchange had become profit oriented and as a result, exchanges were made further and further. A great deal of this logic of capital ought to be attributed to the role of missionaries and its missionary ideology. In fact, the missionaries basically intended to inculcate the notion of capital in order to consolidate and further expand Christian mission. This idea may be well instantiated though a statement in the Baptist Missionary Review of 1908, which stated that the missionaries should “first teach its members how to work well at some trade and to earn more money; then shall we see a self-supporting Indian Church.”<sup>85</sup>

Williams also made a reference on Robert Owen’s work and was critical of his school of thought, nevertheless, quoted one of his significant ideas that “the increase of wealth as the means of culture.”<sup>86</sup> Owen further substantiates by stating that manufacturing of goods “generates a new character in its inhabitants”<sup>87</sup> which interferes into the cultural systems understood in terms of what Williams has been trying to define it. Owen along with Robert Southey thus argues that the change in the conditions of economic production alters fundamental change in what they call ‘human producers’. Similarly, they also argue that the massive impact of the industrial revolution had produced a virtually new kind of human being.<sup>88</sup> In addition to the new ideological structures that had been internalized through the missionary and colonial initiatives, the impact of the two World Wars had produced the new hybridized class of capitalist driven Nagas.

---

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, p. 13

<sup>85</sup> Baptist Missionary Review, August, 1908, p 317

<sup>86</sup> Williams, *Culture and Society 1780-1950*, p. 28

<sup>87</sup> William Cobbett, *The Bloody Buoy*; 1796; Vol. III, *Porcupine's Works* (1801). Cited in Williams, *Culture and Society 1780-1950*, p. 28-29

<sup>88</sup> Williams, *Culture and Society 1780-1950*, p. 29

## 5.8 The Construction of a ‘Christian Culture’ Through Modern Trajectories

With the progressive emergence of active public sphere across the Naga Hills in the twentieth century, the imagination of a ‘Christian culture’ which the missionaries were trying to construct became more and more prominent. This missionary construction of a new culture identified with progress and modernity built new assumptions in the popular minds as the ‘trending culture’. However, the emergence of this new Christian imagination was encoded with puritan and protestant ethics like morality, ethics, discipline, norms, propriety and new work culture. Moreover, in order to be a faithful Christian believer, it was necessary to believe and follow the ways of ‘God’ which creates a culture in itself. Basically, the soul of Christian culture was ‘spirituality’. J. A. Ahlquist, reported in 1941 that the membership in churches were strong, generous contributions from locals, endeavors on education made steady progress, however, he lamented about the weak spiritual stability.<sup>89</sup> We may thus infer that Christian culture composed of all these aspects. A few missionaries argued that there should be a balance between the other aspects and the spiritual aspect in order to sustain and percolate Christianity further. However, the assumption of Christian culture and ‘modern culture’ as synonymous was an intriguing cultural phenomenon.

Here, T S Eliot offers some substantial insights when he uses the phrase ‘idea of a Christian society’ to say that the concept of a Christian society can only be understood if it has been arranged and directed towards an end and argues that any society cannot call itself Christian.<sup>90</sup> Eliot argues that a Christian community

---

<sup>89</sup> American Baptist Foreign Mission Society & Womans’ American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Assam Baptist Missionary Conference Report, Thirty Eighth Session, Kohima, Assam, 1941, p. 31

<sup>90</sup> Cited in Williams, *Culture and Society 1780-1950*, p. 243

is one which has ‘unified-social code of behavior’.<sup>91</sup> As a matter of fact, the missionaries used progressive and modern rhetoric in the process of evangelization. The most comprehensive example may be the slogan of ‘darkness to light’, to imply the shift that had taken place through the intervention of Christianity. A passage from Mead Clark’s ‘A corner in India’ mentions that “the Nagas, once civilized and Christianized will make a manly, worthy people.” A hundred years later, it was written in the 125<sup>th</sup> Jubilee report that even though she saw wild and savage Nagas back then, the writers recounted Clark’s vision about Nagas as worthy people in Christ.<sup>92</sup> The report also stated that Nagas were marching with the rest of the world and drew a contrast with the world of Nagas before 1876. It also further affirmed that the future of Nagas would depend on the ‘direction’ they embarked at that point of time,<sup>93</sup> perhaps to exert pressure on the locals to convert. In this way, the ways of the past were condemned and a new future as well as eternity were extolled. Rev. Manley made an interesting observation about the cultural processes that led to conversions. He stated that,

*“A few converts who lack courage to openly confess...but is silently revolutionizing current standards of morality. He becomes more and more the ideal man. Conscience grows more sensitive. Evils that stalked abroad unashamed now slink in the dark. Return to the dark is impossible.”*<sup>94</sup>

This gives the impression that Christianity was identified with the ‘light’. It is interesting that ‘light’ is precisely the analogy that the Ao voice expressed – as discussed in Chapter three.

Manley also contended that literature was auxiliary to every department and spheres which leads to new social intercourse to remove barriers and access to study leading to confidence and new inquiries. However, he summed up by strongly

---

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, p. 244

<sup>92</sup> 125 Years, Jubilee Reports of Baptist Work in North East India- 1836-1961, p 47

<sup>93</sup> Ibid

<sup>94</sup> The American Baptist Missionary Review, January, 1908, p 241

pointing that at all costs ‘contact must be won’ with the locals.<sup>95</sup> This description offers a new progression of modernity through literacy inside Christian domains.

As reported by the missionaries, the target group for evangelism was mainly the young people, which they referred to as ‘vulnerable group.’<sup>96</sup> Targeting the young folks enabled the missionaries to capitalize a great deal of their effort. Besides the regular institutions like schools and Churches, it was reported in 1933 that Sunday schools and young people's societies were organized, which the missionaries termed it as ‘new stages’ of engagement.<sup>97</sup> According to some sources, Sunday schools were designed for the illiterate persons who could not attend schools.<sup>98</sup> Nevertheless, in this case, these new initiatives were self-organized by the boys and girls, basically students, who had returned home after graduating from mission station schools.<sup>99</sup> It was reported that these students were not satisfied with the ‘old way’ of Christian practices and worship in village churches, according to the missionaries.<sup>100</sup> Similarly, Assam Baptist Missionary Conference report of 1941 mentioned that two literacy campaigns were undertaken by the Ao students for their ‘less fortunate’ brethren.<sup>101</sup> These initiatives clearly manifest the idea of a new habitus that Bourdieu talks about. Therefore, they actively participated to bring about a ‘right frame of mind for innovation’ within the village churches and assisted in restructuring these churches, as reported.<sup>102</sup>

Some report mentioned that most of the pastors were literate but for some reason their reading was mostly limited to song books and the New Testament book of the bible.<sup>103</sup> In order to engage with the new literary feeds, the missionaries

---

<sup>95</sup> Ibid

<sup>96</sup> Assam- Historical-Mission Education Policy and Program in Assam, (Microfilm) 712.2-3, p. 6

<sup>97</sup> Ibid

<sup>98</sup> Ibid

<sup>99</sup> Ibid

<sup>100</sup> Ibid

<sup>101</sup> American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Assam Baptist Missionary Conference Report, Thirty Ninth Session, Golaghat, Assam, 1941, p 26

<sup>102</sup> Assam-Historical-Mission Education Policy and Program in Assam, (Microfilm) 712.2-3, p. 6

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, p. 8

introduced a monthly newspaper called 'Ao Naga Messenger' which was widely circulated around this time.<sup>104</sup> These are some instances that show how literacy and education were used to create new socio, cultural and religious conditions which induced young students with new imagination, knowledge, beliefs, cultural standards, passions and new cravings. This anxieties created by the new material and cultural conditions, critically altered the cultural tastes and ingrained new consumerist dispositions for perpetual cultural transformation.

The new literary habitus created an organic process of raising leaders in Christian and Colonial domains. Perhaps, this organic process of raising leaders created a new alternative to de-essentialize some protruding traditional institutions like village priesthood (*mewu*), chieftainship, warriors and statuses gained through feast of merit. However, it must be clarified that the traditional institutions were not directly subdued but the new hybrid institutions of leadership like teachers, pastors, 'Goanburas', 'dubashis' and government employees, were created alternatively alongside these traditional institutions. It was a matter of time that popular legitimacy shifted to these new institutions with the increase of converts and literates within individual villages. This shift in legitimacy from the old to the new manifested a transition in the notion of public as well. In fact, the nature of traditional public shifted from audiences of announcements made from raised platforms in strategic corners of villages to a progressively literate public with a formal congregation with a pulpit inside the churches with educated pastors. Considering these shifts, it may be argued that the literary agency instituted by missionaries made cultural exchange subtle, inherent and permanent.

