TELEVISUAL ENGAGEMENT AND NAGA YOUTH

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By

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DECLARATION

I, Jasmine Yimchunger, hereby declare that this thesis entitled, "**Televisual Engagement and Naga Youth"** submitted by me under the guidance and supervision of **Prof. Vinod Pavarala** is a bonafide work which is also free from plagiarism. I also declare that it has not been submitted previously in part or in full to this University or any other University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma. I hereby agree that my thesis can be deposited in Shodganga/INFLIBNET.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

This dissertation is about the politics of television audiences. It is about Naganess as well. How do identities and subjecthoods such as Naga and Television get negotiated with regard to representation, tradition, and globalisation? It also examines how televisual products are being used by the Naga youth to recreate cultural traditions and how the young people negotiate between the local, regional, national and international cultures which traverse their lives.

The Indo-Naga political issue forms the wider backdrop to this study and this is explained in the subsequent section. This issue has intensified an awareness of deep differences and has emphasised the tensions between the local and national identities. My study sheds light on media representation as perceived by the Naga youth, ethnicity, and cultural change, in the face of globalisation of culture and inflow of images which cut across and challenge established national and cultural boundaries as well as identities. As the Indian state aims towards cultural homogenisation, the youth resist and negotiate such tendencies and recreate their own culture deftly nestled between tradition and modernity, centre and periphery, the East and the West. All these complicities are dialectically experienced; and in the experience, several mutually opposed but simultaneous tendencies in contemporary culture become manifest: universalisation versus particularisation; homogenisation versus differentiation; integration versus fragmentation; centralisation versus decentralisation; and juxtaposition versus syncretisation (Robertson, 1992; McGrew, 1992:74-75).

By looking at the preoccupations with televisual narratives, the dissertation unfolds how the youth reaffirm and challenge tradition and alongside formulate their own aspirations towards cultural change. The youth's appropriation and re-creative reception of the media for identity

expression, negotiating worldviews generate identity and societal shifts and contribute to the overall shaping of culture. The responses of the youth reveal a lot about how in their consumption of media products, questions of identity are subject to intense negotiation. Also, through such consumption, they construct new forms of identity.

Significance of the study

My experience in workplaces and different settings where people have default positions about the Nagas and ask questions like, "Do you eat dog's meat?", "Do people wear clothes there in Nagaland?" and on knowing that they mostly have all these perceptions about a people through television made me realize the power of the media and its impressions on people's ideas. The topic has remained marginal on which little has been written. Also, it is of great topical interest to me, and has scope for significant political, ideological, and practical implications. It is a region which has no satellite channels, community radio, and so people rely on media that is defined and represented for them by media institutions and personnel far removed from the region geo-culturally. Also, since Nagaland does not fall under Television Rating Points (TRP) towns, there is no other way to solicit data on Naga audiences, be it quantitative statistical data or qualitative data.

This thesis will be a contribution to the field of Television Studies in the sense that the diversity of particular lived experiences will come alive. It outlines mostly the experiences and interpretations of the audience. Such narrations and testimonies of people may appear unevenly sympathetic to their culture and society and may be in conflict with the larger Indian state policies of nation-building, but are nonetheless important.

In attending to the meanings produced by social subjects and to the daily activities they perform, I have sought to explain those significances and practices by locating them in relation to broader frameworks of interpretation and to structures of power and inequality and the Indo-Naga political issue. While this study cannot be extrapolated to different classes and tribes of the Naga population, television's spread to even the remotest parts of the state with the coming of direct to home (DTH) television calls for academic attention and focus and throws light on a historically and temporally situated people. This study is prompted by an interest in actual audiences by investigation into questions of consumption of popular culture directly with them and what it meant to them instead of relying on intuition.

The thesis through a qualitative investigation employing ethnographic methodology explores the question of how the media consumers negotiate their multiple identities in their engagement with television by situating them within a socio-politico-cultural framework.

Statement of the problem

This study proposes to understand the engagement or participation of Naga youth audiences with satellite television – how television is integrated into youth practices, their negotiation with the national and transnational culture and how this negotiation changes the dynamics of their social and cultural practices.

Rationale behind the study

Some of the changes taking place in Nagaland are often attributed to media, among other reasons like colonialism and the advent of Christianity. This is evident in a few academic writings by local authors, journalistic writings and articles in newspapers. That television is considered to have powerful effects was expressed in an article in one of the leading English

dailies, *Nagaland Post* addressed to 'City cable proprietors' regarding the screening of 'pornographic' material on cable channels and the impact it can have on young impressionable minds. Very rarely are such topics discussed in the public sphere be it newspapers, church, or local gatherings.

Also debates about the representation of 'Northeast' in general or 'Nagaland' in particular on Indian television have begged attention of journalists and academics. Daisy Hasan, in one of her articles, says that,

> Reflective and detailed reportage of the region's everyday is glaringly absent on the channels that 'matter'. One of the reasons for this glaring absence is that the cities and towns of the region do not come under TRP (Television Rating Points) towns. Audiences therefore are numerically insignificant against the mass viewership in major Indian cities to which sponsorship is wedded. In such a scenario, audiences in the region take what they get even as they become invisible in the images they consume" (Hasan, 2004:127).

The quote encapsulates the issues surrounding television in Nagaland where the audiences do not take any part in its structural frameworks of which they are mobilized to 'participate" as consumers. Irrespective of whether the people have any say in the production process, they watch what they get on screen anyway. On this issue, Ien Ang (1991) comments that these audiences "remain the invisible audience in whose name or on whose behalf the institutions put forward their interests, claims, defences, polices, strategies" (1991:5). She asserts that "the public interest" that the public broadcaster invents and pretends to represent does not necessarily coincide with what the actual audiences are interested in.

Recent years have seen a huge increase in the viewership of Korean channel *Arirang TV* and the proliferation of Korean movies and serials CDs in many regions, both urban and rural, of Northeast including Nagaland. Arirang TV has spilled over from screen to off-screen in the formation of a fan club, opening of a Korean language tutorial institute, organizing of a Korean film festival sponsored by Nagaland University, a singing competition in Korean

language, the airing of the Hornbill festival, an annual cultural festival held in Nagaland, on Arirang TV and the latest, the signing of an Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between a Korean school and a school in Dimapur to set up a Culinary School in Nagaland. With the Indo-Naga issue still at hand, Nagaland faced another dilemma when globalisation touched the State; as the world talked about globalisation and the 'global village', issues of Naga identity came all the more to the fore.

Satellite television is very much at the heart of popular Naga culture. The rural areas were not connected by cable television, but with the coming of DTH (direct-to-home) television, it has penetrated even to the remote areas. Television is a popular, powerful, and a pervasive medium of expression. With its ideological and hegemonic functions, and also its attractively packaged messages, television tends to dominate the lifestyles of its viewers, especially the youth (Tomlinson, 1991). With the youth immersed in an image-dominated environment, there is a 'moral panic' among some opinion-making groups in Nagaland that television would have negative effects on traditional Naga culture. They worry that television would change the landscape of the culture of the rural youth, who otherwise, to some extent, are still in touch with their traditional practices.

Except for scattered references to the media in the literature, it is difficult to find in-depth academic studies on the mediascape in Nagaland. The scanty literature mostly speaks about the ill-effects of television, and how it undermines the rich and pluralistic nature of Naga society. The relevance of traditional values is not the same for all Nagas and it can't be assumed that all Nagas wish to define their ethnic identity according to classical tribal constructs.

Clearly, the media has social effects and it's important to examine and research the influence media has on people, but, equally clearly, these effects are not necessarily direct, simple and arguably neither all-powerful. Reception is a complex phenomenon and the nature of this

complexity and indirectness needs to be established and researched. It is within this complex scenario of mediation from both national and trans-national television that a study on television becomes pertinent to understand how Naga youth engage with the medium, their negotiations with the dominant images of their marginal culture amidst other media like print, internet etc.

Why youth?

According to the UN, the majority of the world's youth live in developing countries, with approximately 60 percent in Asia and 23 percent in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. The UN estimates that by 2025, the number of young people living in the Global South will increase to 89.5 percent (UNESCO 2002).

Heaven and Tubridy (2003) contends that a host of factors attract or lure the youth of the developing world into non-traditional ways of living, economic necessity being the most significant, and thereby alienating them from their traditional communities. They go on to say that such cultural disintegration serves an impetus to the loss of linguistic, historical and spiritual traditions, the breakdown of family networks, and the loss of a local political structure. With the breakdown of such networks, conflicts arise in such situations and a sense of insecurity and a feeling of chaos emerges (Hewitt, 1989).

In Nagaland, youth movements like those of Naga Students Federation (NSF) and Eastern Nagaland Students Federation (ENSF) actively engage in social and political matters. They seek to organise themselves into a force of considerable political agency that can exert influence upon larger social and political developments. In the cultural matrix, global and local, as well as homogenizing and diversifying, influences continuously merge and become manifest in the lifestyles, performances, and socio-political practices of contemporary youth. Youth in Nagaland like elsewhere are seen as trend-setters, actively responding, adapting to

and identifying with modernized and cosmopolitan Western culture. This Western and now East-Asian oriented youth often times conflict with the local and traditional norms. The aspiration to consumption and ownership of brand name products and construction of identity through these practices are mostly pronounced among the youth and thus make them a potential group for study.

Television Studies: A theoretical background

Mass media research has undergone paradigm shifts from 'media-effects' tradition to 'limited effects' to 'interpretive reading'. In the former, the media were seen as having direct effect powerful enough to 'inject' a repressive ideology into the consciousness of the 'masses'. This approach was called the 'hypodermic needle' model. It was also termed the 'transmission' model based on the simple concept of communication developed by Shannon and Weaver (1949) which defined communication as transmitting a message from a sender to a receiver. In this view, power was thought to reside in texts and the producers and audiences were perceived as passive receivers of information.

Then in the late 1950s and 1960s came the 'uses and gratification' approach where the focus shifted from 'what media do to people' to 'what people do with the media'. Key studies were those of Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) and Joseph Klapper (1960). The important contribution of this approach to understanding audiences was recognising the agency of the audiences in the reception process. It highlighted the fact that different members of the mass media audience may use and interpret any particular programme in quite different ways from each other and also render it different meanings from what the communicator intended it. Both the models suffered from fundamental defects; the former overestimated the 'closeness' of the message encoded and the latter overestimated the 'openness' of the message decoded.

Similar to the earlier 'stimulus-response 'model, the 'uses and gratification' approach also conceived audience as an atomised mass of individuals (Morley, 1992).

In the 1970s, a revised sociological perspective was beginning to make inroads on communication research, 'the interpretive paradigm'. In the previous approaches, the members of a society had always been assumed to share a stable system of values and this was precisely what interpretive paradigm put into question. It asserted that the meaning of a particular action must be seen as problematic for the actors involved and could not be taken for granted. Communication was thus conceptualised as a process of interpretation and of 'mutual typification' by and of the actors involved in a given situation (Morley and Brundson, 1999:126). This set the trend of research focus to forms of cognitive analysis what was previously steeped in behavioural analysis. According to Morley and Brundson, the production of a meaningful message in the TV discourse is always problematic 'work' (1999:129) because messages in social communication is treated as a complex sign both in structure and form and they always contain more than one potential 'reading'. Although messages have a preferred reading inscribed, they remain polysemic and retains the potential of being decoded in a different way from the intended meaning. In other words, the Interpretive paradigm differs from the 'effects' and 'uses and gratifications' approaches in that "the message is treated neither as a unilateral sign, without ideological 'flux' nor… as a disparate sign which can be read anyway, according to the need-gratification structure of the decoder" (1999:129).

Although messages are structured in dominance, the process of interpretation, which is central to the act of reception, is based also on our cultural contexts. We function from within an 'interpretive community' (a term coined by the literary critic Stanley Fish (1980), where exist certain conventions of reading and shared cultural codes. Thus, as Indians, we do not need an explanation for a pair of round glasses, a bald head and a walking stick. We can

readily identify the image as that of Mahatma Gandhi because we are Indians, sharing a common cultural code. We interpret the symbols because we know them in advance. Meaning is a combination of the two - the grammar of the text and the grammar of the cultural context. The grammar or meanings of a text can be deciphered in conjunction with other texts (often called 'culture').

The message "cannot adequately be interpreted if it is severed from the cultural context in which it occurred" (Merton quoted in Morley and Brundson, 1999: 123). Taking a similar stance, Katz (1959) asserted that however potent a mass media content be, it cannot simply influence an individual whose social and psychological context in which he lives requires no use of it.

'The ethnographic turn' in social and cultural studies research brought a major overhaul in investigating media effects research. Cultural studies approaches to mass media drew on literary analysis, linguistics and sociolinguistics (Macnamara, 2003) and a key influence was Roland Barthes' (1977) concept of the 'death of the author' which shifted emphasis from the author's intentions to the reader. This paradigm shift ushered in what Curran terms "a reconceptualization of the audience as an active producer of meaning" (2002: 115). Cultural studies approaches reject one-way-top-down models of communication and the notion of passive and powerless audiences.

To specifically examine how audiences interpret media texts, post-Marxist cultural studies gave even more emphasis to 'human agency' drawing from anthropological and social research. Building on Stuart Hall's influential 'encoding-decoding' model and his concept of the "critical reader", sociologists and contemporary media scholars point out that within a matrix of influences, audiences actively construct the meanings of (decode) media texts rather than passively absorb pre-determined meanings imposed on them . Hall, supported by

Morley and Chen (1996), suggested that a media producer may 'encode' a certain meaning into a text, which would be based on a certain social context and understandings, but when another person comes to consume that text, their reading ('decoding') of it, based on their own social context and assumptions, is likely to be somewhat different.

Identification of the 'intervening' variables that influence the relationship between text and audience was the major contribution of Cultural Studies to media studies (Newbold et al., 2002:41). The 'new audience research' conducted in cultural studies not only found diversity of meanings that people read into mass media messages but also revealed contradictions in how people consume mass media in that people are "quite capable of conforming to prevalent social disapproval or depreciation of certain categories of text, on the one hand, while continuing to take pleasure from those same texts on the other." (Newbold et al 2002: 38).

Stuart Hall's (1980) preferred reading theory was an early attempt at this theoretically. He delineates three modes of reading:

Preferred reading: viewers whose social situation especially class aligned with the dominant ideology accept the preferred meanings.

Oppositional reading: viewers who cannot relate to the dominant ideology in the text because of their social positioning would oppose the text.

Negotiated reading: Here, viewers are neither completely situated in positions of conformity not in opposition to the dominant ideology. They conform to the dominant ideology espoused by the text generally and at the same time modify or inflect the dominant meanings inscribed in the text.

In his critique of the model, Fiske (1987) notes both its contribution and limitations. He says that although the model contributed in freeing the text from complete ideological closure and shifts away from the text towards the reader as the site of meaning, it was not without certain limitations. The model is criticized for its overemphasis on class and side-lining other significant social factors. Fiske proceeds by saying that the three types of reading in the model are implied to be roughly equal whereas in practice, there are very few pure dominant or oppositional readings. He concludes that television viewing is more of a process of negotiation between the text and its variously socially situated readers.

This new thinking in audience research led to "interdiscursive processes in audience reception" (Curran, 2002: 119). Building on Hall's theory, researchers like Morley came up with landmark studies that saw textual meanings in more sophisticated and complex ways and not in the way it was conceived by earlier Marxist and Neo-Marxist theories. Morley argues that "this is to propose a model of the audience, not as an atomised mass of individuals, but as a number of sub-cultural formations or groupings of 'members' who will, as members of those groups, share a cultural orientation towards decoding messages in particular ways" (1992:50). A more cautious assessment of media 'effect/ influence' followed this revision in media effects studies. Thus, we see that textual meaning is produced through an interaction between text and audience. In the encoding/decoding model, audience activity consists in an interpretive struggle between dominant-hegemonic codes of a text and audiences' own subgroup membership-determined codes.