---

<sup>104</sup> Ibid

## 5.9 Modernity in New Commensalities

The missionaries had reported about the annual church associations called as ‘Mungdang’ in the vernacular Ao language, which was a convention of Christians from across Naga Hills once in a year.<sup>105</sup> The regular proceedings of these general conferences included reports of the preceding year, devotional and inspirational speeches, sessions about Christian living and formulation of plans for the coming year. The missionaries had termed these annual gatherings as the ‘social and religious festival’ of the year.<sup>106</sup> Meanwhile, these annual convergences presented the missionaries with opportunities to proactively engage with the ‘Christian believers’ from across Naga Hills which were termed as a ‘consolidated enterprise’ as they admitted that travelling and visiting churches on regular basis was difficult. The missionaries also referred these conferences as strategic in the development of ‘intelligible tolerance’ and ‘national wholesomeness’.<sup>107</sup> Going by these statements, it may be inferred that a vibrant public sphere was emerging within the Christian domain. John Selander stated that “it was not uncommon to hear songs in a dozen or more languages at the closing meeting of an association but said that they were all one in Christ.”<sup>108</sup> He reported that these annual gatherings were a great ‘uniting factor’ among the village churches.<sup>109</sup> It must be noted that Christianity has a universal appeal and it propagates a universal community of Christians. Therefore, even though for practical reasons, some missionaries proposed that Christianity should adapt local cultural forms, the universal idea of a culture, a history and a community, that eventually overwhelms. In fact it may be argued that the indigenization of Christianity was part of a larger design of Christian evangelism. These new public experiences also suggest the gradual and structural transformation of the village public sphere towards a more

---

<sup>105</sup> Ibid, p. 10

<sup>106</sup> Ibid

<sup>107</sup> Ibid

<sup>108</sup> Baptist Missionary Review, April, 1941, p. 128

<sup>109</sup> Baptist Missionary Review, April, 1941, p. 131



vibrant socio religious and interactive culture, which perhaps was central in the location of a new identity consciousness. A new consciousness that began to emerge outside of individual Naga village. The emergence of new collectivities was crucial to the location of modern traits in the Naga society.

The new public sphere enabled by new political, cultural and religious interventions, reverberated across multiple spheres. In fact, the emergence of public sphere cannot be sustained or limited to a singular domain like the Church. Along with the articulation of new collectives within the Christian domain, bold political expressions began to shape the new political public sphere by the close of nineteenth century. Although Naga villages were historically independent, the articulation of larger collective outside of individual villages was significantly a new political experience. One of the first collective articulation of a political identity in the new public sphere was made in the last decade of the nineteenth century, when a group of Goanburas were invited by the then Deputy Commissioner to meet the Viceroy at Imphal. A document of 1900 mentioned that this invitation was a fulfilment of consistent demand by 'Angami' Goanburas to meet the viceroy to submit a written memorandum to declare that Naga villages were 'subject to themselves' before the British took over the hills.<sup>110</sup> Interestingly, a Goanbura by the name Pesetso from Chipoketema (formerly Angami but present Chakhesang village), had joined the entourage with borrowed money for the journey to Manipur to meet the Viceroy, Lord Curzon.<sup>111</sup> It is fascinating to see how Goanburas from most peripheral part of the Angami country had joined the Deputy Commissioner's entourage to convey the political message.

This evidence suggest that new socio political formations preceded the popular assumption that the submission of memorandum in 1929 to the Simon Commission ruptured a 'nationalist consciousness'. Nevertheless, such political

---

<sup>110</sup> Government of Nagaland, File No 445, Tour Diary of Lt W M Kennedy, ISC, Officiating DC, Naga Hills for July 1900, (November, 1901), p. 13

<sup>111</sup> Ibid

aspiration were articulated about three decades before the memorandum of 1929. This piece of evidence also contest speculations that Naga nationalism was the handiwork of foreigners and the memorandum of 1929 was prepared by some administrators as ghost writers.

But taking the context into consideration, the Christian public sphere was a space of discourse, a space of literary activity and production, dissemination of knowledge, and chiefly a place of cultural commonality. Therefore, it was a perpetual space where cultural changes had taken place into the imagination of a 'Christian community' with regular sets of practices and beliefs. From this case, it is important to note that the socio political formations were gradual in nature and therefore it takes time to garner a collective consciousness and to eventually articulate it in public. These collective expressions emerged since the colonial and the missionary encounters became pronounced with the progressive thrust of literacy and education inside Naga society.

### **5.10 Understanding the Naga Case as a 'Literate Modernity'**

Even though I argue that the habitation of modernity was multiple in the case of the Nagas, literate modernity has been the most aggressive and penetrative form of modernity. In fact, the earliest cultural change could be located to the introduction of alphabets, and cultural adaptations progressively resulted out of literate and educational measures throughout the colonial and missionary occupation. The subtle yet penetrative cultural medium has been by far the all-encompassing cultural dynamic to propel incessant cultural transformation of a society like the Nagas. It is necessary to explore and understand the insinuate nature of the literary agency to gain a perspective in the larger discourse of modernity.

In 1899 Perrine astutely described the process of new cultural adaptations on entering the literate spaces like schools. According to him, the missionaries used

sound method to teach Nagas and he found the performance satisfactory.<sup>112</sup> Interestingly, the missionaries had laid special stress on writing and the result was reportedly pleasing. The American copy-books with simple plain round letters were found to be helpful during the initial stages of teaching. Perrine narrated a typical case of the entry of non-literates into the literary domain. He writes, “A raw Naga at first knows no more of the *modus operandi* of writing than does the pencil he tries to hold in his dirty clumsy fingers.”<sup>113</sup> However, the way these new students pick up the new art of writing and reading impressed the missionaries and they called it ‘remarkable’.<sup>114</sup> Perrine further stated that literacy “alone had awakened quite an interest in education throughout the hills, a revival in ‘letters’- a Naga renaissance so to speak.”<sup>115</sup> He describes a state of cultural euphoria that was set abuzz by what he called ‘letters’. It was reported that the literary enthusiasm led to profuse exchange of letters and Perrine describes it as

*“So many and urgent became the letters flying back and forth on matters that were hardly urgent, that we had to interfere in the interest of the ‘Siti mungers’, or village letter carriers.”*<sup>116</sup>

It was in this state of literary enthusiasm that the institution of ‘Naga dak’ who carry letters became talked about according to Perrine.<sup>117</sup>

Even though this description has some hyperbolic tones, the description of a state of cultural euphoria created by literary enthusiasm is significant to locate early engagements and departures. The art of holding a pencil and the adaptation of the skill for writing had reverberated an excitement and craze across the hills. This instance portrays not only a clear shift from the oral culture to the literary but also

---

<sup>112</sup> Fifth Triennial Conference held at Dibrugarh, Feb 11-19, 1899, Calcutta Baptist Mission Press, p. 40

<sup>113</sup> Ibid

<sup>114</sup> Ibid

<sup>115</sup> Ibid

<sup>116</sup> Ibid

<sup>117</sup> Ibid

how pencils and pens had become the new weapons. Perrine even referred this cultural euphoria as a ‘Naga *renaissance*,’ which may be literally translated as ‘rebirth’.<sup>118</sup> Perhaps the missionaries assumed that a new form of cultural rebirth had taken place with learning in village schools. However, this subtle instances evidently enthused the missionaries because the Naga villagers were gradually acceding to their advances. Yet, Perrine also lamented that two things were against the missionary principle of ‘self-sustenance’ of students. Firstly, he described a general disposition not to do more than what was necessary. However, he observed and admitted that locals gradually imbibed a new conscientious disposition for work and described “there was a growing tendency to wholly take care of themselves, for which the missionaries were very happy.”<sup>119</sup> These instances indicate a logic that condition the cultural appetite of locals towards progressive consumption of literary goods, which led to the internalization of new dispositions.

The missionaries had given special interest on education because according to P. H. Moorie “‘enlightenment’ helps to dispel superstition and also that those who could read and write (literate) were more prone to opening to Christian literature.”<sup>120</sup> The experience of Burma may be instantiated to substantiate Moorie’s point. Around the first quarter of the twentieth century, it was noted by the missionaries that, there was an interesting correlation between the success of Christian evangelism with the ‘freedom of the word’, which was a reference for the literary bible. An American missionary by the name Judson, struggled to translate the Bible into Burmese at Palma and could convert only few people to Christianity owing to what was described as ‘great adversity’. Nevertheless, when this report

---

<sup>118</sup> Jerry Brotton, *The Renaissance: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 8-9

Fifth Triennial Conference held at Dibrugarh, Feb 11-19, 1899, Calcutta Baptist Mission Press, p. 40

<sup>119</sup> Ibid

<sup>120</sup> Seventh Session of the American Baptist Conference, held at Gauhati, December, 27, 1902-4<sup>th</sup> January 1903, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, p 73

was written, the number of Christians in Burma had grown to about 2 millions.<sup>121</sup> Similarly, Rev. Robert B Longwell had reported about a village located near the mission station of Impur. This village was sending local evangelists not only to about half of Ao villages but also to villages of neighboring tribes.<sup>122</sup> According to Longwell, the church was just eight years old in 1910 with 351 members, interestingly, two-third of the members were women.<sup>123</sup> The village had borne the salaries of those local evangelists that were sent to other villages. Moreover, it was reported that many people in the village were awaiting baptism but they had to wait for the ‘missionary call’ which happened once in three years.<sup>124</sup> The history of Christianity in this village dated back to the story of ‘first pupil evangelist’, as referred by missionaries, who ventured into this village with the gospel, however, narrowly escaped because he was a ‘good runner’ and was able to hide in the jungle. Evidently, the villagers had pursued him as if he was a tiger, reported Longwell.<sup>125</sup> The missionaries while acknowledging the divine significance of the ‘gospel’ were definitely admitting the power of a literary culture or the Word itself. This instance indicate a Christian-modernity in which faith based on a pragmatic intellectual engagement, was strongly embedded within the literate modernity.