Meanings don't exist in isolation or in a vacuum. Graham Murdock rightly argues that,

> In order to provide anything like a satisfactory account of the relationship between people's mass media involvements and their overall social situation and meaning system, it is necessary to start from the social setting rather than the individual; to replace the idea of personal 'needs' with the notion of structural contradiction; and to

> introduce the idea of subculture...subcultures are the meaning systems and modes of expression developed by groups in particular parts of the social structure in the course of their collective attempt to come to terms with the contradictions in their shared social situations (1973: 13-14)

Subcultures provide particular individuals or groups symbolic resources to draw on in their attempt to understand their specific situation and thereby construct a worthwhile identity. Consciousness becomes consciousness only in the process of social interaction (Bakhtin cited in Henderson, 2104) as a result of which signs emerge. Thus, consciousness is shaped by the social environment and is seen as a socio-ideological fact that links different elements like psyche, language and social interaction. It cannot be denied that there will always be individual readings but these have to be seen in the light of cultural structures and patterns. Such an approach would show the systematically linkages between individual readings and the systematic codes and conventions which these differential readings draw on and how the two are intricately related to one another. Halloran writes of this task confronting the mass communications researcher:

> …real task for the mass communications researcher is …to identify and map out the different sub-cultures and ascertain the significance of the various sub-codes in selected areas governed by specific broadcasting or cultural policies (Halloran, 1975:6)

Going by that argument, the audience should be seen as a group of individual readers and their specific readings will be informed by the pre-existing cultural and social formations and practices. These common and shared codes are in turn determined by factors derived from the positioning of the individual reader in the class structure.

Fiske (1989a) goes a step further by arguing that it is the audience, not the, media, which has the most power. However, many scholars are of the view that Fiske "hopelessly romanticises

the role of audience members" (Lull, 2000: 168). Modern thinking on mass media recognises that perceptions "cannot be viewed as being constructed by media representations alone" (Newbold et al., 2002: 311). From all of the above discussions by different researchers, we can then say that a multiplicity of factors influence interpretations and perceptions of audiences –class, race, nationality, ethnicity, social background, family, education, gender, sexuality, and religion. Eco's theory of aberrant decoding (1972) explains that when there are significant social differences between encoders and decoders of a text, then the text will be decoded by a different set of codes and conventions from those intended by encoders/ producers. The resulting meanings will thus be determined more by the social situation of the decoder than that of the encoder. Thus decoding becomes aberrant.

It is against this background of Stuart Hall's "encoding/decoding" model of communication that my research on television youth audiences in Nagaland will be premised/situated. This model has aspects of both the effects tradition and the uses and gratifications approach and ascribes power to both the producer and the receiver. It borrowed from the effects theorists the notion that the institutions which produce the messages do have the power to set agendas and provide cultural categories and frameworks within which audiences will be inclined to operate. The other aspect is taken from the uses and gratifications tradition, the notion of the active viewer and their agency in making meanings from the signs and messages which the encoders inscribe in the text. Besides the two aspects, semiological perspectives drawing on Eco and Barthes informed the model. The model was also designed to accommodate broader concerns beyond individual psychologies, that of social structures and cultural patterns as well.

Studying audiences would need a negotiation that acknowledges the relative autonomy of audiences without denying the dominant position of media institutions in a national and

global context. Stuart Hall's work allows for such a negotiation. This theory, however, is not sufficient to explain how a marginalized youth audience in the geographical and political periphery who doesn't have any say in the production process deal with television images. To address the issues of an audience group who are caught in subnational struggles within a larger nation, I examine theories and perspectives from other disciplines and consider the relevance of those approaches for understanding the interpretations of the audiences.

Relevant theories

In trying to study Naga youth audiences, concepts like 'negotiation', 'representation' and 'resistance' have emerged from the data and so I found certain concepts from other disciplines to be helpful in understanding the recurrent themes in my data. The theories that I have appropriated and applied for the analysis of the themes mentioned above are those of Scott, Taylor, Arendt, Hall and Straubhaar. To illustrate their relevance to my analysis, I outline a brief summary of the relevant concepts from their work.

Politics of recognition

Much of contemporary interest in recognition was awakened by Charles Taylor's (1994) lucid essay 'Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition' (1992). He begins by asserting that 'a number of strands in contemporary politics turn on the need, sometimes the demand, for *recognition'* (Taylor, 1994: 25). Recognition is related to identity and it is this relationship that defines a person's understanding of who they are. Since identity is 'partly shaped by recognition or its absence', Taylor states emphatically that 'nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm and be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being' (ibid.)

Nagas as a people have, for a long time, been represented by the 'others' starting from the colonial era in their massive literature and that representation was fraught with stereotypes as later researchers have shown. The perpetuation of stereotypes in the mainstream media only exacerbates the already much-contested colonial legacy of misrepresenting a people. This invisibility or misrepresentation on mainstream Indian television was unanimously expressed by the Naga youth in the study and Taylor's politics of recognition comes close to capturing and explaining this recurring theme that runs through in the narration of the audiences.

Hidden transcripts

This concept is useful to understand the symbolic and subtle politics of resistance. By 'hidden transcripts', Scott (1990) means the discourses that take place offstage, beyond direct observation by powerholders. In contrast, "public transcripts" is the open interaction between subordinates and those who dominate. Since the audience talks about their experience and negotiations from their perspectives, the hidden transcripts could be made available to the researcher and their voice becomes audible. In trying to explain hidden transcripts, Scott draws on a mass of empirical and historical material concerning a variety of social arrangements embodying the fabric of domination and resistance – European feudalism, American slavery, Asian land tenancy relations, and prisons, labour camps, and public schools. He utilizes available sources that give relatively direct expression to the voices of the dominated groups like slave narratives, peasant testimony, folk stories and legends. In the present study, I tease out key issues of hegemony and resistance/ negotiation from the responses of the Naga youth audiences and apply Scott's approach to the ways in Naga youth resist cultural hegemony of the dominant group by engaging in alternative media, transnational media that are cultural proximate to them. The gestures, speech and practices of Naga community which are glaringly absent in the mainstream media is acted out in

alternative spaces and these can be seen as the 'hidden transcripts' that the youth use to communicate with each other. It is the practice of domination and silencing that creates the hidden transcripts.

Cultural Proximity

Straubhaar's 'cultural proximity' is a multidimensional concept and it has been widely employed in media studies to explain media preferences across national boundaries. He explained cultural proximity as "…the tendency to prefer media products from one's own culture or the most possible culture" (Straubhaar, 2003: 85). It conveys a notion that people will gravitate toward media which they can relate to culturally. Although a loosely defined concept, it is helpful in understanding Naga youth's media preferences because of their gravitation towards media products mostly from the West and East-Asia in the increasingly abundant media environment and their oft-repeated statements like "We are similar to Koreans and so we like their movies". This sense of belonging with such media portrayals in selective transnational media products led me to apply this concept in the analysis of 'alternative media'. The original idea of the concept is credited to De Sola Pool (1977) by some scholars but for the purpose of my study, I employ Straubhaar's (1991, 2003) elaboration of the concept.

Enlarged Mentality

With all the differences the Naga youth audiences draw on between them and the 'mainland Indians', the audiences also expressed their desire to be understood as a people, to dispel the deeply entrenched "objective" ideas that were or are being constructed around them. Their disenchantment that they are still registered in stereotypical ways long constructed and established by the Euro-American writers and now perpetuated by the mainland Indians led

me to explore one of the most influential political philosophers, Hannah Arendt, and her concept of 'enlarged mentality' (1982). This was Arendt's appeal to think and recognize the world's plurality, to think representatively, that is from the standpoint of everyone else. This capacity to think representatively is what Arendt called an "enlarged mentality". All cultural groups in a pluralistic society whether they be considered religious or secular must challenge its members to be self-critical to develop 'enlarged mentalities', so that while not called upon to surrender the core conviction that they may hold, they must still be called to practise an empathetic appreciation of other viewpoints. Whether groups can nurture such sensibilities in their members is a good test of their contribution to public life and to the common good.

Drawing from four Arendtian themes – plurality, the public realm, power and perspective appreciation- and also from the narration of the audiences, I reason that "politics of enlarged mentality" can be helpful in providing solutions to issues of minority representation in the media and long-standing, unresolved political issues. This term suggests an alternative conception of citizenship that surpasses the limits of both the liberal and civic republican traditions. This is a politics based on enlarged mentality combining context sensitivity with principled judgements and would assist in taking the debate to a new plane. Most of the national rhetoric are not hospitable to the rights of the minorities and this calls for modifying political mindsets and standpoints. Elaborating Kant's work on enlightenment and imagination, Arendt succinctly says that "to think with an enlarged mentality means to go visiting" (1989: 43).

A brief history of television in India

To understand and appreciate the present satellite television scenario where a host of channels are within people's living spaces and opening a window for people even in far-

flung places to worlds that were once accessible only to a few and mostly in the urban spaces, it is necessary to backtrack and briefly consider the landscape against which they emerged.

Television evolved in India at a time in India's history when the country was struggling to achieve self-sufficiency in food production, to establish a public and well-distributed primary education system and to develop a comprehensive family planning program to stem the population explosion. Within this historic juncture, the role of television was to assist in these endeavours rather than to provide a popular cultural forum for entertainment. Television started in India on 15 September, 1959 when AIR's first experimental centre at Delhi was inaugurated by the President. The primary purpose of this project was 'experimentation, training and evaluation'. There were two programmes a week, on Tuesday and Friday evenings of one hour each. Initially 21 TV sets were installed in the rural areas in the neighbourhood of Delhi. Subsequently, UNESCO provided approximately 50 sets which were also installed in the rural areas. Tele-clubs were set up at these community viewing centres. (For a detailed history of Indian television, see Chatterji, 1987; Singhal & Rogers, 1989); Mehta, 2008)

From 23 December 1960 to 5 May 1961 under UNESCO auspices, an experiment in social education was undertaken which has been described in UNESCO's 'Reports and Papers on Mass Communication' No. 38 published in 1963. It says that the programmes were designed to 'add to the information of viewers on various topics, to influence, if possible, their attitudes towards aspects of issues and to encourage follow-up group action and behaviour'. The general theme of the programmes arranged for the experiment was the 'Responsibilities of Citizenship' and the topics covered were traffic and road sense, community health, adulteration of food stuffs, good manners, encroachment on public property and town

planning. Social education for farmers and educational programmes for children were the initial objectives of experimental TV in India.

The growth of Television in India till the early 1970s was very slow because television being expensive and considered a luxury did not fit into the Nehruvian socialist model of modernization or the schema of the nation's developmental plans. The counter-argument was that TV could be a powerful weapon for social change. If at all it has to be used, it should be for social change and not to provide yet another medium for the entertainment of the rich. Thus the accepted *raison d'être* for the introduction and expansion of TV in India has been to provide a medium for the education of the socially deprived.

The period between 1972 and 1982 saw the rapid expansion of television in India. It was in the year 1975 when major developments took place in Indian television. Centres were opened in Calcutta, Madras and Lucknow. In April 1976, Doordarshan, AIR's television service was constituted as a separate department with its own Director-General by Indira Gandhi's government during the period of the Emergency.

A very important event in the history of Indian TV was the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) which was conducted between 1 August 1975 and 31 July 1976. In accordance with an agreement signed between the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), the research and development organisation of the Government of India's Department of Space and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, an agency of the United States Government responsible for the nation's space program, the Application Technology Satellite (ATS-6) was used to beam TV signals to 2400 direct reception TV receivers. All the equipment for this segment was manufactured in India and the software component was provided by AIR. The vast bulk of the programmes was produced by Doordarshan. The programmes were available for some 4 hours a day - one and a half hours

in the morning for an educational programme and two and a half hours for programmes in the evening. The programmes were broadcast in Hindi, Oriya, Telugu, and Kannada depending on the region. A half-hour programme in Hindi was telecast from Delhi in the evening which was common for all the States or Clusters as they were referred to. It included a news bulletin, some item of general interest, and a cultural programme.

Following the SITE experiment, under an agreement between ISRO and the Franco-West German enterprise, the 'Symphonie' satellite was made available for two years from 1st June 1977 for telecommunications experiments. This experiment was designed as a system test of a geo-synchronous communications satellite and to improve Indian expertise in the design, development and operation of a communication system operating a geo-stationary satellite.

India's first multi-purpose domestic satellite was launched with US assistance on 10 April 1982. It was designed to provide meteorological data, communication channels and telecasting facilities. The satellite had problems from the start as a result of which launching had to be postponed on two occasions. After corrective action, the satellite was placed in its geo-stationary orbit on 20 April and started transmitting signals three days later. After being in orbit for 150 days, it finally folded up on 4 September. India's second domestic satellite INSAT 1B was successfully launched on 15 October 1983. Thus began its use by Doordarshan, India's public broadcaster to provide a network service and by All India Radio (AIR) for news and other relays. By the early 1980s, the educational fare of the sixties was increasingly supplemented by a large variety of other programmes. These included sports, news, feature film based music programmes, television plays made for Doordarshan, foreign comedies and a large number of programmes that were produced for television by people who worked primarily in the medium of television. Earlier, programmes were produced primarily by people trained in the media of film and radio. The introduction of commercials on television and the emergence of secondary texts that discussed the television text, for

instance magazines such as TV and Video World set the ground for even more dramatic changes.

To cater to the urban audiences, entertainment programmes were slowly added in the slot but it was made clear that entertainment would be the second priority. This is highlighted in the Chanda Commission of 1964 (a committee of experts was appointed to study the status of television in India, compare it with other countries and propose a set of directives to chart the development of television in India.) which added a last item in their recommendations calling it 'programs of entertainment'.

The varied genres on television led to the emergence of a television flow with the large number of programmes interspersed with commercials. This differed greatly from the earlier arbitrary juxtaposition of educational broadcasts. The variety of genres now followed each other in specific patterns beginning with the early evening children's programmes, moving on to programming for women and youth, followed by news and then a string of serialized programmes that occupied the so-called 'prime time' of Indian television broadcast which was initially from eight in the evening till ten at night. Scheduling became an important facet of Indian television.

Spot-commercials were introduced in Doordarshan in 1976 and it went on to accept "sponsored programmes" from 1983. The year 1982 was a major landmark in the history of television in India. It was the year India hosted the Asian Games in New Delhi. A number of policies that had been initiated in the 1970s were implemented just before the Asian Games. Doordarshan had to enhance and upgrade its technology to showcase a Shining India to both its people and the international community. India's first communication satellite, INSAT-1A was launched for satellite transmission and with it begun live telecast and the creation of a 'national' service (Mehta, 2008: 39). Another colossal shift in the same year was the introduction of colour television. And with satellite technology in place for the first time

the television scenario was transformed once and for all; all of India was now connected simultaneously to the same image in colour. What followed the improved transmission technology was the growth of non-educational programmes. And with advertisements entering the scene, in no time, Indian television was transformed from a 'revenue-guzzler to a prime money-spinner' and by 1987, advertising revenue topped Rs.100 crores, of which 65 percent was contributed by six multinational companies. (Poduval 1999:110).

The mid-1980s saw the rising popularity of television serials like *Hum Log*, *Buniyaad*, *Tamas*, *Udaan* besides the two immensely popular epics, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* and by 1987, almost forty serials were produced (Kumar, 2008). There was an exponential increase in the purchase of television sets and this created a need for changes in the nature of television programming. Small-time cable television entrepreneurs saw in this an opportunity to provide alternative entertainment for the niche market in urban cities. In the mid-1980s, cable television began in Maharashtra and Gujarat through the efforts of private entrepreneurs who connected apartment buildings and hotels through a central video-playing unit and charged a monthly subscription fee to transmit films and serials. Within a few years, this phenomenon was replicated in other urban centres as well and soon it became widespread in small towns too. The number of cable operators in India rose from about 100 in 1984 to 1,200 in 1988, 15,000 in 1992 and to about 60,000 in 1999 (Kohli-Khandekar, 2013)

Then came the 1990s and with economic liberalization, the media landscape altered altogether. Commercial television made its entry and breakthroughs in scientific technology hastened the process. The Gulf War of 1991 played a major role in popularizing CNN and STAR TV. Also, since cities like Bombay and Ahmedabad had already been connected by cable television much before the coming of private players, it became even easier for the proliferation of satellite and cable television.

Initially, the private networks uplinked their satellite signals from Hong Kong, Singapore etc. By 1995, over 12 million Indian households were watching private television and satellite channels and the growth was so fast that by the end of 2000 with more than 40 private television networks, India became the world's largest cable and satellite market with 35 million homes connected to satellite and cable television and 150 million cable viewers (Singhal & Rogers, 2000: 108).

Satellite television came to India in the wake of the Gulf War and the economic liberalization policies of the Indian government in 1991 and before long, the landscape of television in India was marked by privately owned satellite channels. The educational and information aspects, which was the main purpose of television initially got marginalized as entertainment took its place. Starting with Star TV, Zee TV, we now have a plethora of channels. In the present scenario, media outlets and media audiences have splintered into numberless shards. Initially, there were discourses of cultural imperialism and that the global media would turn everyone into 'Americans' but the enormous growth of channels which were largely Indian in content and ownership has invalidated such an assumption. Also, most of the channels were indigenized so as to give a local flavour to the foreign channels. By mid-1990s, satellite television in India seemed very much "Indian", even if many of the channels were "international" or foreign-owned. Networks like Sahara, Zee, ETV, and a host of other networks venturing into regional channels have also helped in toning down the imperialistic debate. Commenting on the changing phenomenon in the television scenario in India in the 1990s, Pavarala (1999) writes, "One interesting thing about this new cross-border flows is that the objective of creating a global, consumer-subject through television does not seem to be proceeding in a manner that overtly seeks to subsume cultural particularities" (1999:104)

Earlier research works on Indian television

With television now geared to aid in developmental projects of the state, researchers started to enquire into this field. Most of the earlier research done on Indian television was centred on education. Rehman (1979) conducted a study on the qualitative and quantitative targets set by the National Adult Education Program in India. Specifically, suggestions were made about the thorough and extensive use of educational media to train the instructors required to run the Adult Education Program. In a similar claim about adult education, Mathias (1975) emphasized targeting adult education through the use of satellite transmissions. Citing wrong priorities and methods and lack of conviction as reasons for illiteracy in India increasing by about 15 per cent in the first 24 years of independence, the author calls for emphasis on primary and adult education, some of it informal, as in the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment. In his book, Chandrasekhar (1982) presents an overview of adult education in India and suggests the use of television to increase the scope of adult education. Starting with an introduction to the problem of illiteracy in India, the book covers a broad spectrum of adult education issues. Topics discussed include adult education and national development; roles of voluntary organizations, universities, colleges, and students in adult education; management principles in adult education; extension and adult education programmes; and research in adult education. Some adult education programmes functioning on the national level and in Tamil Nadu are described. The author also offers suggestions for creating and implementing programmes for rural women, provides techniques for action programs, and suggests a training methodology for adult educators. Extensive appendices to the book provide statistics on literacy in India, organizing adult programs, use of television, national plans for literacy, teaching aids, evaluation tools, adult education agencies, and a glossary of terms. In an appendix, the author illustrated ways in which television could be

used to serve the purpose of adult education. The use of television to spread environmental education had also been the subject of research (Sarabhai, 1985). All these studies investigated the usefulness of television to spread information about environmental safety. One trend of research considered the goals and targets of educational television (Mitra, 1993). Programme variety was investigated by others like Coldevin and Amundsen (1985) who reviewed satellite communication technology in many countries. They suggested different kinds of programmes that could be implemented for transmission over distance education systems. Singh (1984) studied the Open University System of distance education in Great Britain and suggested that a similar flexible higher education system could be adopted with the use of television networks. Some descriptive work dealt with the development and introduction of television in India's higher education system (Reddi, 1987). Sharma (1985) conducted a study on the relevance and cost-effectiveness of the use of mass media for spreading education and the dissemination of information needed to sustain growth and technological progress in developing countries.

All the way from the sixties to the late eighties, the majority of researchers attempted to measure the effects of educational television. The subject of research focusing on 'effects' illustrates a training in mainstream social psychology that had dominated media research in the West, particularly in North America. This was a reductionist form of research where the endeavour was to reduce the key questions to quantifiable variables, and then study the variations in these factors, ultimately establishing causal chains. Other descriptive studies dealt with the variety of educational television in the rural sector, emphasizing the connection between educational content and the rural audience. Indian researchers drew a lot on Wilbur Schramm's (1964) work who argued for the developmental effects of educational television. What went unquestioned was the role that the text of educational television would play in reshaping the popular culture of rural India and the various cultural,

social practices with which television would interact to reform the image of television itself and all that surrounds the medium.

All this research was done at a time when there was only one channel on Indian television. The bulk of existing scholarly work on Indian television appeared relatively recently and centres around the themes of nation and gender and how these discourses have been treated on the public broadcasting service, Doordarshan. Some notable book length studies are Ananda Mitra's *Television and Popular Culture in India: A study of the Mahabharat* (1993), Purnima Mankekar's Scr*eening Culture, Viewing Politics* (1999), Arvind Rajagopal's *Politics after Television (2001)*, and Maya Ranganathan & Usha M. Rodrigues's *Indian media in a globalised world* (2010).

In Television and Popular Culture in India: A Study of the Mahabharat, Ananda Mitra, basing his argument on a critical textual analysis of the extremely popular serial Mahabharata, describes a set of relations drawn between the narrative, its representation on state-owned Indian television, Doordarshan and its relationship with the popular culture of India. Mitra analyses the role played by Doordarshan in the production of popular culture by approaching "culture" as a set of everyday practices of a people. By portraying a specifically Hindu and Hindi image of India and in its attempt to create a pan-Indian identity, the immensely popular serial on television screened between 1987 and 1990, other regional, religious, and linguistic groups were marginalized. Mahabharata which had countless local variants was standardized and represented to show Hindus as one and to be treated thus in politics as well. Mitra discusses the effectiveness of Doordarshan in creating a national image and links it with the then political, cultural and social movements in India. Issues related to religious fundamentalism, language and gender are also focussed upon.

Mankekar (1999) presents an ethnography of television-viewing in India. Mankekar's study engages with an important moment in Indian cultural politics and media, the rise of a pro-capitalist Hindu right-wing political movement in India in the 1980s which has been widely related to the popularity of two religious serials broadcast, Ramayana and Mahabharata, on Doordarshan (Rajagopal, 2000). The period saw the rise of commercialization of state television on one hand and the rise of a politically assertive and culturally fundamentalist middle class on the other. Mankekar's work throws light on the gendered nature of the reception of these programmes and how the reading of these texts are translated into the emerging relations of power in Indian household settings.

Mankekar by focusing on the responses of upwardly-mobile, lower-to-middle class urban women to Doordarshan's entertainment serials, demonstrates the profound role of television in shaping women's place in the family, community, and nation, and also in the repositioning of class, caste, consumption, religion, and politics. Mankekar examines how both entertainment narratives and advertisements aimed to convey certain ideas about the nation. By focusing on the recurring themes in these shows like Indian womanhood, family, community, constructions of historical memory, development, integration, and sometimes violence, Mankekar analyses both the television text and her participants' perceptions and reactions to these messages. Her ethnographic analysis brings out the complexity of these women's daily lives, social relationships, and everyday practices. Mankekar pays attention to her role as an ethnographer and to the volatile historical and political context in the midst of which these programmes' integrationalist messages are transmitted and to the cultural diversity of the viewership. While her study is set in a single-channel setting, in her epilogue, she describes the arrival of satellite television and transnational programming to India in the 1990s and raises important questions which could be taken up for further research, two of them being relevant to my own work, 'what spaces do transnational texts create for

resistance, subversion or appropriation through the production of desire, fantasy and imagination?' 'Whose experiences gain centre stage in these new cultural productions? She asks these questions in the context of "culture" which continues to be an important political weapon as the culture wars within India persist, religious and regional identities are sharpened, and inequalities of caste and class are exacerbated (Mankekar, 1999: 350)

Her findings show how women selectively appropriate and contest key narratives for their own purposes, and thus subverting patriarchal and nationalist discourses in the construction of their own identities and worldviews.

In January 1987, Doordarshan, the Indian state-run television, started broadcasting Ramayana, a Hindu epic in serial form to nationwide audiences. This broadcast violated a decades-old standing on religious partisanship. This was the time of growing tension between the Hindus and the Muslims, and it contributed to the largest political campaign led by Hindu nationalists in post-independence times, around the symbol of Lord Rama, the *Janmabhoomi* issue. Thereafter, the face of Indian politics changed once and for all. In Politics after Television, Arvind Rajagopal analyses this extraordinary series of events. While audiences may have glued themselves onto their screens harking back to an epic golden age, Hindu nationalist leaders were embracing the prospects of neoliberalism and globalisation. Television was the platform that made it possible for these movements to come together, symbolising the new possibilities of politics, at once more inclusive and authoritarian. Alongside, the study examined how the larger historical context was woven into and changed the character of Hindu nationalism.

With a plethora of channels, television now occupies an important position within the social-cultural map of India. This is why it is important to consider television in terms of the text of

television and the way in which television is read and how particular texts-educational or otherwise-become reshaped on television and reshape television itself. The practice of watching television does not exist in a vacuum. It takes place with other social, cultural and domestic activities. As the review of past research has indicated, there has not been much attempt to understand these texts' role in culture and society, especially among oppositional or marginalized groups.

During the 1990s, the Indian mediascape went through a remarkable set of transformations as a powerful set of transnational and national forces under the twin labels of globalization and liberalization transplanted people in India from a single-network television environment to one of multichannel, 24-hour satellite broadcasting. Vamsee Juluri based his research in the context of the rapid proliferation of satellite television in India.

Vamsee Juluri's (2003) *Becoming a global audience* is an attempt to construct a postcolonial approach to global audiences and evaluate the rise of global television in India and the changes this rise has wrought in the television landscape. Rooted in political economy, Juluri examines concerns of cultural imperialism in relation to the actual experience of television reception in India by addressing the broader politics of globality in Indian everyday life. The rise of satellite television in India in the context of economic liberalization in 1991 has been marked by the indigenization of global music television networks like MTV and Channel V. He argues, however, that this "Indianization" is no cause for celebration and is a new form of nationalism and one that perpetuates the status quo of the capitalist world economy. Using in-depth interviews with Indian music television viewers and theoretical approaches drawn from political-economic, cultural, and post-colonial studies, he argues instead that the reception of music count-down shows and nationalistic music videos is a 'form of self-orientalism, a process in which everything feels like it is still India, but appears as if someone else was looking at it" (2003:2).

The notion of ideological and hegemonic struggle is evident in every aspect of Indian life and culture, and television has been doggedly involved in this struggle, constantly vying to carve a position of its own within India's popular culture. It is this element of struggle that makes it all the more important to study television as a cultural formation and recognize the struggle that is continuing around the medium.

As I started researching this topic, I found out that there is hardly any literature on television audiences on the periphery. For the purpose of this study, I draw on the Centre-Periphery Gopalakrishnan's (1994) framework of territorial politics of the North-Eastern region of India as will be explained further on in this chapter. There is a staggering absence of the point of view of the minorities in most of the Television studies literature, especially in the Indian context. All the above studies have been conducted in 'mainland' India and studies in the peripheries are absent. It is this gap that the present study attempts to bridge.

Although studies on television in India have provided valuable insights, they did not consider the significance of power relations between the centre and the periphery, discussed later in this chapter. The present study will attempt to investigate the continuities and breaks between dominant and subordinate value systems, thus breaking from mere descriptive accounts of subculture. In many accounts, the subculture is often presented as an independent phenomenon outside of the larger social, political and economic contexts, rendering it incomplete. My study is an attempt to address that shortcoming in subculture studies by embedding the subculture within a broader political and social context. I have tried to take into account the interplay of ideological, political and cultural factors which bear upon a subculture. I have analysed the ethnographic details through the lens of 'identity' and instead of presenting it as an abstract category, I have sought to show how it works out in practice as a material and tangible substance, experienced and exhibited in style.

By focussing on the dissonance and discontinuity with the Indian 'mainland and mainlanders', I tried not to deny the very manner in which marginal experience is made to crystallize, objectify, and communicate a group experience. But this thesis is not just about the differences. It also highlights the negotiation, integration and coherence aspects of the youth as they chart out an identity in the mediated space and television becomes a complex site of contestation.

A brief overview of Nagaland

Nagaland, the 16th state of the Indian Union lies in the Northeastern belt of the country. It covers an area of 16,579 sq. kms. The state is divided into 11 districts with Kohima as its capital. As per the census of 2011, the population of the state is 1,978,502 and its density is 119 persons per sq.km. More than 80% of the people live in rural areas. There are about 17 major tribes and other sub-tribes and each tribe and sub-tribe speak their own language or dialect[1]. Although they all belong to the Naga ethnic family, they do not necessarily understand each other's dialect and that is considered to be one of the major handicaps amongst the Nagas (Jamir & Ao, 2005). The languages and the dialects that the Nagas speak, which numbers about sixty, belong to the Sino-Tibetan family of languages. English is the official language of the Nagas and is the medium of instruction in schools.

Unlike most Indian states, Nagaland has been granted a greater degree of state autonomy, as well as special powers and autonomy for Naga tribes to conduct their own affairs under Article 371 A of the Constitution of India[2]. Each tribe has a hierarchy of councils at the

[1] Although 17 major tribes are officially recognised in Nagaland, Naga scholars identify much larger numbers of tribes. Yonun Asoso (1974) lists 'about fifty', and the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) lists 36.

[2] Among other things, Naga customary laws, practices and their usages; religious and social practices of the Nagas, ownership and transfer of land its resources are given special protection under Article 371(A) of the Constitution of India.

village, range, and tribal levels dealing with local disputes. There is a special regional council for the Tuensang district, elected by the tribes of the area.

Some of the apex socio-cultural organizations both at the district and state level are the Naga Students' Federation, Eastern Naga Students' Federation, the Naga Mothers' Association, the Tribal Hoho, the Federation of G.B (Gaonbura) Union etc. All these have different aims and objectives targeting the whole populace for the promotion, advancement, integrity and development of Naga society (Jamir & Ao, 2005).

The authors (Jamir & Ao, 2005) in their book, *Naga Society and Culture* lament that 'the total change of the socio-political cultural behaviours and outlook of the hill people is due to the influence of mass media. They are expediently adopting western culture and their lifestyle through such channels. This is creating another socio-cultural dilemma diluting the essence of their beautiful culture. It is feared that the Naga cultural heritage may wane in the coming generations if care is not well taken' (Jamir & Ao, 2005: 74). In the name of 'preservation' of Naga culture and tradition, this kind of statement invoking the decadence of Naga society because of media is often made among the elders. The rationale provided is that aspects from foreign cultures are being integrated and replacing age-old local traditions. Such reasoning also hinges on the assumption that that the individual derived his or her Naga identity only by participating and maintaining integral connections in a larger collectivity, the Naga tradition and customs. The youth are the ones assumed to most likely violate their roots through blatant individualism and engage uncritically in this integration of other culture that are disruptive to the continuation of traditional cultural practices, ranging from clothes to language and ideologies and were seen to be verging on anti-Naga. The youth is often thought of as passive recipients of media but the later chapters deal with the complexity of the young people's engagement with the media and therefore will endeavour to examine if

the engagement qualifies, disqualifies these assumptions or instead undo the tradition/ modernity binary in the space of the engagement.

Long before television entered Nagaland, the findings of a research conducted by AIR's Audience Research Department in Nagaland in 1974 showed interesting results. The survey observed that while the villager's restricted knowledge creates in him a desire to expand it, it does not give him the capacity to assimilate information which is not related to his own surroundings. Other studies conducted by the same department have shown that BBC's World Service is the most popular of foreign broadcasting services among the Nagas. Western music is what attracts the common listener. They also listen to programmes from Bangladesh and Pakistan. (Luthra, 1986)

Nagaland is going through a transitional stage, with a pronounced shift from rural-based traditional society to an urban-based one. Internet communication, computer games, mobile phones are becoming very much a part of Naga culture, especially among the youth. It is within this current socio-political scenario that my work on the Naga youth audiences of satellite television is located.