Likewise, looking at the census reports of Assam for 1881 and 1891, out of 1000 men only 67 could read and write and out of 1000 women only 4 were literate.<sup>126</sup> However, it was pointed out that a steady growth had been observed in the census report for 1900-01 show an increase of 31,213 pupils with a total number of 104308 students, constituting 12 percent of the total population.<sup>127</sup> As far as Naga

---

<sup>121</sup> Assam – Historical – Mission Education Policy and Program in Assam – 11/14 16/49 (Microfilm) 712-2.3, p 10

<sup>122</sup> Assam Baptist Missionary Conference of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Twelfth Biennial Session, Gauhati, January 4-13, 1913, p 49

<sup>123</sup> Ibid

<sup>124</sup> Ibid

<sup>125</sup> Ibid

<sup>126</sup> Seventh Session of the American Baptist Conference, held at Gauhati, December, 27, 1902-4<sup>th</sup> January 1903, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, p 73

<sup>127</sup> Ibid

Hills was concerned, there were thirteen literates to 1000 population in 1901.<sup>128</sup> These statistical figures are significant pointers to locate the state of education and literacy. These intellectual shifts came about after almost three decades of active missionary engagement with the Naga villagers. Indeed, Rev. Perrine had made some profound observations about these inherent shifts. Paradoxically, the Nagas who were slowly adapting new advances perhaps were not even mindful about these inherent shifts.

The experiences in Burma and Impur's neighboring village induced the contemporary missionaries to aggressively set the 'living word', as popularly referred by missionaries, into the school curriculum of missionary education. In 1911, it was resolved by missionaries that the Bible shall be taught in all standards of the schools as one of the 'chief objects', to prepare young men to become efficient teachers in the Christian village schools and influential laymen to help the local churches, which they believed would eventually 'uplift' the Christian community.<sup>129</sup> In the Naga Hills, the experience of modernism was all the more a 'literate modernity' because the missionary and partly colonial imagination of a 'Christian community' was derived most successfully through the local agencies of village pastors and school teachers, who were culturally, intellectually and spiritually designed by foreigners. Further, it was disclosed that the missionary schools were designed not simply to produce Christians but predominantly produce 'men of culture'; by which the missionaries basically meant 'men of broad scholarship and high ethical principles' who would grow up to be 'worthy citizens'.<sup>130</sup> The document further stated that the supreme desire and aim of the missionaries was to "bring the people of India into subjection unto the thought, the

---

<sup>128</sup> Ibid, p 76

<sup>129</sup> Assam Baptist Missionary Union, Report of the Eleventh Biennial Session, Gauhati, March 4-12, 1911, Calcutta Mission Press, p. 26

<sup>130</sup> Baptist Missionary Review, August, 1908, p 310

life and the love of Christ.”<sup>131</sup> However, for Jones, the decision to reject or accept Christianity should be left at the conscience and free will of the student.<sup>132</sup>

Jones also continue to echo the popular missionary rhetoric that the purpose of missionary education was to nurture the ‘intellect’ and ‘character’ of a Christian community, which was resonated in the writings of Downs who stated that ‘Christian character’ and ‘Christian lifestyle’ were the primary objectives of Christian missionary work.<sup>133</sup> Further, Jones cited the instance of Hinduism and Mohammedanism to claim that the cultural and intellectual aspect of Christianity, which he claim was absent in the two other religion, ‘appeals to the high intelligence of the people’. <sup>134</sup> Therefore, according to him, the protestant missionaries had recognized the value of ‘school-house’ as a medium to propagate Christianity.<sup>135</sup> Jones also recapitulated how the missionaries had commenced their mission work from the lowest alphabet classes to usher in cultural change.<sup>136</sup> Jones concluded by stating that education and literacy had transformed the character of the local converts and literates with what he calls ‘new manhood’.<sup>137</sup> By this statement, he was trying to describe the shift in the expression of masculinity from a hitherto traits of a warrior to a gentlemanly masculinity. According to him this new expression profoundly distinguished the educated and converts from the rest of the ‘natives’.<sup>138</sup>

Interestingly, it has been found that the missionaries were critical about advanced scholarship and intellectual development out of the missionary education system. It was reported by Delta that the American missions had about 12000

---

<sup>131</sup> Ibid

<sup>132</sup> Ibid

<sup>133</sup> Baptist Missionary Review, August, 1908, p 310-311; Downs, *Christianity in North-East India*, p. 197

<sup>134</sup> Baptist Missionary Review, August, 1908, p 310-311

<sup>135</sup> Ibid, p 310-311

<sup>136</sup> Ibid, p 311

<sup>137</sup> Ibid

<sup>138</sup> Ibid

schools and nearly four hundred thousand scholars in these schools across the entire mission, probably including their home state of America.<sup>139</sup> He lamented that the mission colleges had predominantly shifted from moral and evangelical to intellectual development of the students.<sup>140</sup> This statement buttresses the missionary idea of education in India and particularly in the eastern frontiers where the American Missionary activities were more intense. He lamented that, the design of higher education system had taken away some of the most resourceful evangelists for critical intellectual pursuits.<sup>141</sup> Likewise, the missionaries were critical about up gradation of schools to higher standards, which partly explains why the American missionaries were content with village primary schools and never intended to introduce a high school in the Naga Hills until 1938. As stated in the earlier chapter, the high school at Kohima was introduced not only due to constant pressure from locals but it was set up in lieu of their contributions.

As missionary education continued to receive progressive response from locals, Longwell reported in 1913 that ‘many Nagas wanted education’ and further stated that ‘Christians everywhere wanted it’.<sup>142</sup> The phenomenon which conspicuously creates this ‘want’ may be understood as a modern cultural dynamic, which perhaps derived out of different variables but basically from the ‘politics of reverence’ and the ‘logic of capital’. At the same time, it may be stated that the progression of modernity in the Naga Hills was compulsive in nature. It was compulsive in the sense that literacy and education had become a necessary evil for conversion and to attain ‘civilisation’. Primarily, it was necessary to indoctrinate Christian message through education. The latter was pointed out by Delta who stated that some people believe that Christianity is practically a synonym of civilization.<sup>143</sup> Nevertheless, it was predominantly the missionaries who had

---

<sup>139</sup> Higher Education: A Criticism by Delta, Baptist Missionary Review, August 1908, 357

<sup>140</sup> Ibid

<sup>141</sup> Ibid, 359

<sup>142</sup> Assam Baptist Missionary Conference of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Twelfth Biennial Session, Gauhati, January 4-13, 1913, p 49

<sup>143</sup> Higher Education: A Criticism by Delta, Baptist Missionary Review, August 1908, 359



constructed such cultural assumption. The rapid growth of literacy rates and the success of the Christian proselytization could be attributed to this compulsive nature of education.

However, basing on the census report of 1931, the missionaries indicated how illiteracy had impeded ‘progress’ and development in the Naga churches.<sup>144</sup> They stated that for the large part of missionary engagement with locals, Christian literatures and biographies had never failed to impress the locals.<sup>145</sup> As a result of these experiences, the missionaries yearned that if all locals could read the New Testament, they would have had ‘great reason to rejoice.’<sup>146</sup> The missionaries argued that the ability to read, study and ponder over the scriptures was vital for spiritual growth. Therefore they strongly lamented that illiteracy forfeits the ‘inspirational medium’.<sup>147</sup> Time and again, the processes of conversions spiritually, culturally and in terms of physical progress and development, missionaries made particular reference to literacy and education. Gradually, the colonial administrators recognized this literacy essence in domination and control which is evident from the radical take-over of mission schools by early twentieth century. This intrigues of literacy was a way of learning the literate western cultures which explains the notion of ‘access’ to a literate culture. Here, it may be argued that, even though there may be other ways of cultural adaptations and assimilation, literacy prominently commanded cultural adaptations in the Naga Hills and other colonized oral societies. This view gives a new perspective to the way perception, reception and adaptations take place.