Some challenges which Nagas face today are: the issue of identity, integration of villages, tribes, peoples, administration, and territory; social decorum, morality and nation-building; all these while grappling with technology, rationality, political ideologies and their shifting meanings, as well as reasserting their culture and reclaiming their respective languages. Then urbanization developed, and expanded bringing more complex challenges and dynamics to the Naga identity, hitherto small, structured, and almost insular. The age-old barter system of economy was immediately transferred to market economy. People moved out from the village. Today, at least 50 percent of first-generation Nagas born outside of their ancestral villages hardly have any idea about life in the villages, nor desire to speak their mother–

tongue. It is regarded "unfashionable", "un-civilized" to hold conversation in Naga vernacular languages (Longchar, 2005).

Radio came to Nagaland in the late 1960s, newspapers in the 1970s, television in the 1980s, and computers were introduced in the mid-1990s. The leading newspapers in English are Nagaland Post, The Morung Express, Eastern Mirror, Northeast Herald and Nagaland Page. There are other newspapers like Tir Yimyim, Ao Milen, Capi and Tenyi Ralha which are published in local languages like Angami, Ao etc. DD has a programme production centre which was inaugurated on 30th March, 1993. It is located about eight kilometres from the main capital town of Kohima. It relayed its first transmission in 1982. The centre originates programmes for 2 hours between 6 – 8 pm in DD North-east. Because of the poor transmission and poor programme quality, there are hardly any viewers[3] of DD Kohima. In Nagaland, almost all the district headquarters have their own local cable TV channel. Again, the poor quality of programmes and also transmission make it an undesirable channel for the audiences. Audiences prefer watching satellite channels to DDK and local cable channels, except for audiences in remote villages which are not connected by cable. But, the trend is changing with the coming of Direct-To-Home (DTH) Satellite television. Although proper statistics are not available on the number of households with DTH television, DTH antennas are seen on rooftops of many houses, even in villages. This might engender a broad transformation across the rapidly growing mediascape with a culture of transition among youth who are caught between tradition and modernity.

[3] A visit to Doordarshan Kohima Kendra by the researcher to collect information revealed that there is no data on the viewership. The Doordarshan website also does not have any data on Nagaland viewership. No information except the details about the location of the transmitters and whether it is HPT (High Power Transmitter or LPT (Low Power Transmitter) is given.

The Indo- Naga Political Issue

As will become clearer in later chapters, Indo-Naga political issue has a huge bearing on the identity on the Naga and it informs many aspects in the formation of their worldview and their engagement with other cultures. For this, an account of the Indo-Naga political issue becomes pertinent.

During British rule in India, the tribal areas were declared as 'excluded', 'partially excluded' and 'un-administered'. In the case of the Naga Hills, it became a separate district under the Raj in 1881, and from 1935 to 1947, they were administered as an "excluded area". After India gained independence from the British in 1947 and in the wake of the partition of the British India into India and Pakistan, the Indian nationalist elite, took over political power from the colonisers. The post-colonial Indian state as part in its mission to build a strong and stable nation sought to integrate even the backward tribal communities living in the so-called 'excluded', 'partially excluded' areas of British India into the Indian Union. The 'unadministered' areas were also not left out in the process.

'Many Nagas, Mizos, and Manipuris, and even Assamese, do not consider themselves Indians, and it is necessary to understand why they feel that way' (Lintner, 2015: 3). When the Simon Commission visited India in 1929, the Naga Club submitted a memorandum (Vashum, Iheilung & Panmei, 1996) to the Commission expressing their desire for self-rule and not to be included in the Indian Union. The Nagas believed that the Indian state would be adversarial to the social values, customs, values, identities and the indigenous political structure of Naga society and so wanted to have a self-governing state separate from the Indian state. Since then, by invoking the right to self-determination on the basis of their 'unique' history and 'distinct' ethnic identity, the Nagas have been resisting the idea of the Indian state and thus providing a counter narrative. This resistance continues to this day

although there have been changes in the self-determination discourse. The ongoing Indo-Naga political issue is one of the world's longest-running ethnic insurgencies causing heavy casualties on both sides for decades (Lintner, 2015)

Prior to India's independence on 15 August 1947, the Nagas also declared their independence on 14 August 1947 from the British (Iralu, 2014). Comprising 16, 527 square kilometres, Nagaland was annexed to the Indian Union on 1 December 1963 and accounts for 0.17 percent of India's total population. With the redrawing of the map, Nagas were scattered in the states of Assam, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and neighbouring country, Myanmar. The annexation did not quell the demand for self-determination and as Choube puts it, "The demand for unification of all the Naga-inhabited areas under a single administered state, either 'autonomous or independent' is the bone of contention in the north-east of India" (Choube 1985: 163 cited in Ranganathan and Rodrigues, 2010). The Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagalim Isak -Muivah or NSCN-IM is at the forefront of demanding Greater Nagaland based on the claim that the Nagas were, prior to the annexation of India, a territory under British governance. The demand for a union of all the Naga inhabited areas surrounding the present State of Nagaland under the Indian Union, has largely been ignored by the powers that be as well as the mainstream media (Bezboruah 2006: 91; Hazarika 2006: 357). Statehood within the framework of India's Constitution has been unacceptable to the leaders and the founding fathers of the NSCN-IM, Thuengaling Muivah and Isak Chishi Swu. It is argued by many researchers that the Naga middle class drew inspiration from the colonial theories that asserted that the tribals of Northeast India were racially, linguistically, culturally, politically, and economically distinct from the Indians (Pandey, 2011). The Naga nationalists initially wanted the issue to be settled in a democratic and peaceful way but with the increase in the state's recourse to coercion and repression where destruction of homes and lives were carried out under the sanction, protection and

legal immunity of Acts and Regulations like The Assam maintenance of Public Order Act, 1953; The Assam Disturbed Area Act, 1953; and The Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958, the Nagas gradually took to arms to fight and resist the state machinery.

The Indian political leaders were convinced that the Naga revolt would be contained by counterinsurgency strategy and that the Nagas would accept India's sovereignty in due course of time like it happened to other communities in the Northeast region. But it was not to be. The Naga struggle raged for decades thus forcing the Indian government to adopt a major policy-shift towards the Naga movement in 1990s and made several attempts to negotiate peace with the insurgent groups. It negotiated cease-fire agreements with Isak-Muivah (IM) faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (NSCN) in the year 1997 and later with Khaplang faction of NSCN in 2001.

At the time of writing this dissertation, a framework agreement (peace accord) was signed between the Centre and the NSCN-IM (National Socialist Council of Nagaland- Isak-Muivah) on August 3, 2015. Much has changed in the Naga nationalist demand since the 1951 Naga referendum where 99% of the Nagas voted against being part of the Indian Union and establish a separate independent state (Yonuo, 1974:202). Although details of the framework agreement have not been divulged, there is speculation that the demand for a sovereign Naga nation appears to have narrowed down to the demand of an autonomous, unified homeland within the republic of India. In early 2016, newspapers were rife with speculations that according to the August 3 Framework Agreement, Nagas would be granted a separate passport and national flag but the speculation was slowly laid to rest when the Government responded by saying that there was no such formal declaration by the centre. (Hindustan Times, January 30, 2016, The Northeast Today,). Also there are worries among the Naga civil society if the pact will include all components of public or be the agenda of just a few people at the helm and if such an agreement can bring lasting and enduring peace.

With Indo-Naga political conflict, one of Asia's oldest unresolved issues dragging on for decades, the youth in Nagaland are at a crossroad negotiating two identities- one of being a Naga and the other, being an Indian. Against the backdrop of the long standing Indo-Naga political imbroglio, issues of representation of ethnic minorities on mainstream Indian media and the ways in which Naga youth negotiate and contest these representations a major portion of the dissertation. And this political issue begs some understanding of the centre-periphery debate to consider the arguments of this dichotomy within the Naga context.

A Centre-Periphery Approach

The terms Centre and Periphery are usually used to mean 'either a territory or a population group (or a sub-group)' (Gopalakrishnan, 1994: 49). Drawing further on Gopalakrishnan's framework of territorial politics of the North-Eastern region of India, the definitions of Centre and Periphery are drawn out. He describes Centre as one having a privileged location within a territory and having the characteristics like the location of the holders of the key resources, of negotiations and of decision making as affecting the entire territory. It also signifies the location of administrative, economic, and cultural institutions.

Periphery is defined as a geographical area that remained within the control of the Centre (Gopalakrishnan, 1994). In other words, it is characterised by distance factor, resource constraints and consequent dependence. Moreover, periphery normally exhibited transitional or marginal cultures in relation to the centre and was not fully integrated with the overall system of communications. Questions of identity take centre-stage in these politically defined territories. The peripherality is not just political or territorial, but extends to social, economic, religious, and cultural areas as well. Thus, distance, difference and dependence form the main characteristics of the periphery. In such a scenario, the people on the peripheries form a part

of the system and yet find themselves marginal to it. Their sense and perception of identity gets reinforced and this leads to consistent assertion of separate identity through socio-political means.

I use the centre-periphery dichotomy from this vantage point described by Gopalakrishnan to explain the Naga context where there are huge gaps in political, cultural, and geographical aspects between 'mainland' India and the State. In terms of television audiences in Nagaland, the centre-periphery framework applies in the sense that the television channels and programmes transmitted over them are far from the location of reception, culturally and geographically. This periphery is composed largely of participants with little or no influence upon the centre and the decisions emerging therefrom. The fact that Indo-Naga political issue has been dragging on for so many decades is a clear example of the centre-periphery debate.

Thesis Overview

The data collected through an ethnographic approach to address the objectives of the study and the analysis done by using grounded theory tools has been organized into seven chapters.

Chapter 1, '**Introduction**', reviews the relevant media audiences literature in communication studies. I offer a brief overview of the state of Nagaland and identity contestations vis-à-vis the Indo-Naga political issue which has an impact on how the youth negotiate television and its representation.

This chapter also outlines my theoretical bases and offers some broad conceptual contours framing the remainder of the dissertation. Naga nationalism, Hannah Arendt's 'enlarged mentality' (1982) and James Scott's concept of 'hidden transcripts' (1990) which are relevant

to the analysis of the thesis will be discussed. I argue that James Scott's work on the Zomia (2009) illuminates the Naga youth's negotiation with televisual culture.

Chapter 2, '**Methodology**', outlines the research objectives and questions and the choice of ethnography as a methodological approach for collecting data and grounded theory for analysing the data. It also explains the problems and limitations of the study. This study examines media reception and consumption, and issues of representation, ethnicity, identity, in the context of the respondents' culture, history, politics and everyday life.

The respondents of this study are young Naga people in the age group of 18-35 from three districts, Kohima, Dimapur and Tuensang. Besides Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), interviews with village elders, cable television owners, bureaucrats were conducted to elicit information and opinion about non-youth, retrospective or contradictory views.

Chapter 3, '**Audience Activity, context and different ways of seeing'**, provides a critical review of the literature on media audiences, with special focus on the idea of active audiences. An understanding of the history of this aspect of media studies will help us recognize not only its advances, but also its limitations, gaps and silences. The chapter also aims to develop a diversified rather than a polarised or reductionist conception of the active audience, thereby showing a possibility for a convergence of a variety of active audience studies, in terms of the concept of 'audience engagement'. I argue that audiences have too often been categorised either as active or passive, and that the employment of such a dichotomy has led to an oversimplified view of the diversity of both audience research and the complex nature of audiences. Earlier research both of the 'effects' tradition and 'uses and gratification' approach relied mainly on mental states, needs and motives, abstracted from the social situation of the individuals (Pavarala, 1999). I will argue that rather than being

antithetical, the two approaches complement each other and can be articulated in new configurations. The chapter also examines some of the reasons why minority audience studies are significant. International research concerning ethnic minorities has focussed mostly on content analysis of the portrayal of the ethnic minorities in both print and electronic media. One of the gaps in audience studies is the lack of attention to how minority audiences perceive or evaluate the media: what they think, want, or say about media representations, the media's involvement in their everyday lives, or their expectations of the media. Little attention has been paid to audience responses within ethnic minority communities. In India, research on ethnic minority audience is relatively small and researching this less explored area focussing on diversity, therefore becomes a necessity.

Indian media have seen a striking transformation since the economic liberalization of 1990s. However, the relationship between Indian media and its more than 100 ethnic minority groups is under-researched. The Indo-Naga political imbroglio which is one of Asia's oldest unresolved issues has been dragging on for decades touching all aspects of the society -- political, social, economic. In a politically sensitive region, where issues of identity are at the forefront, how do the youth reconcile their culture and what is represented on Television? Chapter 4, '**Mainstream Indian Media and Nagas: Representation and negotiation'** addresses this question and by providing a historical context of the Indo-Naga political situation examines the reaction or the testimonies of the Nagas in response to the portrayals on Indian mainstream media which has received only cursory attention in a few writings. By examining how audiences negotiate with media content, we can better understand the degree to which Indian media depicts or disregards complexity in its representations of the Nagas and the meanings audience make out of these representations. Instead of taking for granted the theories constructed by the state and the media, which project hegemonic narratives, a

critical understanding of audience perspectives, without falling into the trap of 'cultural populism' (McGuigan, 1992) can yield significant insights.

Chapter 5, '**Naga youth engagement with Korean Popular culture (popular media products): An alternative avenue**', explores the engagement of Naga youth with Korean media and discusses the reasons behind its popularity. It will attempt to address the question, "How does an audience watch/ read a transnational media product?" The chapter points out the main characteristic features of watching Korean dramas and the nationalistic views expressed in the responses.

This chapter also explores another dimension about the mode of engagement of the youth with Korean media - the ways in which Naga youth, denied time and space by the mainstream media in India, have found in Korean media a way to engage themselves, an alternative to dominant cultural practices and restrictions. It also examines the complex process of reception of Korean media by the Nagas to re-negotiate the broader terrains of modernity, identity and national culture. The reception process also illuminates the political tensions between the centre and periphery and reflects the political status and identity of the Naga vis-a-vis the mainstream Indian identity.

Chapter 6, '**Televisual engagement – negotiating the local and the global**' is concerned with the engagement of young audiences in Nagaland with television and shows how the local, regional, national and international, mediate and overlap in the audiences' reception. It examines how audiences' engage critically with the transnational, national, regional and local programming and how their multiple identities are imagined through that engagement. In this chapter, I seek to analytically understand the complexity of audiences and gauge how unresolved historical, cultural and political questions become visible in their televisual

experiences. This identity negotiation of the Nagas is defined by Alba von Stockhausen as an identity between 'Colonial Construction, Political Calculation and Religious Instrumentalism' (Stockhausen, 2008).

From the tribal allegiance of local cable TV channels to the 'imagined' Naga identity vis-à-vis the 'mainstream' Indian identity and now mediated by globalisation, Nagas' attachment to that "constructed" or "inherent" identity begins to weaken or strengthen and is constantly being negotiated. The chapter also looks at how Christianity which is deeply woven into the Naga thought and expression has a bearing on what comprises 'good' and 'bad' images and how it informs people's viewing choices and preferences.

I conclude in **Chapter 7** by providing a summary of the chapters and providing an account of the findings of the thesis. The chapter also discusses how marginalized communities aspire to be active actors in the making of televisual discourses. It also points to a media scenario where the youth negotiate the past and the present and in an age of commodification, the youth engage in alternative ways to create their own identity and aspire to blend in tradition and modernity to accommodate globalisation. Under the present historical conditions, with the economic, historical, and cultural meanings of Nagas fluctuating and often times contradictory, research on audiences also need to move beyond the limit of the nation-state boundary, to develop discourses congruent with the new conditions to create a new discursive temper, and to imagine new possibilities.

The popularity of Korean audio-visual programmes in Nagaland supports the theoretical models in international communication that suggest an asymmetrical interdependence of industries and a trans-border flow based on audience demands for content in close proximity to their own culture.

The researcher also suggests drawing from the analysis of the responses of the audiences that the Naga youth contest perceived threats to their identity and power by renegotiating issues of representation and thus suggests rethinking discourses of representation. Caught in the tension between modernity and tradition, the Naga youth attempt to reinterpret their culture and reshape outsiders' representation of their identity and thus combat the perceived misrepresentations of the Nagas articulated by the 'others', not just symbolically and politically but this time motivated by economic forces. While Nagas have little control over broadcasting policy-making and the representation on television, they are not entirely passive while engaging with television. They are not resigned to accepting representations of them as unproblematic but actively engage and challenge, contest and negotiate outside imagery, engage in alternative media cultural products and negotiate the local, regional, national and global. In the process, the youth adjust and enhance their own group's image and question the traditional norms.

The conclusion also identifies themes for further research.

Chapter 2

Research Methodology

This chapter outlines the research objectives and questions and the rationale behind the topic selected for study. It explains the choice of ethnography and grounded theory as a suitable methodological approach for collecting data and for analysing the data for the topic under study. It also describes the choice of different groups for focus group discussions and the advantages and challenges of the researcher being positioned as an insider.

Aims and objectives

- To understand the perceptions of the Naga youth about how Naga society, politics, and culture are represented on mainstream Indian television.
- To enquire to what extent is their interpretation or construction of meanings inflected (or have a bearing) by cultural codes, conventions and discourse (beliefs, values etc.)
- To understand how the youth negotiate satellite television that is dominated by national imagery and language.
- To understand the huge sway of the Korean channel, 'Arirang TV' among the youth and its extension in the formation of an 'Arirang fan club', the eagerness to learn Korean language, and adapting 'Emo' (a term generally used to signify a particular relationship between fans and artists, and to describe related aspects of fashion, culture, and behaviour).

Research questions

- How do Naga youth negotiate national television representation/ portrayal of the Nagas and engage with the mainstream television which is dominated by hegemonic national imagery and language?
- Why have Korean audio-visual products captured the imagination of the Naga youth? What explains its popularity seen in the formation of an 'Arirang fan club', learning Korean language and adapting 'Emo'? To what extent can it be seen as questioning a dominant culture or subverting it in the face of the complex "Indo-Naga" political scenario?
- Caught in a tension between tradition and modernity, how do Naga youth come to grips with television images (emphasis on the specificity of local practices within a larger political and cultural framework) and balance the local, regional, national and global television?

Rationale behind the study

My interest in audience research began during my Masters programme when I undertook a small assignment on the consumption of media in Nagaland. The study highlighted issues of media representation, youth aspirations and disillusionments with regard to media etc. Also, in many different settings – while travelling, in workplace, in university campus etc, I realized that people's perceptions about the Nagas were formed largely by the media. I got interested in knowing what the Nagas themselves thought about their representation on Television. My interest was also set off by the popularity of Korean cultural products among the Naga youth. Although popularity of Korean cultural products was invoked a lot in everyday

conversations in Nagaland, it was rarely researched academically, thus sparking off an interest to find an appropriate conceptual framework for comprehending such media engagements.

Sensitizing concepts

Blumer's (1954) notion of 'sensitizing concepts' was helpful in my study. Blumer brings out the definition of sensitizing concepts by contrasting it with 'definitive concept'. A definition concept, he says, refers to a set of common attributes or fixed bench marks. On the contrary, a sensitizing concept lacks such specification of attributes and instead of enabling the user to move directly to the instance with the bench marks, gives the user a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances. Another distinction that he makes between the two concepts is that whereas definitive concepts provide prescriptions of what to see, sensitizing concepts merely suggest directions along which to look. Since Naga society has its own distinctive and unique character, I had to render these concepts as provisional and not put it to strict or abstract reference. To bring out this particularity in the engagement of Naga youth with television which has not been researched before, 'sensitizing concepts' as described by Blumer was apt to my study.

I started out with an interest to find out how Naga youth engage with television. This interest led me to concepts such as representation, alternative engagement, identity, and the tradition/ modernity dichotomy into the study. Those concepts helped me formulate interview questions and to think analytically about the data. I focussed on these concepts during discussions and interviews, but remained as open as possible to any important perspective that emerged in the course of the discussions. Sensitizing concepts offered a set of powerful tools for understanding the bigger questions of meaning and purpose and not just the 'what' and 'how' questions. Sensitizing concepts prevents accumulating evidence

toward the most reasonable or likely explanation and make the case for the most likely scenario. It opens doors to ask oneself the hard questions and consider possibilities we may have always discounted. Greater understanding of the meanings of life gives us a better understanding of the cultural and traditional aspects of a people and broadens perspectives. And such theorizing 'pierce our understandings and puncture our preconceptions' (Charmaz, 2006:151). Although I used concepts like the ones stated earlier, I did not confine to a fixed operational definition of them and left it flexible to accommodate new ideas of the empirical world that I set out to understand.

In my pilot study which shall be discussed later, I made the respondents fill up a small questionnaire before the discussion to see if any important theme was missed out in the instrument. Since I was interested in issues of negotiation, meaning-making, and representation through the lens of a minority community vis-à-vis mainland India, I felt that ethnography would be the most suitable and logical approach to elicit responses regarding this complex process.

Grounded theory in Ethnography

In simple words, grounded theory is the discovery of theory from data (Strauss and Glaser, 1967). It is a set of methods and tools that consists of systematic and yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analysing qualitative data to construct theories 'grounded' in the data (Charmaz, 2006: 2). Grounded theory was propounded by Strauss and Glaser to close the gap between theory and empirical research which they saw as an 'embarrassing' gap in post-war sociology (1967: vii). Although grounded theory was directed primarily at sociologists by the early proponents , they believe that it can be useful to anyone who is interested in studying social phenomena –political, educational, economic, industrial etc. that is based on

qualitative data. (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Since my study is to understand the engagement of Naga youth with television which involves qualitative data, I found grounded theory to be a relevant methodology for the study. My approaches to collecting data and analysing them involved a combination of both ethnography and grounded theory, what Charmaz describes as a 'grounded theory ethnography' approach. She differentiates this from other types of ethnographies. She explains,

> Grounded theory ethnography gives priority to the studied *phenomenon* or *process*- rather than to a description of a setting. Thus, from the beginnings of their fieldwork, grounded theory ethnographers study what is happening in the setting and make a *conceptual* rendering of these actions. A grounded theory ethnographer likely moves across settings to gain more knowledge of the studied process. Other ethnographic approaches often focus on topics such as kinship networks, religious practices, and the organization of work in a specific community. Subsequently, these ethnographers provide full descriptions of these topics in the studied setting and usually take a more structural than processual approach (Charmaz, 2006: 22).

Since my analysis had to treat the engagement of Naga youth with television not just as an individual act but as a collective action and attempt to link it to larger cultural and political aspects, a rigid ethnographic method would have posed difficulties for analysing the data. The field-work was conducted in three districts and that necessitated moving to different places and settings and so a grounded theory ethnographic approach was more suitable to conduct my study. I needed to know more than just how the youth use television and go beyond it – how they engage with television and how political, social and cultural contexts inflect the engagement.

A quantitative method would not have sufficed to investigate this research problem for various reasons. The nature of the study being exploratory demanded flexibility to include ideas even late in the analysis. As Charmaz points out, 'the logico- deductive model of traditional quantitative research necessitates operationalizing established concepts in a theory

as accurately as possible and deducing testable hypotheses about the relationships between these concepts' (Charmaz, 2006:17). This model would be rigid and would not have allowed the flexibility to follow and pursue other topics that my participants defined as significant and crucial. For example, Christianity as a frame of reference for television choices and preferences was a recurrent theme, something which I had not anticipated. Subsequently, I studied how Christianity informed their choices of television programmes and the concept of sin via images. This is because television consumption is complex in nature; it is a dynamic and experiential activity and cannot be addressed as a static and behavioural practice. Such a complex activity cannot be reduced to rigid and objectively quantifiable variables. Television in the context of everyday life is laden with unforeseen and indeterminate moments rendering the process immeasurable (Morley, 1992).

In an effort to concretize the 'television audience', empirical audience measurement which many television institutions rely on sees the audience as isolated beings and ignores the social, political and cultural contexts in which viewing takes place. Ien Ang addresses this issues by saying that,

> …the identities of actual audiences are inherently unstable, they are dynamic and variable formations of people whose cultural and psychological boundaries are essentially uncertain. The social world of actual audiences is therefore a fundamentally fluid, fuzzy, and elusive reality, whose description can never be contained and exhausted by any totalising, taxonomic definition of `television audiences' . . . institutionally-produced discursive constructions of `television audience' are strategic structurations which are under constant pressure of reconstruction whenever they turn out to be imperfect weapons in the quest for control (Ang, 1991:34).

In a similar vein, many other scholars have shown that quantitative statistical approach to study audience is inadequate to account for the multitude of differences among television viewers. The differences, context of viewing should be accounted for if a meaningful

interpretation has to be brought out in the study. (Fiske, 1994, Scannel, 1988). The popularity of the survey method of audience research has declined over the years and in Gillespie's, words:

> In recent years, the survey method has been most unfashionable among academic audience researchers who have generally expressed increasing preference for the use of qualitative method. It is dismissed as positivist, empiricist and lacking in explanatory power. It is also criticised for being unable to address questions of `meaning', since the researcher is unable to tap into the subjective meanings held individually or collectively. It is argued that the questionnaire is not understood and answered by everyone in the same way; that it is a rigid and closed method of data collection (Gillespie, 1995: 52-53).

Drawing on the work of Moser and Kalton (1971), Gillespie opines that quantitative survey methods are useful for establishing broad patterns of media consumption and taste, if used along with qualitative methods. Since the social survey `counts people as units', it is inefficient to deal with the complexity of social processes and gives a limited account of the relationship between audiences and the social reality.

Over the years, a revised sociological perspective (the interpretive paradigm) has made its presence into communication research (Ivala, 2007). The interpretive paradigm stressed that the meaning of a particular action cannot be taken for granted and must be viewed in the contexts of the actors involved. It thus questioned the assumption that all the members of the society shared stable and similar values. Interaction was conceptualised as a process of interpretation and of mutual representation by, and of, the actors involved in a given situation. The role of language and symbols, everyday communication, the interpretation of action, and the process of `making sense' in interaction were emphasized in this paradigm (Morley, 1992: 46). But this paradigm had its own share of weaknesses. The interpretive paradigm, by virtue of its emphasis on interpersonal actions as the reproduction of shared stable norms, could shed light on microprocesses of interpersonal communications and can

be generalized to a group of individuals but the weakness lay in its limitation to explain institutional power or social structures of class and politics. This is because the audience is abstracted from the larger group and subculture which provide a framework of meaning for their engagement. Like in effects tradition, the audience is still conceived of as an atomised mass of individuals (Ivala, 2007:33).

Ethnography and Television Audience Research

To get an insight into the complexities of television and its audiences embedded in wider social, political and economic contexts, traditional models like 'effects models', 'uses and gratifications' have not been satisfactory. These models or approaches did not take into account the complexities of audiences and was not concerned with the audiences being situated in a complex social, geo-political and cultural setting. The audience was conceptualised as a large mass consisting of isolated and unknown individuals (Ivala, 2007). The embeddedness of audiences in a complex context demands research techniques and procedures which are sensitive to the microprocesses and appropriations by viewers. Since I was interested in locating Naga young audiences not just as individual units but as integral parts and agents in the system which involves explanation, and also to prioritize their narratives, I chose ethnography.

Of the 11 districts of Nagaland, the three districts that I have selected, namely, Tuensang, Kohima and Dimapur, are the ones that I am most familiar with and where I have lived for longer periods.

A quantitative method would not have been adequate to elicit explanations about the complexity of meaning-making and social and historical processes which inform much of

television viewing choices. Ethnography can yield empirically grounded nuances of televisual audiences better than other methods, an understanding of a people in relational and holistic terms. This holistic approach produces what Geertz (1973) called 'thick description', that there is a complex whole formed by the encounter of various social relations and processes, which may be termed as 'culture'. This involved talking extensively with a number of Naga youth belonging to different strata of the society in terms of age, gender, location, tribe, etc.

Interviews (structured and unstructured) and focus group discussions in spells over a period of two years were chosen as primary tools for data collection. With my positioning as an insider, I was able to earn their confidence and trust; they spoke freely without being guarded and without inhibitions. Being an insider, I had to constantly tell myself to detach myself emotionally and culturally which is a pre-requisite in conducting research as Woods puts it "Without detachment the researcher runs the risk of 'going native'; that is, identifying so strongly with members that he finds himself defending their values, rather than studying them…" (1979: 261)

Pilot Study

The pilot study described in detail in a later section formed the foundation for the study. It was conducted with thirty respondents. Through the pilot study, the different groups from three different districts were identified for the main field-work. Also, the pilot study was conducted to test the representativeness, the objectives of the study and also to include anything important that was left out in the objectives of the study. Based on the findings of this pilot study, the questions for the questionnaire (Appendix-I) and interview guide (Appendix-II) were designed.

Research Design

The exploratory research design was adopted for the study. Exploratory research is a type of research conducted because a problem has not been clearly defined.

A small questionnaire was designed to gauge the demography of the respondents. This information was gathered to see if factors like age, occupation and educational education formed any pattern in their consumption of and engagement with television later during analysis. Although a questionnaire is not usually employed in an ethnographic study, I felt that it would come handy if there were patterns that come out based on that.

Data collection and analysis

Grounded theory and ethnography approaches with tools such as interviews, participant observation, Focus Group Discussions and conversations, were deployed for the collection and analysis of data. According to Charmaz (2006), grounded theory methods 'consist of systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analysing data to construct theories 'grounded' in the data themselves. Since no earlier research has been conducted in this area and the study involved developing conceptual analyses right at the beginning of the project, I adopted certain aspects of grounded theory approach. Also, the study required analysing and interpreting the participants' meaning and grounded theory approach was thought to be most suitable. Moreover, the approach being flexible as stated by Glaser and Strauss (1967), the approach made me open to new insights and provided guidelines that showed me how I may proceed. With a few provisional concepts and tools, I started my field work.

By being open to what the participants had to offer and coding my data early in the research, I could include important analytical categories like 'Christianity as a frame of reference' that emanated early on from the data. This flexibility permitted me to follow leads that emerged in the initial stages of the study. The chance discovery of such concepts opened the door for new insights and piqued my curiosity to explore more on the topic. I had to ferret out such respondents' ideas and that proved to be an exciting journey for me. This kind of openness revealed participants' views, feelings, intentions, and actions as well as the contexts and structures of their lives, thus enriching my data. Those concepts which were not pre-determined could be explored during subsequent data collection. As Charmaz (2006) attests, 'with grounded theory methods, you shape and reshape your data collection and, therefore, refine your collected data'. Coding early on in the research helps one to reword them as the code emerges and fit the data.

One of the defining components, according to Glaser and Strauss (1967), is to conduct the literature review after developing an independent analysis. In my case, I conducted the review of literature before, during and after collecting data but I tried not to see the data through the lens of extant ideas and theories to avoid forcing data and analysis into preconceived categories.

For the data collection, twelve groups were selected. I used purposive sampling to select the participants. The data was elicited and generated from interviews, FGDs, informal and spontaneous conversations with members of FGDs. The predominance of male respondents is telling of the gendered imbalance in Naga society. Female respondents spoke lesser and it took a lot of tact to break the ice and make them confident to speak.

Grounded theory was used for the analysis of data. Since the study is an audience study where the audience express their viewpoints and experiences of their engagement with

television in relation to their particular embeddedness and the research intends to understand the problem from a socio-historical standpoint, I thought it best to analyse my data using grounded theory, which is explained in a subsequent section. My rationale to choose ethnography over quantitative approach as my method to do an investigation into this study is attested in Gitlin's remark in relation to the electronic set meter `The numbers only sample sets tuned in, not necessarily shows watched, let alone grasped, remembered, loved, learned from, deeply anticipated, or mildly tolerated' (1994:47). Gitlin claims that the intensity and significance of viewing are beyond Nielsen's comprehension and the numbers are a 'currency for transactions' because of the nature of their commitments to time and money (ibid.). Because of the limitation of numbers in studying audiences, qualitative study was the best method to garner rich and thick information about the audience with emphasis on the particularities, unique features and surprising exceptions.