There was another practical factor that compelled the missionaries to undertake extensive literacy campaigns in the Naga Hills. According to missionary reports, pastors with scanty education and knowledge about the scriptures did often

---

<sup>144</sup> Assam-Historical-Mission Education Policy and Program in Assam, (Microfilm) 712.2-3, p. 32

<sup>145</sup> Ibid

<sup>146</sup> Ibid

<sup>147</sup> Ibid, p. 33

hesitate to enforce disciplinary actions on its members.<sup>148</sup> Basing on this experience, the missionaries observed that until majority of the congregation become literate it was difficult to enforce church discipline, which was essential for the sustenance of the churches. The missionaries were also trying to imply that it was not possible to enforce discipline without knowledge about the scriptures both by pastors and Church members.<sup>149</sup> They lamented about the poor state of literacy as ‘dangerous’ for that could jeopardize the position of the missionaries and churches not only by demoralizing the local converts but largely, at the watchful colonial administrators who had often expressed disapproval of some missionary practices like the case of banning rice beer.<sup>150</sup> The report also stated that the average village Christian knew only few don’ts about Christianity viz. don’t commit adultery, don’t drink rice beer, and don’t work on the Lord’s Day.<sup>151</sup> Therefore, the missionaries strongly desired that literacy could capacitate the local Christians with the fundamental information and knowledge about Christianity. This was only possible through the institution of mission schools.

Progressive shifts began to take place by early twentieth century. One of the prominent shifts happened through the missionary girls’ schools which were introduced in different places. One of the first such schools was the girls’ Middle English School which was established at Impur by Mrs. Wickstrand and was handed over to the Ao Mungdang, under the supervision of Mrs. Kijungluba Ao, Mr. Nokden, Rev. Mademkaba and others.<sup>152</sup> Under the Kohima mission station, the Angami Women’s Bible School was started by Mrs. Tanquist which was taken over by the leadership of the Angami Women’s Association.<sup>153</sup> It was evident that education was a game changer. The case of women in Naga Hills, who were comparatively late entrants into the domain of colonial and missionary education,

---

<sup>148</sup> Ibid, p. 34

<sup>149</sup> Ibid

<sup>150</sup> Ibid

<sup>151</sup> Ibid, p. 35

<sup>152</sup> 125 Years, Jubilee Reports of Baptist Work in North East India- 1836-1961, p 3

<sup>153</sup> Ibid

had received noticeable empowerment to participate in the Christian and literate domains. Interestingly, these women became leaders in different capacities at different places as new agents (ies) of Christian faith and more so from the cultural point of view. Bourdieu's idea of a *habitus* may be relatable to this educational experience.<sup>154</sup> Around the second half of twentieth century, local educated women gradually undertook 'responsibilities'

in the churches and in their respective communities, alongside the American missionaries. It was recorded that girls were coming out to study higher theology to prepare themselves for 'higher' and 'heavier' responsibilities.<sup>155</sup> As a result, many girls who graduated from missionary schools became active leaders at different levels. In the words of the missionaries, hundreds of girls "even the quiet and shy ones are now taking leadership in different walks of life."<sup>156</sup> These instances give a succinct picture of how the consumption of new cultural goods through literary medium had determined a systemic cultural transformation.

However, the entire discussion of literate modernity boils down to an important aspect of language which is the moral aspect. In the first place, literary cultures are based on definite linguistic morphology. Therefore, literary expressions need to be in conformity to the syntax of a particular literary tradition. Taking English language for example, one ought to be grammatically consistent, culturally grounded in the English traditions, phonetically sound, in order to make expressions correct or legitimate. Therefore, there is undeniably a moral dimension to grapholects. As a matter of fact, when there is the consciousness of 'right' and 'wrong' in literary expressions, naturally, the subjects or host individuals were impelled to learn more and more of the 'alien cultures' to become like the aliens.

---

<sup>154</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. xix; Bennett et al, *Culture, Class, Distinction*, p 13

<sup>155</sup> 125 Years, Jubilee Reports of Baptist Work in North East India- 1836-1961, p 7

<sup>156</sup> Ibid, p 3

This inherent disposition within languages evidently is a recurring cultural dynamic. One small example to substantiate this point may be the use of ‘ouch’ as an expression of pain. We may have our own distinct expressions for such pains but in order to make oneself more ‘modern’ or even correct, we tend to read the dictionary to learn to use such English expressions. Therefore, we see how literary culture creates an institutionalized form of mimicry in students and literate people. However, such literary and pedagogic dispositions creates a strong dichotomy between non-literates and literates, civilized and uncivilized and mainstream and margins, which creates a reverential politics. The cultural impulsion to be literate, civilized and to enter into the mainstream culture, explains modernity in a new light. Once again, the discourse on modernity has been confounded with the idea that it has been compelled as a ‘necessary evil’. We may associate the whole process of education system through the literary medium largely as a process of a necessary evil. In this way, the missionary and colonial educational institutions perpetually produced Christian converts, educated and civilized citizens of the new, perhaps, a ‘modern’ society. The power of the literary tradition, text or word has been acknowledged as ‘technologies of the intellect’ by Jack Goody because it alters human cognitive operations, and enables to understand and manipulate the world.<sup>157</sup> A careful investigation of cultural change from the perspective of diachronic linguistics, which is the scientific study of language change, may spill more beans about the complex interlink of language and culture.

By all means, the literate modernity remained as the most penetrative and pronounced form of modernity, which percolated in multiple spheres and ‘modernities’ in the context of the Naga Hills. The emergence of new collectives is a case in point.

---

<sup>157</sup> Jack Goody, *The Power of Written Tradition*, Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000, p. 1

It is safe to assume that literary and oral cultures were two distinct cultural forms. Therefore, the adaptation of literary culture was in some sense, adaption of a new culture. However, it is impossible to envisage complete shifts. The interaction in fact, to a great extent introduced a fragmented culture. The modern everyday which turned on to the more convenient, flexible modern location that colonialism had brought to the Naga Hills. The ceremonies, rituals, and the celebration of the memory of ethnic origins turned on the remembered traces of the Naga oral traditions – the authentic identity as it was remembered in the contemporary context of forging a collective Naga identity. This is the point that will be elaborated in the Conclusion.

## Conclusion

This thesis has traversed through a complex historical situation to understand the drastic cultural changes that had taken place in the Naga society over the course of approximately two centuries. It discusses the role of colonial rulers and particularly, the American Baptist Missionaries who applied different methods and discursive strategies to engage with the locals and interfere in local cultural systems. As discussed, in the process of occupation, the colonial forces had violently and brutally subdued the Naga villages to subjugate the Nagas. On the other hand, the missionaries had used more subtle means like education and literacy to expand its influence. As a result, it may be inferred that the entry points of these two entities vary to a great extent. However, as argued in the chapters, their collaboration and association largely depended on common interests, exigencies and principles of material and spiritual advancement.

For the first forty years before the entry of the American Baptist missionaries, the colonialist design of occupation was defined by brute force to meet imperialist ends. Therefore, collective punishments, fines, burning of entire villages, excommunication of locals from native villages, etc. were popular means of colonial subjugation. The entry of Baptist missionaries brought about a new paradigm of control which may be termed as a form of ‘cultural hegemony’. It was so because right from the beginning, the missionaries had literalized local spoken languages, produced basic primers and pedagogic texts and introduced village primary schools. The two experiences of conquest and control over the local Nagas suggest two distinct hegemonic modalities. Nevertheless, it needs to be argued that the entry and cultural engagement with locals by the missionaries enhanced not only the authority but also steadily internalized the legitimacy of the colonial rule.

However, as the two entities operated almost parallel in principle, it resulted in the emergence of two distinct spheres of influence. While, the domain that emerged under the colonial patronage was characterized by political and bureaucratic portraits taking the instance of hybridized institutions like ‘Goanbura’ and ‘Dobashi’, the sphere under missionary influences was marked by religious and cultural portraits like ‘teachers’, ‘evangelists’ and ‘pastors’. Until the dawn of the twentieth century, colonial government’s interest in education was lackadaisical and therefore, the criteria to qualify appointment as a ‘Goanbura’ or ‘Dobashi’ did not strictly require literacy or education. Although, by then the government had been recruiting mission school graduates as clerks in the colonial offices. On the other hand, the missionaries were proactively engaged in literary works, literary campaigns, educational measures and evangelism right from the beginning. The essence of the missionary domain was marked by literacy. Evidently, there was a marked difference in the way locals had reciprocated to the colonial and missionary advances.

The abrupt interest demonstrated by the colonial regime in education right at the dawn of the twentieth century perhaps was a realization of the importance of education and literacy as strategies of engagement. With this renewed interest, the colonial administrators complemented the efforts of missionaries in education by assuming the role of ‘taskmasters’ to secure regular attendance of students in village primary schools and regularized the provision of grant in aids to schools. With the collaborative undertaking the literacy percentage had shot up substantially and the increase in literacy rates translated into increase number of conversion as discussed in the preceding chapters. As a matter of fact, literacy began to progressively interfere into the local cultural systems and created new socio-cultural and political ecosystems to enable perpetual production and circulation of new cultural and capital goods. Thus, a new literate culture progressively emerged.

However, it is also evident that the expansion of these two domains began to threaten the socio-cultural, political and religious *status quo* of the locals. This

sense of insecurity was all the more heightened because of the moral platitudes, Christian and Church discipline enforced by the missionaries on one hand and the legal restrictions imposed by the colonial government over local cultural and traditional practices on the other. This authoritative tightening of grip over respective domains to consolidate authority and control produced tensions not only among Christian converts and non-believers over traditional practices but also between the colonial administrators and the missionaries as both the entities had politicized the local cultural practices. These experiences created new didactic and polarized spaces within the local cultural spheres. This complex cultural situation reinforced the sense of ‘cultural difference’ even more and eventually the politics of culture played out in favor of missionaries and colonial administrators as the reconfiguration of social and cultural systems had produced a ‘politics of reverence’. Moreover, the logic of capital which colonialism and evangelism set in motion through literacy permeated an inherent cultural dynamic to intensify this reverential politics. This cultural politics became more and more widespread and manifest along with the new material culture and access produced by the agencies of engagement. I argue that this reverential politics was essential to disdain of traditional practices over new cultural adaptations to produce hybridized socio-cultural, religious and political conditions, systems and identities.

As the colonial and missionary apparatuses gradually got established, the process of cultural change was institutionalized. This produced new obligations within the traditional cultural milieu to enable a distinct cultural decorum gradually to manifest the emergence of class. As a result, this cultural situation promulgated the shift in loyalties of authority structures and rise of new legitimacies. Thus, I argue that to a great extent Christian evangelism had turned into cultural evangelism which by and large resulted in a cultural state of double consciousness. However, I also argue that with the literary culture that has been actively operating under visible surface of major socio-religious, political and cultural shifts, change had been systemized by a new Naga consciousness. Thus, a new class of Nagas emerged.



Considering all these shifts that happened in the stretch of about a century of political occupation and evangelization, it has become critically necessary not only to understand the phenomena and factors behind, but also to locate cultural change in the context of modernization of Naga society. Nevertheless, the thesis critically engages with colonial modernity as it impacted the Naga Hills. Alternative modernities permit one to read the various contextual layers within the Naga society. There is no one homogenous face that modernity imprints upon society. The Nagas therefore did reflect the dominant colonial culture, but there were powerful residues or traces from its pre-colonial past that did not disappear. Accordingly, the study has recognized multiple forms of modernity that operated to bring about decisive shifts in everyday lives of the Nagas, but has also registered the nostalgic memory of a cultural loss that contemporary Naga identity wants to regain as a new political language. Thus, though literary culture was found to be overwhelmingly aggressive in penetrating, stabilizing the steady progression of shifts, the traces of the memories of its varied oral cultures that still survives in cultural and legal niches gives the collective Naga identity a clear political location within the mainstream of Indian political life. Therefore, the Naga modernity has been defined by the deep sense of loss of Naga authentic traditions which produced political sensibilities and also a celebration of the new modern self. In this sense, shift was not total, but the Naga modern self, identity and culture is deeply fragmented.

## **Select Bibliography**

### **Primary Sources**

#### **National Archives of India**

Government of India, Confidential Department, National Archives of India, File no. 497

Government of India, Confidential Dept. File no. 496.

Government of India, Department of Education, General A, Formation of the Department of Education, File no 16, Proceedings, February, Calcutta, 1911

Government of India, Home Department, Judicial Proceedings, July 1896.

Government of India, Home Department, Public Section, File No 131/45, 1945.

Government of India, Home Department, Public, Educational Reconstruction, File No. 272/35, 1935

Guide to the records in the National Archives of India, Part IV, 1871-1957.

#### **Nehru Memorial Museum and Library**

Ao Naga Church and Discipline, By R. Wickstand, Sept. 1933 (Microfilms)

Assam – Historical – A Century of Service by Wikstrand, 712-2.4 (Microfilms)

Assam – Historical – Mission Education Policy and Program in Assam – 11/14  
16/49 - 712-2.3. (Microfilms)

Harding, F. W. *Indigenous Christianity in Assam*. Assam Christian Council  
Guwahati 1939 by (Conference of the Assam Mission – Nehru Memorial  
Museum and Library)

### **Assam State Archives**

Ao Naga Grammar with Illustrative Phrases and Vocabulary by Mrs EW Clark,  
Assam Secretariat Press, Shillong, 1893.

Report on the administration of the district of the Naga Hills, 1878-79, State  
Archives, Assam.

Assam Secretariat Department, Home A, File No. 518, 1904

### **Nagaland State Archive, Kohima**

Government of Nagaland, Administrative Report of 1910-11, File No 296.

Government of Nagaland, Administrative Report, 1936-37, File No, 283.

Government of Nagaland, Annual Administration Report of the Naga Hills  
District 1906-07.

Government of Nagaland, Annual Administration Report of the Naga Hills  
District 1909.

Government of Nagaland, Annual Administration Report of the Naga Hills  
District, 1911.

Government of Nagaland, Ao Church History (ABAM), 1881-1906

Government of Nagaland, Appointment and Political Department, File No. 62,  
1922

Government of Nagaland, Appointment and Political Department, File No 62,  
1922

Government of Nagaland, Church correspondence with government, Private  
(ABAM) 1912-41

Government of Nagaland, February File no 452, 1929.

Government of Nagaland, File No 390, Tour Diary of Hutton, 14-18<sup>th</sup> Jan, May &  
June, 1918

Government of Nagaland, File No. 109, 1905

Government of Nagaland, File No. 168, 1864.

Government of Nagaland, General Administrative Report of Naga Hills 1925-26,  
File No 354.

Government of Nagaland, General Administrative Report of Naga Hills 1922-23,  
File No 347

Government of Nagaland, General Administrative Report of Naga Hills 1936-37,  
File No 283.

Government of Nagaland, General Department, File No 95, 1903.

Government of Nagaland, General Department, File No. 167, 1884

Government of Nagaland, General Department, File No. 167, 1884-85

Government of Nagaland, General Department, File No. 507, 1884

Government of Nagaland, General Department, File No. 67, 1931

Government of Nagaland, General Department, File No.507, 1884

Government of Nagaland, Governor's Secretariat Department, File No. 675, 1941

Government of Nagaland, Hutton's Letters & Diaries, File No 324, 1916

Government of Nagaland, Impur (ABAM), 1881-1906

Government of Nagaland, Lt. D. H. Durrett, File No 456, 1944.

Government of Nagaland, Political Department (Naga Hills), File No 132, 1917

Government of Nagaland, Political Department, File No 109, 1917.

Government of Nagaland, Private (ABAM - 1871, 1896, 1940), File no 4.

Government of Nagaland, Private Department (ABAM) File No. 12, 1901

Government of Nagaland, Private Department (ABAM), 1912-41

Government of Nagaland, Private Department (ABAM), File no 2, 1840.

Government of Nagaland, Private Department (ABAM), File No. 15, 1903

Government of Nagaland, Tour Diary of A W Davis, Esq ICS, Deputy  
Commissioner, Naga Hills 1891-97, File no 433, 1892

Government of Nagaland, Tour Diary of CR Pawsey, February and March 1941  
& January and March 1947, File No 451

Government of Nagaland, Tour Diary of Dr N. L. Bor, File no 454, 1942.

Government of Nagaland, Tour Diary of Lt W M Kennedy, ISC, officiating DC,  
Naga Hills for July 1900, File No 445, July, 1901.

Government of Nagaland, Tour Diary of the SDO, Mokokchung, File No 448,  
1907

**Council of Baptist Churches in North-East India Archive,  
(CBCNEI) Guwahati**

125 Years, Jubilee Reports of Baptist Work in North East India: 1836-1961

American Baptist Foreign Mission Societies, Records, 1817-1969 (Assam,  
Kohima, General Material, 1924-46), Supplee, July 17, 1937.

American Baptist Foreign Mission Society & Women's American Baptist Foreign  
Mission Society, Assam Baptist Missionary Conference Report, Thirty  
Eighth Session, Kohima, Assam, 1941.

American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Assam Baptist Missionary  
Conference Report, Thirty Ninth Session, Golaghat, Assam, 1941

American Baptist Mission Foreign Society, Madison Avenue, New York, Mission  
Education Policy and Program in Assam, 1949.

Assam Baptist Missionary Conference of the American Baptist Foreign Mission  
Society, Twelfth Biennial Session, Guwahati, January 4-13, 1913

Assam Baptist Missionary conference report, Thirty Seventy Session, Jorhat,  
Assam, 1940

Assam Baptist Missionary Union, Report of the Eleventh Biennial Session,  
Guwahati, March 4-12, Calcutta Mission Press, 1911.