In this satellite television universe with so many channels to choose from, focussing on a particular channel or a programme would not yield spontaneous responses and so I chose to let the channel or programme emerge from the audience spontaneously. The participants' reliance on memory gave me valuable insights as to what they remembered about a particular programme which suggests that it was something that stood out and was negotiated, preferred or opposed during that moment of viewing. And since the focus of the study was audience and their perception and not the content, I didn't choose any particular programme for discussion.

Ethnography as a method for investigation has been around for a long time in the disciplines of anthropology and sociology but it is still relatively new in studying the social world of actual audiences. The method has been appropriated by audience researchers and it has been hailed as a research practice capable of overcoming the hurdle of many audience studies

(Gillespie, 1995). Ethnographies are discourses too like the ratings discourse and so it cannot give us direct and unmediated access to the real. But the strength lies in its potential for engaging with the production of meaning in everyday life (Moores, 1995). Therefore, it is this approach to audience research which I found fitting for television audience research.

My positioning as an insider

Belonging to the Naga community and being born and brought up in Nagaland, my positioning as an insider that studies one's own social group and culture (Naples, 2003) had some strengths and challenges. Although 'insideness' is not a fixed or static position, for the purpose of the study, by 'insider', I concur with the definition given by Chavez that I hold prior knowledge and understandings of the group I studied and am also a member of that group and share aspects of self and identity with the participants (Chavez, 2008). This positioning makes me a researcher and researched at the same time. This section details the challenges and also the advantages that arose from insider research and thus throws light on the tools that aided and also hindered the research process. Such accounts might help bring attention to avoid potential bias and also increase the trustworthiness of the data gathered.

The advantages and challenges of Insider Research

There are considerable advantages to being an insider researcher and at the same time researching one's own society presents its own challenges or disadvantages.

ADVANTAGES

As an insider, I did not have to worry about orienting myself with the research environment and the participants as I was already acquainted with the context and the culture. I could understand and read the non-verbal cues and so could avoid unnecessary unpleasant situations during the course of the interviews, discussions and conversations. Furthermore, since sensitive issues like Naga nationalism, Indo-Naga issues were discussed, I was able to "understand the cognitive, emotional, and/or psychological precepts of participants as well as possess a more profound knowledge of the historical and practical happenings of the field" (Chavez, 2008: 481). The closeness and familiarity to the community under study provided me a nuanced understanding as a marginalized group with certain grievances which would have been somewhat difficult for someone who doesn't belong to the community to empathize with. There are certain conversational codes like intrusion seen as being rude and insulting especially with someone elder and since I was familiar with these non-verbal gestures like embarrassment, discomfort etc., I could approach the participants for the discussions accordingly. Nagas speak a lot in folkloric language and I had the advantage to more closely render underlying meanings, which may be misinterpreted by outsiders whose cultural codes would be quite disparate from those of the Nagas.

I had easy access to the field and people and the participants could open up to discuss sensitive issues which is referred to as "expediency of access" (Chavez, 2008: 481). Since I knew a significant number of participants prior to beginning my study, I was privy to a lot of information which otherwise they would have been reluctant to talk about with someone they didn't know. But, there was also the challenge not to overstep the line between friend and researcher and that is a skill I developed after a few FGDs.

During analysis, if an analytical category had limited data and could not portray the full range of the study, I could travel to the field of study even after the field study was completed and meet the same participants without much difficulty.

DISADVANTAGES

Keeping distance emotionally, morally and culturally from the research by virtue of sharing similar worldviews was hard and the familiarity makes one take certain things for granted which otherwise would be an issue worth exploring. That proved to be a deterrent and I had to constantly compare the data with previous research. Although grounded theory approach requires the researcher to delay review of literature till all the data is collected, I had to refer to literature to come up with some concepts to avoid being blind to the ordinary and thus dismissing some important concepts that were emanating from the data. To discuss all-too familiar topics which concern most Nagas and to raise provocative questions and elaborate them as though they were new was difficult. At times, the participants were not forthcoming to discuss very familiar topics. Also, the bias of projecting one's own views onto participants or the data analysis, however much I made a conscious effort to avoid it, cannot be overruled. This lack of detachment from the field which happens unconsciously can be helped by writing memos before data collection and analysing and comparing it with the data. Discussions with peers and my research supervisor on the research topic also allowed me to think critically about the research and develop reflexivity, to unlearn the seemingly natural setting.

Sources of data

The sources of data for the study are the responses elicited from the FGDs and interviews. They comprise the maximum portion of the data. In addition to these, a few supplementary sources like books, newspapers which were relevant to the topic under study were used.

More on ethnography

In carrying out this work, I have employed the methods of ethnography. Ethnography is the empirical description and analysis of cultures based on intensive and extensive fieldwork in a particular local setting (Gillespie, 1995). As Gillespie notes,

> Ethnography highlights the small-scale processes, rather than the large-scale products, of people's perception, thoughts and action. The ethnographer reads the world, as she reads mediated messages, through the eyes of her informants themselves; she focuses on the microprocesses of daily uses, interpretations and identifications, rather than macrohistorical logics of 'longue duree'. But ethnography can also make manifold connections between micro- and macroprocesses; between the public and private, the domestic, local, national and international spheres in contemporary societies; and between 'micro' issues of power in everyday life and 'macro', structural social features (Gillespie, 1995:1).

The subjects of this study are young Naga people in the age group of 18-35 from three districts. To garner data for the study, I used different tools with FGDs being the main approach. Besides FGDs, informal personal conversations, and, interviews with village elders, bureaucrats were conducted.

Fieldwork Timeline

The two-month pilot study spanned from 1st December, 2009 to January 30, 2010. Out of the eleven districts of Nagaland, three districts headquarters were covered – Kohima, Dimapur[4] and Tuensang. The former two districts are urban in nature and the latter is semi-urban. All the discussions took place in the district headquarters of the respective districts except for three in remote villages.

The pilot study was conducted at a time when Eastern Nagaland was demanding a separate state, 'Frontier Nagaland'. There was political unrest in places like Tuensang and it was challenging to find respondents speak at leisure and so the fieldwork in this district had to be completed hastily thus making changes in the planned schedule.

The main fieldwork spanned from 20th March, 2010 to 8th June, 2011. Although the field work was done in two spells, I returned to the field when some important idea occurred to me while analysing data and gathered more information from respondents to make the categories dense and to further refine the concepts. Thus, further theoretical sampling was done to fill out the major categories of the study. Theoretical sampling is defined as "data gathering, driven by concepts derived from the evolving theory and based on the concept of 'making comparisons', whose purpose is to go to places, people, or events that will maximize opportunities to discover variations among concepts and to densify categories in terms of their properties and dimensions" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). In simple words, it is the strategy by which the researcher obtains more data selectively to refine and fill out the major categories.

[4] Dimapur is the economic hub of Nagaland. It is also called the gateway of Nagaland and is the only place in Nagaland that is connected by railways and airways.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Pilot study

Besides talking informally with individuals, the pilot study mainly adopted focus group discussions. Nine groups, 3 in each district, participated in the pilot study that was carried out. With the permission of the groups, all the discussions were recorded. Most of the discussions took place in very informal settings where tea and snacks were offered and some time allowed for some informal discussion before the actual session started. Most of the groups fall into specific categories and a couple of them which cannot be categorized have been named as mixed groups. The groups have been chosen to make it an eclectic mix from all the different strata to get as wide a variation as possible. This also helps implement the tool of 'theoretical sampling' more meaningfully falsifiable by making observations in as many diverse situations as possible. My selection of the groups is aided by my pre-understanding of the context to which I also belong.

Experiences and observations

Since the pilot study coincided with the famed Hornbill festival and also the festive season of Christmas, getting people to sit and discuss was quite challenging. Some of the groups were contacted through people whom I know but with groups like NSF, YouthNet, I had to fix an appointment to talk to them. I had to make a few revisions to the planned groups and also the methodology for sampling. One of the challenges that I faced during my field-work was in getting people to take out time to sit and discuss. To separate television as an object of study was equally challenging. In most of the groups, there were more male respondents than female although I tried my best that there should be good representation of females. Finding

male respondents to talk was much easier than getting female participants. Due to time and travel constraints, the rural villages couldn't be covered in the pilot study. The rural places were included during the main fieldwork later.

Although the FGD is an important method of eliciting responses and is taken more seriously by the respondents, many tend to give calculated responses and some even get intimidated as to whether their responses will make any sense. Many of the young entrepreneurs whom I had initially planned to hold discussion with as a category were too busy to afford time to spare and suggested that it would be easier for them to fill up questionnaires. In group discussions, people tend to centre their opinions on the most common ones, on 'social norms'. In reality, opinions and behaviour may be more diverse. And this can be achieved by interacting with people individually. Since the groups were diverse, the responses had a range of views. Some of the topics in the list did not make much sense to some groups depending on their knowledge/ educational qualification; in such cases, the questions were aborted quite early on in the discussion. As a researcher and moderator, I took care to stimulate and support discussion and not act as an expert. But in certain cases where the participants just couldn't figure out how to respond, I had to give them leading questions and then the discussion would follow spontaneously. I had to pay careful attention to group dynamics. Domineering participants and off-the-track discussions were some of the major challenges in navigating group dynamics.

Overall, the discussions went well and the participants enthusiastically participated once they warmed up. Many participants admitted that it was the first time that they were getting to discuss about television and were appreciative of the fact that such a study was being carried out.

Main field-work

Eleven groups were identified under different categories for FGDs. Some of the groups were those that had participated in the pilot study. The different categories both for the pilot study and main field-work included Students' union leaders, faculty members of colleges and university, NGO, Rock band, theatre group, church youth association and educated unemployed youth.

There were about five-seven members in each group. Altogether there were 59 people, 19 female and 40 male. Before the FGDs and interviews, I distributed questionnaires to the participants to obtain general information like age, educational qualification, and occupation and also the channels and programmes of preferences. Each FGD lasted for anywhere between two to five hours. Listed below are the groups and a brief description of each group that had participated in the pilot study and in the main field-work.

Group	Group profile	Location	Number of participants		Age group
			Female	Male	
Gabriel Ministry (Pilot study)	All were students except for one and all were active members of the Gabriel Ministry which is a Christian youth organisation. The respondents were from different tribes. The discussion took place in an open ground where they had organized a Book fair.	Tuensang	Two	Five	19-24
Yimchunger tribe Pilot study)	Only 3 people turned up in this group, although 6 people were supposed to come. 3 of the boys who had witnessed a fight some days	Tuensang	Two	One	26-28

	before the discussion were summoned by the committee members of the colony for a trial to be conducted for the case registered under Naga customary law. The discussion was conducted at night in my aunt's place since the girls were busy the whole day doing household chores and said that they just couldn't find time during the daytime. All 3 stopped their studies after passing 12th standard. None of them are employed.				
Working professionals (Pilot study)	3 of them hold Bachelor's degree and one a Master's degree. All were from the Chang tribe of Nagaland. The discussion took place in my home.	Tuensang		Four	26-35
Ao tribe (Pilot study)	One is a teacher and the other three are unemployed. Three of them hold Bachelor's degree and one has a Master's degree. The discussion took place in my sister's home.	Kohima		Four	26-29
Alder college faculty (Main)		Kohima	Five	Two	27-31
NSF (Naga Students Federation) (Both pilot and main)	All were executive members of NSF, the apex students' body of Nagaland. The discussion took place in the office of NSF. All hold Bachelor's degree.	Kohima		Three	27-32
YouthNet (Both pilot and main)	YouthNet is an NGO that works in partnership with the government, community residents, grassroots organizations, educational institutions, corporations etc. Most of the office bearers in YouthNet are lawyers. The discussion took place in YouthNet office.	Kohima	Four	Male	25-30
Purple Hearts (Main)		Tuensang		Five	23-31
Tuensang Town Baptist Church (TTBC) (Main)		Tuensang	Three	Two	21-30
Christian Youth Endeavour (CYE) (Main)		Tuensang	Two	Five	19-30
Dreamz Unlimited (Pilot and main)	It is a theatre society of Nagaland, formed in 2008. They perform in Nagaland and in other parts of India.	Dimapur	One	Four	25-26

	One is intermediate pass, three have Bachelor's degree and the female has a Master's degree. The discussion took place in my uncle's home.				
Nagaland University faculty (Both pilot and main)	Three have Bachelor's degree in Engineering and one has Master's degree. The discussion took place in the campus quarter of one of the faculty.	Dimapur		Four	26-28
Science College Alumni (Both pilot and main)	Three have Bachelor's degree and one holds Master's degree. Two are employed and two unemployed.	Dimapur	Two	Two	25-26
Mixed (Main)		Hakchang village	Two	Ten	19-28
Mixed (Main)		Kuthur village		Five	22-31

I sought permission of each group and interviewees to record the discussions. Using an audio recorder allowed me to give full attention to the participants, making eye contact. While interviewing, many a times, one is preoccupied with thoughts of what question to ask next, often taking away concentration from the issues discussed. It is later when you sit to transcribe and listen to the entire discussion again, that you can better hear and feel what the participants were saying.

No one had any problems with their responses being recorded but in some interviews, I was asked to stop the recording when they had some sensitive information to reveal. In FGDs, audio recording was not adequate because two or three people would speak at a time and so I had to rely on memory.

I had taken notes during the pilot study, but I realized that this was a real distraction to the participants and they would stop talking. So, I had to stop taking notes while they were talking in the later FGDs and interviews. I realized that eye contact was vital to building trust and interest. And needless to say, active listening is crucial. A few times I tried taking notes, it diminished the authentic atmosphere which was created after a considerable amount of

time and so I opted out of taking notes for the rest of the FGDs and interviews. One added advantage was that I knew at least one or two people in each group and so the discussions were spontaneous and honest. The languages that people spoke in were English, Nagamese, Yimchunger, Chang, languages in which I am comfortable having conversations. But when I visited Hakchang village which is a Chang village, a Chang friend accompanied me just in case the village elders spoke in a Chang variant which I might have difficulty understanding. Understanding Naga oral semantics is very important because many vital and piercing insights and information are given out in a humorous way and one has to know to read between the lines.

Also, interruption is considered rude in Naga culture and so I had to patiently listen for hours lest people get offended. Transgression of these cultural norms would have meant that the speaker would hesitate to speak with the same enthusiasm again and that would have jeopardized the entire research endeavour and would have been too great a loss for my study. Formal discussion did not fit the interaction and communication style of the group and so I had to be flexible in allowing them to speak according to what was comfortable to them. I began by asking questions from the list of issues, but allowed participants to explore and elaborate on their responses freely. Thus, they were in charge of the flow of content, and I was a listener and facilitator and that seemed to agree with the Naga conversational and communication style.

My familiarity with these cultural codes helped me a lot to avoid anything that would have made the participants hesitate to talk. Since I had to step out of the familiar while conducting research, I had to be extra cautious lest I fell into validating and defending their point of view. The 'common-sense' and 'taken-for-granted' categories had to be made 'strange 'again for me to investigate.

Topics and themes that were discussed ranged from: individual preferences of television channels and programs, the underdeveloped television landscape in Nagaland, their aspirations, social and national identities vis-a-vis television, and also their engagement with other media.

Personal Interviews

Besides the FGDs, I conducted personal interviews with six people - The Secretary, Urban Development, Government of Nagaland; Proprietor of Global Chapter Cable Television, Dimapur; Owner of Aries Music and Sports Foundation; owner of Mokokchung Cable Channel; Advisor to the Commissioner, Supreme Court of India; and Pastor, Hakchang Baptist church. When I reached Hakchang village, a group of Gaonburas[5] had assembled in the village hall prior to my coming and were waiting for me. Although this group was not contacted for the discussions, leaving the village without talking to them and so I spent some time discussing some general things about the village.

Interviews with these individuals highlighted particular aspects of identity, larger issues of socio-political inequalities, gender discrimination, religious factionalism, treatment of minority groups, etc. through a range of symbolic, vernacular, and idiomatic contexts.

[5] Village headmen

Figure 1: An aerial view of Hakchang village. (Picture by the researcher)

Figure 2: A log drum[6] in Kuthur village (Photograph by the researcher)

[6] Log drums were created out of huge tree trunk extending to upto 30 to 40 metres long and 5 to 6 feet high. The log drum was used as a means of communication and was beaten to announce births, deaths, festivals and also to declare emergency when a rival group attacked a village.

Challenges

Transcribing some interviews and conversations in English proved to be extremely challenging because of the semantic gap and in such cases, I had to rely on the closest possible meaning. Many Nagas speak in idioms and sayings and getting them translated was not possible.

Breaking silences and getting people to discuss on a topic that they have hardly reflected upon was a huge challenge. More challenging was to enable them to find a coherent frame to their talk. In Hakchang village, the group of Gaonburas were sceptical about such research. They mentioned that people (researchers) come and talk to them, take their pictures and never get back to them. They wondered what happened to the information they gave and the pictures taken of them. This kind of apprehension had to be quelled by explaining patiently and gently the purpose of such research and how it might help in bettering communication flows without promising anything.

Another challenge was respondents digressing from the main topic often. The topic would shift to meta-discourse of Naganess most of the time and this had to be tactfully handled to narrow the conversation to the relevant topic. My previous experience as a real-life testimony producer for a TV channel where I had to interview people on very sensitive and sometimes uncomfortable and painful issues came in handy for interviewing participants for my study. The skills that I had developed there helped me to let the interview take on an exploratory stance and not one of interrogation. Keeping the interviews informal and conversational elicited more information than making it rigid and formal. Keeping it informal increased the comfort level both for the researcher and the participants. The interviews had to be unrestricted and open-ended and yet directed and paced. I had a well-thought-out interview and FGD instrument with me but I was open to unanticipated material to emerge during the

course of discussion. If one is too focused on the interview guide, then one misses out on new insights that emerge from the responses of the participants.

Insights into the changes in Naga Society

Researching this topic was an eye-opener for me in more ways than one. Besides the insight that I gained on youth's engagement with television, there were some discernible changes which was evident from the young people's discussions and from my own observation. Staying away from home for more than a decade and visiting home only during holidays made me realize that there are a lot of changes on many fronts in Naga society. Although I restricted my study to youth and their television engagement, there were some prominent changes that I couldn't help noticing. One of the more pronounced ones was the emergence of class divisions and the lifestyle of the youth. Although exploring the multidimensional angles behind such inequalities was beyond the ambit of my research objectives, ill-governance and power dynamics between section sections of people are some of the reasons behind the polarization. There is a huge disparity between the urban and rural spaces, between 'backward' and 'advanced' tribes[7] in terms of lifestyle and infrastructure but television has reached even the remotest parts of the state. Being brought up in a town, I always thought that the aspirations of people in villages, especially the youth, would differ hugely from the youth in towns and cities. But this assumption was proven wrong when I

[7] This official classification was an affirmative action adopted by the state to give preferential treatment to those tribes who were lacking behind in certain spheres like education. All the tribes in Tuensang district fall under 'backward' category while the tribes in Kohima district are categorized as 'advanced'. Both these districts were chosen for my field-study taking this categorization into consideration. This categorization has met with little success leading to the demand for a district state by the Eastern Nagas called 'Frontier Nagaland'. Tuensang was an unadministered area during the colonial period and was not part of 'Naga Hills' district. This historical fact was invoked to mobilize the formation a separate district during the movement.

interacted with the youth in the villages. They all aspire towards upward social, occupational and also geographical mobility.

Nagas were known for their collective, close-knit society and this communal and traditional life and traditional is slowly beginning to disintegrate and is losing its grip among the youth. The greater interaction with people from other cultures is providing an openness to new styles of life. Even in the rural villages, with no proper infrastructure like roads, sanitation, access to safe drinking water, the youth appeared to be effortlessly aping the fashion of the Koreans and following the archetypes of the western and Korean culture. Mass media has broken the chasm that existed between the remote villages and the outside world. The emphasis is shifting from the past to the present and the future and traditional moors are slowly giving way to aesthetic justification of life. Westernisation in terms of fashion, cuisines are seriously changing the traditional way of life even in the remote areas and money oriented culture and lifestyle are becoming increasingly appealing to the youth. Materialism and individualism are making their inroads on Naga society and taking it by storm.

With all the talk about culture and tradition, the consumerist culture on the screens of the mass media that promotes a hedonistic way of life has brought with it a desire for the new. These changes are emerging out of a dialogue with past conventions of the society or out of a rebellion with the traditional norms. This desire for new has passed over into the arena of life and is acted out in life changing social structures. In the urban places, trends like driving expensive cars, going to discotheques, eating out in eating chains like KFC and Pizza Hut which have recently opened their outlets in Dimapur seems to be the trend among youth. Although this group is a minority in terms of scale, the numbers are large and they dominate the cultural space. But in my interaction with the research participants, amidst all these rapid

changes, they are still caught in the tension between striking a balance between cultural traditions and adapting to the changes that are happening.

Although their 'we' feeling seemed to be not as strong as before in social terms, politically it is as strong as ever. Their views on politics and non-identification with Indians were unanimous. This strong sentiment was pervasive compelling me to focus my research on this aspect once I entered the field and making changes in some of the objectives that I set out to enquire.

CHAPTER THREE

AUDIENCE ACTIVITY, CONTEXT AND DIFFERENT WAYS OF SEEING.

Introduction

This chapter provides a critical review of the major traditions of the literature on media audiences, with special focus on the idea of active audiences. An understanding of the history of this aspect of media studies will help us recognize not only its advances, but also its limitations, gaps and silences. The chapter also aims to develop an understanding of a diversified instead of a polarised or reductionist notion of the active audience, thus enabling a possibility for a convergence of a range of active audience studies, related to 'audience engagement'. Most of the studies have categorised audiences either as active or passive leading to an oversimplification of the diversity of audience research and also the complex nature of audiences. I will argue that rather than being antithetical, the two approaches complement each other and can be given new configurations. The chapter focusses on the concept of audience engagement and in understanding this concept, I aim to locate priorities around a shared conceptual framework focused on interpretation and critique by mobilizing previously fragmented audience research. This would enable us to investigate the sheer assortment and dynamism of audiences in the context of social changes and the global mediascape.

The chapter also examines some of the reasons why minority audience studies are significant. International research concerning ethnic minorities has focussed mostly on content analysis of the portrayal of the ethnic minorities in both print and electronic media. One of the gaps in audience studies is the lack of attention to how minority audiences perceive or evaluate the media: what they think, want, or say about media representations, the media's involvement in their everyday lives, or their expectations of the media. Not much attention has been given to

audience responses and interpretations within ethnic minorities (Ross, 2001). In India, research on ethnic minority audience is relatively small and researching this less explored area focussing on diversity, therefore, becomes a necessity.

Active Audience Theories

To conceptualize the activities and understandings of the audience in a media-rich environment, a lot of research, in the past few decades, has utilized the concept of 'audience activity'. To arrive at a description of 'audience activity', I begin by outlining the major established tradition of media audience theory; this reveals various definitions of audience activity arising from different research traditions. In the process, a huge array of research aims and objectives, questions, historical, socio-political and cultural contexts and standardized conceptions of the audience are found. In such a scenario, it is not easy to find a single definition of audience activity. In order to get a feasible definition of audience activity, a merging of the different strands of audience theories needs to be attempted.

In the following section, in order to get a workable definition of 'audience activity', I look at the main body of literature within active audience research. I focus mainly on two major active audience approaches in media audience studies, namely (l) uses and gratifications studies within American communication studies, (2) audience reception studies of British cultural studies and European reception theory , and an emergent (3) Audience studies in India that draws from the above.

I choose British and American research traditions because both have established research traditions in media research. The three countries also share similarities in the sense they are all multi-ethnic, multi-cultural societies. The theoretical discussion and methodological

frameworks generated in one national context often have relevance in another. The different traditions have generated a lot of lively as well as acrimonious debates centering on epistemology, methodology, and frameworks. Such clashes and debates have informed and helped me chart my own research agenda and priorities.

Uses and Gratifications Studies within American Communication Studies

Wimmer and Dominick (1994) proposed that Uses and Gratifications studies (U&G) began in the 1940s when researchers became interested in the engagement of audience with different media like radio and newspaper. Other researchers like Dozier and Rice (1984) have credited the U&G approach with Schramm's (1949) instant and delayed reward model of media gratifications. Audience activity within American communication studies has been represented as the mass media having a limited impact on its audiences, what is referred to as the 'limited effects' tradition. In the 'limited effects' paradigm, the concept of audience activity focussed of two aspects. One was the concept of selectivity- what audiences choose to view; this was developed from uses and gratifications studies. The other concept which was of interpersonal networks that mediate viewing was proposed within the theory of the diffusion of innovation (Katz, 1980). Diffusion of innovation developed from the two-step flow model of media messages drawing from its concept of 'opinion leaders' (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955). A further development in this line was Everett Rogers's (1982, 1986) convergence model of communication. Although uses and gratifications studies were subjected to severe criticism since its emergence in the 1940s, it has constituted the main body of traditional research into audience activity.

Whereas effects theories look at what the media do to people, uses and gratifications studies look at what people do with the media (Katz, 1959). By focussing on what people do with the media, uses and gratifications studies have looked into the relationship of media and the needs of the media users. Highlighting the diversity of uses people put media to, media is seen as a source of pleasure or information which are formally or instrumentally used by audiences for reasons such as diversion, personal relation, personal identity and surveillance (McQuail et al., 1972). Robinson's (1972) review of a series of related studies of viewing behaviour suggests a similar description (utilitarian, ego-defensive, value expressive, informative) of the possible functions of television.

Effects theories and uses and gratifications studies are regarded as representing different and opposing paradigms but on close analysis, they share many similarities. The following sections look at the emergence of these two bodies of research from a historical perspective.

Early Uses and Gratifications Studies and Effects Studies

"Moral panic" and the Payne Fund Studies are the reasons cited by some mass communication researchers as the originators of Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory. The Payne Fund Studies were carried by the U.S. Motion Picture Research Council in the late 1920s. With an interest in understanding how movies were affecting American youth, many leading sociologists and psychologists like Herbert Blumer, Philip Hauser, and L. L. Thurstone (Lowery & DeFleur, 1983) conducted research. However, researchers like Rosengren, Johnsson-Smaragdi, & Sonesson (1994), argued that the Payne Fund Studies were primarily effects-oriented propaganda studies, as opposed to the U&G tradition, which focuses on research of individual use of the media. In the same strand, Cantril's (1940) study of Orson Welles's "War of the Worlds" radio broadcast was more narrowly interested in

sociological and psychological factors associated with panic behaviour than in developing a theory about mass communication effects (Lowery & DeFleur, 1983).

The first study considered to fall within the tradition of U&G was "Professor Quiz- A Gratification Study" carried out by Herzog (1940) along with Hadley Cantril, one of the leading scholars in propaganda studies (Cantril, 1965). Cantril was a supporter of the model of powerful effects (Cantril, 1940) and one of his eminent works is his presentation of a conception of the "atomised audience" of radio. Radio came about as a tool in the early stages of its introduction targeting people who did not read the newspaper and to educate them (Lazarsfeld, 1940). The findings of radio research, however, showed that most serious radio programmes did not reach the target audience. It was the serial dramas and quiz programmes and not the serious educational programmes that this target audience considered as sources of information. This result sparked an interest among radio researchers at to why serial dramas and quiz programmes was a success among mass audiences. Studies using different methods like uses and gratifications method and content analysis were carried out. Together with a variety of gratifications, the results of audience listening to *Professor Quiz* revealed four general appeals- the competitive appeal, the educational appeal, the self-rating appeal and the sporting appeal. However, Herzog cautions:

> The information [the viewer] seeks is disjointed, unrelated, unsystematic. It is preferred so because he does not know how to organize information and does not want to undergo the intellectual discipline necessary to learn how. "Education" for him is rationalized to mean, then, the passive absorption of anything which happens to be presented (1940: 92).

The above quote clearly conceptualized the audience as devoid of any agency to actively engage with media. Despite Herzog's study existing within a body of research where the audience is considered to be active, it is not so according to later researches' definition of active. This type of research cannot be neatly categorized as either passive or active. Many

scholars are of the opinion that early research lacked theoretical coherence and were predisposed towards behaviourist and individualist methodology. (McQuail, 1994).

In the ‘40s, the tradition of media audience research was becoming much more firmly established in American communication studies and this period is considered as 'the golden age of radio research'. Following Lazarsfeld's "Radio and the Printed Page", a number of uses and gratifications studies were conducted. Some studies include Lazarsfeld and Stanton's (1949) "Communication Research 1948-49"; Waples et al.'s (1940) "What Reading Does to People"; and Warner and Henry's (1948) "The Radio Daytime Serial- A Symbolic Analysis".

Although Uses and gratifications studies are commonly understood as opposing effects research, a careful analysis of them especially of the 1940s seem to be in line with the effects tradition. The audience as passive is shared in some uses and gratifications studies and effects research. The studies falling under the two traditions also are premised on the assumption that there is an effect and thereby share similar research aims to establish and understand media effect. One of the main tenets of uses and gratifications studies is that that audiences use the media in a myriad of ways which the media producers had not possibly intended and that people interpret messages from within their own social context (Kaufman, 1944). Although that reasoning was established in uses and gratification studies, the main objective of such research was to understand people's readings and uses of media. This was done in order to find ways to educate them with the aid of media and thus premising on the assumption like in effects tradition that people can be affected by the media. Users and gratifications approaches to audience studies treated audiences as different but this difference was mostly explained by the individual differences of psychology and not by the variety of intersections of social alliances and social relations.

Then came the 1950s. Alongside the development of television in Western countries, there was an increasing concern about the powerful and undesirable influence of the media on the impressionable minds of children. Television programmes were presumed to lead to juvenile delinquency and other social problems like moral depravity, violence etc. While the 1940s were considered as the 'golden age of radio research' in the history of American mass communication studies, the 1950s saw the beginning of television research which was a response to social demand. This decade saw an upsurge in studies conducted on television effects.

During the 1950s and 1960s, researchers identified and operationalized many social and psychological variables that were presumed to be the precursors of different patterns of consumption of gratifications (Wimmer & Dominick, 1994). Accordingly, Schramm, Lyle, & Parker (1961) concluded that children's use of television was influenced by individual mental aptitude and relationships with parents and peer group. These studies sought to study the relationship between peer and family and media use (Rosengren, 1985). Audience activity in the '50s uses and gratifications studies was conceived of as including three activities derived from a variety of needs, the activities being selectivity, use and interpretation (Riley and Riley, 1951; Maccoby, 1954; Schramm et al., 1961). Schramm et al. (1961) were interested in investigating what children do with television and not what television does to children and how the same content is put to different use by the children. The '50s uses and gratifications studies highlighted that, due to viewers' social embeddedness, media effects are appropriated depending on the specific social context of the viewer. There was a shift from the traditional effects model of mass media research conducted during this period to a more functionalist outlook. In Klapper's (1963) words, the audience had to be restored to "his rightful place in the dynamic, rather than leaving him in the passive, almost inert, role to which many older studies relegated him" (p. 527). Geiger and Newhagen (1993) acknowledged Klapper as the

pioneer in the 'cognitive revolution' in the communication field. '50s U&G studies thus marked an important break from earlier research in that while the '40s research concentrated on the individual psychology of the viewer, the '50s research approached the viewer from a social angle, that is, as "a persona interacting with others, participating in cooperative social activities" (Friedson, 1953: 230). An individual's opinion is supposed to be a function of his group affiliations (Riley and Riley, 1951). The '50s U&G studies are generally seen as belonging to active audience theory. While the activity of the audience was emphasized, there was still the concern to discern how social contexts of audiences had a bearing on the degree of influence by the media. Media was still seen to be effecting audiences in most of the studies although studies had started to incorporate the social contexts of the audience.