Assam Baptist Missionary Union, Report of the Tenth Biennial Session,  
Guwahati, January 8-17, 1910

Assam Missionary Conference of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society,  
Golaghat, Calcutta: The Banerjee Press. 1915.

Assam Moves towards God by Wilfred Danielson, American Baptist Foreign  
Mission Society

Baptist Missionary Review, April, 1941

Baptist Missionary Review, August, 1908

Baptist Missionary Review, Baptist of Bay of Bengal. November-December,  
1955.

Baptist Missionary Review, May, 1922

Baptist Missionary Review, Vol XXVIII, Orissa Missionary Press, 1922

Council of Baptist Churches in North East India, Thirteenth Annual Session,  
Sibsagar, Assam, 1963.

Council of Baptist Churches in North East India, Thirteenth Annual Session,  
Nowgong, Assam, 1964.

Eight Session of the American Baptist Conference, Guwahati. December 24, 1904  
to January 1, 1905. Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press. 1905.

Fifth Triennial Conference held at Dibrugarh, Calcutta Baptist Mission Press, Feb 11-19, 1899

Higher Education: A Criticism by Delta, Baptist Missionary Review, August 1908

Ninety Ninth Annual Report of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Michigan, May, 1913.

Ninety Sixth Annual Report of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Chicago, Illinois 1910

Ninth Biennial Conference of the American Baptist Missionary Union, held at Guwahati, January 5 to 12, 1907, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, 1907.

One Hundred-First Annual Report of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Los Angeles, California, 1915.

One Hundred-Third Annual Report of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Boston, Massachusetts, 1917.

One Hundred-Twenty Fourth Annual Report of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society. New York: Judson Press Philadelphia, 1938.

Rivenburg, S. W. *The Way to Health in Angami Naga*, (Translated and revised) American Baptist Union, Kohima Assam, 1904.

Second Survey of Fields and Work of the Northern Baptist Convention, Board of Missionary Cooperation, New York, Judson Press, Philadelphia, 1929

Seventh Session of the American Baptist Conference, Guwahati, December, 27, 1902 - 4<sup>th</sup> January, 1903.

Sixth Session of the American Baptist Conference, held at Guwahati, December 22-31, 1900, Guwahati Mission Press, 1901.



The American Baptist Missionary Review, 1910.

The American Baptist Missionary Review, January, 1908.

The Assam Mission of the American Baptist Missionary Union- Triennial  
Conference 1895.

The Assam Mission of the American Baptist Missionary Union- Triennial  
Conference, 1889

The Assam Mission of the American Baptist Missionary Union- Triennial  
Conference (Calcutta Mission Press), 1893.

The Assam Mission of the American Baptist Missionary Union- Triennial  
Conference, Sibsagar, 1895

The Baptist Missionary Review, April, 1936, vol. XLII.

The Baptist Missionary Review, February, 1908, Vol. XIV

### **Reports, Gazetteers, Chronicles, Souvenirs and Books**

Archer, Mildred. *Journey to Nagaland: An Account of Six Months Spent in the  
Naga Hills in 1947* (Type Script) Naga Database Online.

B. C. Allen, *District Gazetteer of the Naga Hills*. 1905.

Clark, Mary Mead. *A Corner in India*. Philadelphia: American Baptist  
Publication.1907.

Gait, E. A. *A History of Assam*. Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co.1906.

Gammell A. M. William. *History of American Baptist Missions*. Boston: Gould, Kendall and Lincoln. 1850.

Grierson, G.A. *Linguistic Survey of India*. Vol. III. Part II. 1903.

*Heralding Hope*. Government of Nagaland Publication. Guwahati: Bhabani Offset and Imaging System Pvt. Ltd. 2004.

Hutton J. H. *The Angami Nagas*. Macmillan. 1921.

Hutton, J. P. *The Sema Nagas*. London: Macmillan, 1921;

Mills, J. P. (Reprint Govt. of Nagaland 2003). *The Ao Nagas*. London: Macmillan Publication. 1926.

Mills, J. P. *The Locha Nagas*. London: Macmillan Publication. 1922.

*Nagaland Legislative Assembly Resolution adopted by Nagaland Assembly 1964-70*. Assembly Secretariat Kohima, Chapter I- Government Resolution (1964-1970). Kohima: The Kohima Printing Press.

*One New Humanity: Nagaland Baptist Church Council Celebrates Platinum Jubilee 1937-2012*. Kohima: Nagaland Baptist Church Council. 2012.

Sword Victor Hugo. *Baptists in Assam: A Century of Missionary Service 1836-1936*.

*The Heritage of Zapami Village*. Published by the Village Council. May, 2017.

*Heralding Hope: Kohima 125*, Government of Nagaland, 2004

## Interviewees

Chikhro Khutso, Zapami Village

Dikha Khutso, Zapami Village

Neisa Wetsah, Zapami Village

## Websites and References

*A New Species of Christian Songs*. Christian History Institute Magazine.

<https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/new-species-of-christian-song>

Age of Sage Organization [http://www.age-of-the-sage.org/philosophy/john\\_locke\\_tabula\\_rasa.html](http://www.age-of-the-sage.org/philosophy/john_locke_tabula_rasa.html)

Bible Gateway

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians+5%3A11>

Bible Gateway

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+28%3A19&version=NIV>

Christian History. Christianity Today, Issue 31. Golden Age of Hymns

Christianity Today <http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-31/golden-age-of-hymns-did-you-know.html>

Christianity Today <http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-31/golden-age-of-hymns-did-you-know.html>

Christianity Today <http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-31/golden-age-of-hymns-did-you-know.html>

Christopher Hayward, Music, Worship and the Church, <http://www.jubilee-centre.org/music-worship-and-the-church-by-christopher-hayward/>

Graham, Billy. *Why we came to Nagaland*. telebroadcast published on June 21, 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FpEi8vwa54E>

International Conference Locating Northeast India: Human Mobility, Resource Flows, and Spatial Linkages, Department of Sociology, Tezpur University 9th-12th January, 2018, <http://www.tezu.ernet.in/event/CONCEPT-NOTE-AND-CFP.pdf>

Oxford Dictionaries <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/leader>

*The Golden Age of Hymns, Christian History, Christianity Today*, Issue 31, Golden Age of Hymns

*The Hymn Exposition*. Christianity Today, Issue 31. Golden Age of Hymns.

The Sangai Express <http://www.thesangaiexpress.com/lord-curzons-visit-manipur/>

Webster English Dictionary

Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life COPYRIGHT 2009 Cengage Learning, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/humanities/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/naga>

## Secondary Sources

### Books and Papers

Allen, Louis. *Burma: The Longest War (1941-1945)*. London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd. 1984.

Ao, Alemchiba. *A Brief Historical Account of Nagaland*. Kohima: The Naga Institute of Culture. 1970.

Ao, Bendangyabang. *History of Christianity in Nagaland: A Source Material*. Shalom Ministry Publication. 1998.

Ao, R. Lisen. *A Collection of Stray Records of the American Baptist Mission Work in Naga Hills (1836-1936)*. Janambhumi Press Pvt. Ltd., Jorhat. 1987.

Ao, Temsula. *The Ao Naga Oral Tradition*. Dimapur: The Heritage Publishing House. 2012.

Bandyopadhyay, Sekhar. *From Plassey to Partition: A History of Modern India*. Orient Blackswan. 2004.

Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. Routledge Classics. Psychology Press. 1994.

Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1984.

- Bourdieu, Pierre. *The Forms of Capital*. In J. Richardson (Ed.) *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. New York: Greenwood. 1986
- Brotton, Jerry. *The Renaissance: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2006
- Bunyan, John, *The Pilgrim's Progress* (Classics), Peacock Publication, 2016
- Burke, Peter and R. Po-Chia Hsia ed. *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge University Press. 2007.
- Butler, John. *Rough Notes on the Angami Nagas and their Language*. Journal of Asiatic Society. 1875.
- Calhoun, Craig et al. *Classical Sociological Theory*. (Second edition) Blackwell Publishing. 2007.
- Chakhrabarty, Dipesh. *Adda, Calcutta: Dwelling in Modernity*. In Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar (ed.)-*Alternative Modernities*-Duke University Press. 2001.
- Chakhrabarty, Dipesh. *Habitations of Modernity*. Orient Blackswan. 2004.
- Chasie, Charles. *The Naga Imbroglio: A Personal Perspective*. Standard Printers & Publishers. 1999.
- Cohn, Bernard. *Colonialism and its forms of Knowledge: The British in India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, (Copyright Princeton University Press, 1996) 1997.
- Crain I. A. *The Wesley Press and Publishing House*. Mysore (First published in the National Christian Council Review, January 1942)

Downs S. Frederick. Christianity in North-East India: Historical Perspectives, ISPCK, Delhi, 1983

DuBois, W. E. B. *The Soul of Black Folk*. 1903.

Dzuvichu, Lipokmar. 'Roads and the Raj: The Politics of Road Building in the Colonial Naga Hills, 1860s to 1910s. Indian Economic and Social History Review. 2013.

Eaton, Richard. *Comparative History as World History: Religious Conversion in Modern India*. Journal of World History, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 243-271  
Published by: University of Hawai Press.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20068595>

Eisenstadt, S. N. *Multiple Modernities*. Daedalus, Vol. 129 - No. 1, Multiple Modernities. The MIT Press on behalf of American Academy of Arts & Sciences Stable. 2000. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20027613>

Elwin, Verrier. ed., *Nagas in the Nineteenth Century*. Bombay: Oxford University Press. 1969.

Elwin, Verrier. *Nagaland*. Spectrum Publication. 1997.

Ferretter, Luke. *Louis Althusser*. Rutledge Critical Thinkers. 2006.

Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books, Inc. Publishers. 1973.

Ghosh, Anindita. *Power in Print: Popular Publishing and the Politics of Language and Culture in a Colonial Society, 1778-1905*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2006

Ghosh, Suresh Chandra. *The History of Education in Modern India: 1757-1998*. New Delhi: Orient Longman Limited. 2000 (1995).

- Gibbon. *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. In ed. Bury (1896), vol. 1, Ch. 9, p. 218. Cited in Rosalind Thomas. *Oral Tradition and Written Record In Classical Athens*. Cambridge: University Press Cambridge. 1989.
- Habermas, Jürgen. *The Structural Transformation of Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Translated by, Thomas Burger with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence. Cambridge: The MIT Press. 1993. (First Print- 1989).
- Iralu, Kaka. Combating State Sponsored Terrorism with The Pen  
<http://nagas.sytes.net/~kaka/articles/art011.html>
- Jacob, W. James et al. *Indigenous Education: Language, Culture and Identity*. Springer. 2015.
- James C Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*, Yale University Press. 2010.
- James, William. *The Principles of Psychology*. New York: H. Holt and Company, 1890. <http://izt.ciens.ucv.ve/ecologia/Archivos/Filosofia-I/The%20Principles%20Of%20Psychology%20Vol%20I.pdf>
- Julian Jacobs, *The Nagas Hill peoples of Northeast India: Society, Culture, and the Colonial Encounter*, Hansjörg Mayer 1990 (Extended New Edition 2012), New York Thames & Hudson.
- Kaviraj, Sudipta. *An Outline of Revisionist Theory of Modernity*. *European Journal of Sociology / Archives Européennes de Sociologie / Europäisches Archiv für Soziologie*. Vol. 46, No. 3, pp. 497-526. Cambridge University Press. 2005.



- Kaviraj, Sudipta. *Modernity and Politics in India. Daedalus* Vol. 129, No. 1, Multiple Modernities, pp. 137-162. The MIT Press on behalf of American Academy of Arts and Sciences. 2000.
- Kaviraj, Sudipta. *The Imaginary Institution of India: Politics and Ideas*. Permanent Black. 2010
- Keane, Fergal. *Road of Bones: The Epic Siege of Kohima 1944*. HarperCollins Publishers Limited. 2011.
- Khutso, Riku. *English Language and the Formation of Public Sphere in Colonial Naga Hills: 1870s-1950s*. MPhil Dissertation (unpublished). 2013.
- \_\_\_\_\_. History, Identity and Language: Tenyidie and Its Widespread Networks, *Language in India*, ISSN 1930-2940 Vol. 18:2 February 2018,
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Shifting Democratic Experiences of Nagas*, in Jelle J. P. Wouters and Zhoto Tunyi (ed.), *Exploring Democracy in Nagaland: Tribes, Traditions and Tensions*. Kohima: Highlander Books. 2018.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Socio-Cultural Situation and The Ambiguity of Double Consciousness*. The Morung Express. 25 June, 2015.
- Lange, Matthew. *Lineages of Despotism and Development: British Colonialism and State Power*. University of Chicago Press. 2009.
- Liezietsu, Shurhozelie. *Tenyidie Dze*, Kolkata: Ura Academy Publication, 1992
- Lohe, Kewepfuzu. *Socio-Cultural Heritage of Kuzhami Chakhesang Nagas*. Pfutsero: Kuzhalhu Zawe Publication, Vision Press, 2010.
- Macfie, A. L. ed. *Orientalism A Reader*. Edinburgh University Press. 2000.

Mackenzie, Alexander. *History of the Relations of the Government with the Hill Tribes of the North-East Frontier of Bengal*. Calcutta: Home Department Press. 1884.

Nicholas Dirks, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India*, Princeton University Press, 2011

Nuh, V. K and Wetshokhrolo Lasuh. (eds.) *The Naga Chronicle*. Indian Council of Social Science Research. New Delhi: Regency Publication. 2002.

Nuh, V. K. *The Origin of Naga*. Kohima: Vision Press. 2012.

Ong, Walter J. *Orality and Literacy*. Taylor & Francis. 2002.

Pandey, Gyanendra. *Remembering Partition Violence*. Cambridge University Press. 2003 (first published 2001).

Pandey, Gynendra. *A History of Prejudice: Race, Caste, and Difference in India and the United States*. Cambridge University Press. 2013.

Parameshwar, Dilip Gaonkar. (ed.). *Alternative Modernities*. Duke University Press. 2001.

Pathenpurakal J. (Ed.). *Impact of Christianity on North East*. Shillong: Vendrame Institute Publications. 1984.

Pettigrew W., Jonah M. Solo, K. Mahangthei, *Forty years in Manipur, Assam: an account of the work of Rev. & Mrs. William Pettigrew*, University of California, Digitized in 2006

Pillai, Manu, S. *'I'm a Naga first, a Naga second, and a Naga last'*. Livemint. 2017.

<http://www.livemint.com/Leisure/3ARYXMNwsz27unaESW5bcP/Im-a-Naga-first-a-Naga-second-and-a-Naga-last.html>

Pou, K. B. Veio. *Literary Writings of Noreast India: Naga Writings in English*. Dimapur: The Heritage Publication. 2016.

Quintin Hoare, Geoffrey Nowell Smith, (eds.) *Selections from the Prison Notes of Antonio Gramsci*, International Publishers, New York, 1971.

Rowena, Robinson. *Christians in India*. Sage. 2003.

Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. Penguin Books India, 2006 (reprint).

Sana, R.K Bijeta. *Exploration of Region in Colonial North-East India: Construction of "Naga Hills"*. International Research Journal of Social Sciences. ISSN 2319–3565, Vol. 2(2), 34-42, February Int. Res. J. Social Sci. 2013.

Sanyu, Vishier. *A History of Nagas of Nagaland: Dynamics of oral Tradition in Village Formation*, Commonwealth Publishers, 1996, p. 7.

Schmidt, James. *What Is Enlightenment?: Eighteenth-Century Answers and Twentieth-Century Questions*. University of California Press. 1996.

Schultz, Jack M. *The Seminole Baptist Churches of Oklahoma*. University of Oklahoma Press. 1999.

Sema, Piketo. *British Policy and Administration in Nagaland 1881-1947*. New Delhi: Scholar Publishing House. 1992.

Sharma, RS. *India's Ancient Past*. Oxford University Press. 2005 (twenty second impression 2016).

- Singh, Avadesh Kumar. *Celebrating Translation as a Bridge Between Knowledge and Cultures*. Translation Today, Vol. 10, Issue-II, 2016, National Translation Mission.
- Sitlhou, Hoineilhing. *Deconstructing Colonial Ethnography: An Analysis of Missionary Writings on North East India*. Ruby Press & Co. 2017.
- Stern, Aglaja and Peter Van Ham. *The Hidden World of the Naga: Living Traditions in Northeast India and Burma*. Prestel: University of Michigan. 2003.
- Thomas, John. *Evangelizing the Nation: Religion and the Formation of Naga Political Identity*. Routledge. 2015.
- Thomas, Rosalind. *Oral Tradition and Written Record In Classical Athens*. Cambridge: University Press Cambridge. 1989.
- Thong, Tezenlo. 'Thy Kingdom Come': The Impact of Colonization and Proselytization on Religion among the Nagas, Journal of Asian and African Studies 45(6) 595–609, Sage Publication, 2010
- Tinyi, Venusa. *The Headhunting Culture of the Nagas: Reinterpreting the Self*, The South Asianist, Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 83–98 | ISSN 2050-487X | 2017.  
[www.southasianist.ed.ac.uk](http://www.southasianist.ed.ac.uk)
- Vijayraju "Understanding Missionary Activity within Broader Historical Perspective: Two Micro Studies of the Brethren Movement in Andhra (1833-1968)", Department of History, University of Hyderabad, 2010. (PhD Thesis)
- Viswanathan, Gauri. *Mask of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India*, Oxford University Press, 1998;

Wagner, Daniel A. *Literacy, Culture and Development*. Cambridge University Press. 1993.

Wati, I Ben. *IMPUR CHANU, (1920-1935)*. An Autobiography. 1998

William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, Prabhat Prakashan, 1965

Wouters, J. P. Jelle. The Making of Tribes: The Chang and Chakhesang in India's Northeast, *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 51, 1 (2017): 1–26 SAGE Publications, New Delhi. 2017.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Feasts of Merit, Election Feasts, or No Feasts? On the politics of wining and Dining in Nagaland, Northeast India*. The South Asianist, Vol. 3, No. 2. 2017.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Performing Democracy in Nagaland: Past Politics and Present Politics*, Economic & Political Weekly, April 19, 2014 Vol xlix no 16. 2014.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Battle of Kikruma: How a Single Village Took on the British Empire*. himalmag.com /the-battle-of-kikruma/ 1851. 2015.

Yhome, Kekhriesituo. *Politics of Region: The Making of Nagas Identity During the Colonial and Post-Colonial Era*. Borderlands ejournal. volume 6 number 3. 2007.  
[http://www.borderlands.net.au/vol6no3\\_2007/yhome\\_region.htm](http://www.borderlands.net.au/vol6no3_2007/yhome_region.htm)

Yhome, Kekhriesituo. *The Making of the Modern Naga Identity: A Historico-Geographical Dimension*. PhD Thesis, University of Hyderabad. 2007 (unpublished).

Zehol, Lucy and Kevekha Kevin Zehol. *The Legendary Naga Village: A Reader*  
(*Khezhakeno*). 2009.

# LITERATE MODERNITY AND NEW CULTURAL ADAPTATIONS: COLONIAL AND MISSIONARY EXPERIENCES AND LEGACIES IN THE NAGA HILLS FROM 1830s TO 1950s

*by* Riku Khutso

---

**Submission date:** 19-Apr-2018 02:29PM (UTC+0530)

**Submission ID:** 949627825

**File name:** periences\_and\_Legacies\_in\_the\_Naga\_Hills\_from\_1830s\_to\_1950s.pdf (1.38M)

**Word count:** 85501

**Character count:** 467320

LITERATE MODERNITY AND NEW CULTURAL  
ADAPTATIONS: COLONIAL AND MISSIONARY EXPERIENCES  
AND LEGACIES IN THE NAGA HILLS FROM 1830s TO 1950s

ORIGINALITY REPORT

2%

SIMILARITY INDEX

1%

INTERNET SOURCES

1%

PUBLICATIONS

1%

STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1

[archive.org](https://archive.org)

Internet Source

<1%

2

[link.springer.com](https://link.springer.com)

Internet Source

<1%

3

"The Changing World Religion Map", Springer  
Nature, 2015

Publication

<1%

4

Mepfhü-o, Ketholenuo. "Conversion: perception  
of the Christian 'self' and the 'other'", Asian  
Ethnicity, 2015.

Publication

<1%

5

Submitted to University of Newcastle

Student Paper

<1%

6

[monoskop.org](https://monoskop.org)

Internet Source

<1%

7

[ia601502.us.archive.org](https://ia601502.us.archive.org)

Internet Source

<1%



8	Submitted to University of Lincoln Student Paper	<1 %
9	Submitted to Blackburn College, Lancashire Student Paper	<1 %
10	Submitted to University of Leeds Student Paper	<1 %
11	Submitted to University College for the Creative Arts at Canterbury, Epsom, Farnham, Maidstone and Rochester Student Paper	<1 %
12	<a href="http://www.sciy.org">www.sciy.org</a> Internet Source	<1 %
13	Submitted to Nottingham Trent University Student Paper	<1 %
14	<a href="http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org">uscpublicdiplomacy.org</a> Internet Source	<1 %
15	Segal, Robert A.. "Clifford Geertz's Interpretive Approach to Religion : Clifford Geertz's Interpretive Approach to Religion", Religion Compass, 2012. Publication	<1 %
16	Submitted to University of Bristol Student Paper	<1 %
17	<a href="http://unesdoc.unesco.org">unesdoc.unesco.org</a> Internet Source	<1 %

18	"Christianizing South China", Springer Nature, 2018 Publication	<1 %
19	<a href="http://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu">scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu</a> Internet Source	<1 %
20	John Thomas. "Sending out the spears: Zeliangrong movement, Naga Club and a nation in the making", The Indian Economic & Social History Review, 2012 Publication	<1 %
21	Submitted to Baylor University Student Paper	<1 %
22	"Cultural Genocide and Asian State Peripheries", Springer Nature, 2006 Publication	<1 %
23	Submitted to Middle East Technical University Student Paper	<1 %
24	<a href="http://www.cammac.space">www.cammac.space</a> Internet Source	<1 %
25	<a href="http://www.lollutheran.org">www.lollutheran.org</a> Internet Source	<1 %
26	Dzuvichu, L.. "Roads and the Raj: The politics of road building in colonial Naga Hills, 1860s-1910s", Indian Economic & Social History Review, 2013.	<1 %

---

27	Submitted to London Contemporary Dance School	<1 %
	Student Paper	

---

28	<a href="http://www.literacy.org">www.literacy.org</a>	<1 %
	Internet Source	

---

29	Öğüt, Şebnem Timur. "Material Culture of Tea in Turkey: Transformations of Design through Tradition, Modernity and Identity", The Design Journal, 2009.	<1 %
	Publication	

---

30	<a href="http://anilpinto.blogspot.com">anilpinto.blogspot.com</a>	<1 %
	Internet Source	

---

31	Dolly KIKON. "Destroying differences, schooling consent: a critical analysis of education policy in Indian-administered Nagaland 1", Inter-Asia Cultural Studies, 8/1/2003	<1 %
	Publication	

---

32	<a href="http://digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu">digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu</a>	<1 %
	Internet Source	

---

33	Dzüvichü, Lipokmar. "Empire on their Backs: Coolies in the Eastern Borderlands of the British Raj", International Review of Social History, 2014.	<1 %
	Publication	

---

Submitted to Jamia Milia Islamia University

34

Student Paper

&lt;1 %

35

[www.nscnonline.org](http://www.nscnonline.org)

Internet Source

&lt;1 %

36

[repository.tamu.edu](http://repository.tamu.edu)

Internet Source

&lt;1 %

37

Submitted to Lakeridge High School

Student Paper

&lt;1 %

38

Submitted to Grand Canyon University

Student Paper

&lt;1 %

39

Huggan, Graham. "Prizing "otherness": a short history of the Booker. (Booker Prize)  
(Postcolonialism, History, and the", Studies in the Novel, Fall 1997 Issue

Publication

&lt;1 %

40

[hypergeertz.jku.at](http://hypergeertz.jku.at)

Internet Source

&lt;1 %

41

[www.innovation.cc](http://www.innovation.cc)

Internet Source

&lt;1 %

42

Submitted to John Wesley University

Student Paper

&lt;1 %

43

[www.cwds.ac.in](http://www.cwds.ac.in)

Internet Source

&lt;1 %

44

[en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org)

---

Internet Source

<1 %

---

45

Submitted to University of Warwick

Student Paper

<1 %

---

46

lrd.yahooapis.com

Internet Source

<1 %

---

47

www.gg.rhul.ac.uk

Internet Source

<1 %

---

48

ecommons.luc.edu

Internet Source

<1 %

---

49

omega.cohums.ohio-state.edu

Internet Source

<1 %

---

50

open.uct.ac.za

Internet Source

<1 %

---

51

Meyer, Stephan Olver, Thomas. "Alternative modernities in African literatures and cultures.", Journal of Literary Studies, June 2002 Issue

Publication

<1 %

---

52

lra.le.ac.uk

Internet Source

<1 %

---

53

etheses.whiterose.ac.uk

Internet Source

<1 %

---

54

uir.unisa.ac.za

---

Internet Source

<1 %

---

55

[core.ac.uk](http://core.ac.uk)

Internet Source

<1 %

---

56

[nonfiction.bookbest.com](http://nonfiction.bookbest.com)

Internet Source

<1 %

---

57

[unstats.un.org](http://unstats.un.org)

Internet Source

<1 %

---

58

[xroads.virginia.edu](http://xroads.virginia.edu)

Internet Source

<1 %

---

59

Renu Vinod. "Negotiating Values in Modern India: A Theoretical Exploration", Journal of Human Values, 2015

Publication

<1 %

---

60

[el.minoh.osaka-u.ac.jp](http://el.minoh.osaka-u.ac.jp)

Internet Source

<1 %

---

61

Submitted to King's College

Student Paper

<1 %

---

62

Johan Fornäs. "Defending Culture", Springer Nature, 2017

Publication

<1 %

---

63

"English and American Studies", Springer Nature, 2012

Publication

<1 %

---

---

Exclude quotes      On

Exclude matches

< 5 words

Exclude bibliography      On