Criticism of Uses and Gratifications Studies

In the 1970s, the U&G approach came under a lot of criticism mainly for both its functionalist and theoretical problems. The criticisms were centred on the aspect that it (a) heavily relied on self-reports (b) was simplistic in its understanding about the social origin of the needs that bear on the audiences while engaging with media, (c) was too uncritical of the possible dysfunction both for self and society of certain kinds of audience satisfaction, and (d) was too captivated by the inventive diversity of audiences (Katz, 1987). It was also criticized for isolating the subjects from their social situation thus isolating the mass communication process from other social processes. This problem of abstraction cannot explain properly the real social structures and process of mass communication in which the audience is embedded thus lending the theory a low explanatory power (Elliott, 1974). Elliott criticizes uses and gratifications studies for ascribing excessive power to the audience and

portraying a rather too optimistic picture of the relationship between the media and audience.

Elliott's criticism raises a very important question. If according to U&G studies, audience activity is supreme and acts as a filter against undesirable media effects, it divests the issue of institutional arrangements and power. As such, there would be no requirement for any changes in the broadcasting policies and the prevailing status quo can justifiably be maintained. This position is arguably unacceptable to critical scholars with broader goals for changes in broadcasting policy regarding issues of racism, representation, to name a few and would absolve media from their responsibility to be responsible. Media hegemony advocates have contended that the U&G theory overextends its reach in asserting that people are free to choose the media fare and interpretations they want (White, 1994)

Elliot's criticisms of uses and gratifications studies have been hailed as attempts at change. In response to the strong tides of criticisms by critics such as Elliott (1974), Swanson (1977), and Lometti, Reeves, and Bybee (1977), uses and gratifications studies have tried to shift from its functionalist approach and has integrated multiple theories such as McQuail and Gurevitch's (1974) three approaches, the structural/cultural, action/motivation and 'functional' approaches, McGuire's (1974) approach of sixteen paradigms of psychological motivation and Cazeneuve's (1974) anthropological, ethnographical, and philosophical perspectives.

Uses and gratifications theorists tried to appropriate other approaches, and, drawing upon the broad and multi-theoretical framework, the following three theoretical orientations were established. These theoretical orientations concerned: (l) expectancy-value relationships to gratifications (Babrow, 1989; Babrow & Swanson, 1988; Galloway & Meek, 1981; Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1979, 1982, 1985); (2) transactional processes of gratifications and effects

(McLeod & Becker, 1974, 1981; Wenner, 1985); and (3) the dimensions of audience activity (Windahl, 1981; Levy & Windahl, 1984).

Uses and Gratifications Studies and Audience Activity

In response to the criticism of uses and gratifications studies which saw it as individualistic and ahistorical, the first theoretical framework, an expectancy-value approach to gratifications, was offered by Palmgreen (1984) and was later integrated within a larger societal framework to give it a formal bent. The advancement of the information revolution led to the expansion of the concept of 'audience activity' incorporating characteristics of new media. Levy and Windahl (1985) classified audience activity along two dimensions: (l) the qualitative orientation of the audience towards the communication process, including selectivity, involvement and utility and (2) temporally; that is, before, during, or after exposure. This classification proves helpful in understanding the diverse range of audience activities.

With the coming of other media technologies such as cable television, the remote control, the VCR, video games, the personal computer, the concept of audience activity expanded and the idea of a more active audience than that of the old media emerged (Heeter and Greenberg, 1985; Levy, 1980, 1987; Rubin and Bantz, 1989; Walker and Bellamy, 1991).

In the body of uses and gratifications studies, audience activity is conceived of as diverse media uses derived from psychological factors such as predispositions, needs and gratifications. Uses and gratifications studies, as a theoretical approach, was severely criticised by critical studies scholars for its lack of theoretical foundation and its failure to take into account the social environment of the media audience and media use. In response to the

heavy criticisms, uses and gratifications scholars began to appropriate other theories into their own and look at the possibility of convergence between the various theories of the audience for a more comprehensive theoretical grounding "to the extent that the same problematics are empirically studied by members of various schools, the present sharp differences of opinion will gradually diminish and be replaced by a growing convergence of perspectives" (Rosengren, 1983:203). To support the case for convergence, Rosengren (1985) argues that Radway's (1984) study of romance readers is in fact a 'reinvention' of uses and gratifications studies.

Audience Reception Studies within British Cultural Studies and European Reception Theory

Through a set of internal debates and responding partly to the criticism against uses and gratifications studies, an alternative approach to television audience research was developed in the 1970s at the Centre for Contemporary Culture Studies at the University of Birmingham (Morley, 1988). When Hall's encoding/decoding model emerged, there were a lot of research paradigms prevailing around that time. Primary among them were the American communication studies, which included uses and gratifications studies and the effects tradition, the British Screen theory and various theories of political economy. The latter two were criticized by Hall for privileging textual meaning and their failure to look at audience interpretations. The concept of selective perception which placed emphasis on audience granting them undue agency over textual meaning also came under Hall's criticism. The concept of selective perception was the cornerstone of both behaviourism and uses and gratifications studies.

The paradigm of British cultural studies was marked by its rigid adherence to the Marxist hegemonic model of the media which considered audience as politically passive and had neglected audience activity. Hall's (1980) encoding/decoding model and Morley's (1980) Nationwide Audience brought audience research into the paradigm of British cultural studies. Hall's encoding/decoding model, Morley's research and audience reception studies need some elaboration because of the shifts it brought to British cultural studies paradigm.

The Encoding/Decoding Model

This model has aspects of both the effects tradition and the uses and gratifications approach and ascribes power to both the producer and the receiver. It borrowed from the effects theorists the notion that the institutions which produce the messages do have the power to set agendas and provide cultural categories and frameworks within which audiences will be inclined to operate. The other aspect is taken from the uses and gratifications tradition, the notion of the active viewer and their agency in making meanings from the signs and messages which the encoders inscribe in the text. Besides the two aspects, semiological perspectives drawing on Eco and Barthes informed the model. The model was also designed to accommodate broader concerns beyond individual psychologies, that of social structures and cultural patterns as well.

In the encoding/decoding model, Hall (1980) argued that the paradigm of audience research should shift from behaviourism in which it had been based ever since the emergence of media audience studies in American communication studies. Behaviourist audience research starts with the stimulus-response model and thus understands television and its messages eliciting a linear observable, physical response to a certain stimulus. An analogy of a hypodermic needle is used to demonstrate the idea of its linearity and direct response. The direct-stimulus model has been criticised for dismissing social factors which contribute to

differences in different social groups. It was against the unidirectional flow of independently existing meanings that Hall developed his encoding/decoding model. Drawing upon Marx's analysis of relations and practices of production, Hall presented a cyclic rather than a linear model of the communicative process emphasizing on the discursive codes used in both the production and reception of texts. According to Hall, messages which were encoded in the production process were let out into the structure of social practices through decoding in the process of audience reception and this was a cyclical process. And because of its non-linear nature, media effects, uses and gratifications cannot be understood in terms of the linear stimulus-response model of the behaviourist, reductionist perspective.

Hall also discussed the symmetry or asymmetry between encoding and decoding in encoding/decoding model and claimed that symmetry is not always present. Thus communication is not always "perfectly transparent" but should be understood as "systematically distorted" (Hall, 1980:135). This absence of transparency in communication results in a variety of interpretations. But Hall does not equate the variety of interpretations with pluralism. Drawing on Parkin (1971), Hall hypothesised three different codes which audiences use in their decoding. Hall's (1980) preferred reading theory was an early attempt at this theoretically. Stuart Hall's 3 modes of reading:

Preferred reading: viewers whose social situation especially class aligned with the dominant ideology accept the preferred meanings.

Oppositional reading: viewers whose social situation is in opposition to the dominant ideology would oppose its meanings in the text

Negotiated reading: Majority of viewers are probably situated not in positions of conformity or opposition to the dominant ideology. They conform to the text in some ways but not the

others. They accept the dominant ideology in general but modify or inflect the meanings preferred by the dominant ideology.

In his critique of the model, Fiske (1987) notes both its contribution and limitations. He says that although the model contributed in freeing the text from complete ideological closure and shifts away from the text towards the reader as the site of meaning, it was not without certain limitations. The model is criticized for its overemphasis on class and side-lining other significant social factors. Fiske proceeds by saying that the three types of reading in the model are implied to be roughly equal whereas in practice, there are very few pure dominant or oppositional readings. He concludes that television viewing is more of a process of negotiation between the text and its variously socially situated readers.

This new thinking in audience research led to "interdiscursive processes in audience reception" (Curran, 2002: 119). Building on Hall's theory, researchers like Morley came up with landmark studies that saw textual meanings in more sophisticated and complex ways and not in the way it was conceived by earlier Marxist and Neo-Marxist theories. Morley argues that "this is to propose a model of the audience, not as an atomised mass of individuals, but as a number of sub-cultural formations or groupings of 'members' who will, as members of those groups, share a cultural orientation towards decoding messages in particular ways" (1992:50). A more cautious assessment of media 'effect/ influence' followed this revision in media effects studies. Thus, we see that textual meaning is produced through an interaction between text and audience. In the encoding/decoding model, audience activity consists in an interpretive struggle between dominant-hegemonic codes of a text and audiences' own subgroup membership-determined codes

Audience Reception Studies vs. Media Imperialism

Active audience theory plays a very important role in media studies despite varying conceptions of audience reception studies. In the wake of digital satellite broadcasting and the internet enabling us to watch transnational programmes and get information from other countries, the theory of media imperialism once again comes into play. The media is thought to aid in such imperialism. There is a fear that economically powerful nations would extend their control, including cultural control, over developing and relatively powerless countries. According to this theory, the audience is once again viewed as passive victims of the media. But again the conception of the audience as passive was criticised by audience reception scholars who defended, once more, the activity of the audience. For example, audience reception studies of *Dallas*, the American soap opera which had international popularity, indicated a diversity of audience interpretations varying with social and cultural context. Such diversity is understood as a sign of activity (Liebes & Katz, 1990). A diversity of interpretations was found amongst audiences particularly between cultural and international boundaries thus pointing to a trend in active audience theory through the '80s and '90s. Liebes and Katz (1990) showed, for example, that audiences in Israel differed in their interpretations from American audiences and within Israel, different interpretations were given depending on ethnicity. These findings showed that American cultural imperialism theorists had overestimated the power of the media suggesting a monolithic interpretation of media. But it is still an open question as to whether studies such as Liebes and Katz's genuinely undermine the media imperialists. The existence of a variety of interpretations is yet to show that audiences are active enough to withstand the power of the media. Although the arguments for active audiences seem to be stronger today, scholars like Schiller (1992)

and Seaman (1992) are sceptical about the findings of reception studies. They continue to criticise active audience theory and the active-passive controversy continues.

The social determinations of meanings

Meanings are socially determined. The word 'determine' does not refer to a mechanistic cause and effect process, rather it means to delimit or set boundaries. Anyone person is subjected to a wide variety of social determinations. Therefore, people's subjectivities, their consciousness of self and their social relations although produced socially does not mean that all people are clones of each other. A theory of social determination not only leaves room for individual and other differences, but also emphasizes that the significant differences are produced socially rather than genetically. Hodge and Tripp (1986) says that non-television meanings are powerful enough to overshadow television meanings. If the TV programs fail to allow space for these non-television meanings to be generated from it, it is unlikely to be popular. There should be space for the articulation of their interests.

It is against this background of Stuart Hall's "encoding/decoding" model of communication that my research on television youth audiences in Nagaland will be premised/situated. Although Naga youth use a shared discursive assemblage, meaning is not totally determined by that shared repertoire and is not totally subject to it. Different alliances and experiences also have a bearing on meaning-making and these accounts for the variety of responses around the phenomenon of television-watching. But this is not to say that there is no structure, a determining framework of power relations within which audiences exist. This structure limits the individual meaning-making.

Studying audiences would need a negotiation that acknowledges the relative autonomy of audiences without denying the dominant position of media institutions in a national and global context and Stuart Hall's work allows such a negotiation and so would make sense in studying Naga audiences as well since they are situated in a complex situation within the national and transnational satellite television set-up. One of the key questions that this approach does not address, however, is how a marginalized audience who does not have any say in the production process deal with television images.

Research on Indian Audiences

Most of the earlier research done on Indian television was centred on education. Rehman (1979) conducted a study on the qualitative and quantitative targets set by the National Adult Education Programme in India. Specifically, suggestions were made about the thorough and extensive use of educational media to train the instructors required to run the Adult Education Programme. In a similar claim about adult education, Mathias (1975) emphasized targeting adult education through the use of satellite transmissions. In his book, Chandrasekhar (1982) suggested the use of television to increase the scope of adult education. In an appendix, the author illustrated ways in which television could be used to serve the purpose of adult education. The use of television to spread environmental education had also been the subject of research (Sarabhai, 1985). All these studies investigated the usefulness of television to spread information about environmental safety. One trend of research considered the goals and targets of educational television (Mitra, 1993). Programme variety was investigated by others like Coldevin and Amundsen (1985) who reviewed satellite communication technology in many countries. They suggested different kinds of programmes that could be implemented for transmission over distance

education systems. Singh (1984) studied the Open University System of distance education in Great Britain and suggested that a similar flexible higher education system could be adopted with the use of television networks. Some descriptive work dealt with the development and introduction of television in India's higher education system (Reddi, 1987). Sharma (1985) conducted a study on the relevance and cost-effectiveness of the use of mass media for spreading education and the dissemination of information needed to sustain growth and technological progress in developing countries.

All the way from the sixties to the late eighties, the majority of researchers attempted to measure the effects of educational television. The subject of study illustrates a training in mainstream social psychology that had dominated media research in the West-particularly in North America. This was a reductionist form of research where the endeavour was to reduce the key questions to quantifiable variables, and then study the variations in these factors, ultimately establishing causal chains. Other descriptive studies dealt with the variety of educational television in the rural sector, emphasizing the connection between educational and the rural audience.

Indian researchers drew a lot on Schramm's work (1964) who argued for the developmental effects of educational television. What went unquestioned was the role that the text of educational television would play in reshaping the popular culture of rural India and the various cultural social practices with which television would interact to reform the image of television itself and all that surrounds the medium.

All these researches were done at a time when there was one channel. Most of the existing scholarly work on Indian television has appeared relatively recently and focuses on how discourses of the Nation and issues of gender have been treated on the various channels run by the government broadcaster, Doordarshan (known commonly as DD). Some notable book length studies are Ananda Mitra's *Television and Popular Culture in India: A study of the*

Mahabharata (1993), Purnima Mankekar's Screening Culture, Viewing Politics (1999), Arvind Rajagopal's *Politics after Television (2009)*, and Maya Ranganathan & Usha M. Rodrigues's *Indian media in a globalised world* (2010).

In *Television and Popular Culture in India: A Study of the Mahabharat*, Ananda Mitra, basing his argument on a critical textual analysis of the extremely popular serial Mahabharata, describes a set of relations drawn between the narrative, its representation on state-owned Indian television, Doordarshan and its relationship with the popular culture of India. Mitra analyses the role played by Doordarshan in the production of popular culture by approaching "culture" as a set of everyday practices of a people. By portraying a specifically Hindu and Hindi image of India and in its attempt to create a pan-Indian identity, the immensely popular serial on television screened between 1987 and 1990, other regional, religious, and linguistic groups were marginalized. Mahabharata which had countless local variants was standardized and represented to show Hindus as one and to be treated thus in politics as well. Mitra discusses the effectiveness of Doordarshan in creating a national image and links it with the then political, cultural and social movements in India. Issues related to religious fundamentalism, language and gender are also focussed upon.

Mankekar (1999) presents an ethnography of television-viewing in India. Mankekar's study engages with an important moment in Indian cultural politics and media, the rise of a pro-capitalist Hindu right-wing political movement in India in the 1980s which has been widely related to the popularity of two religious serials broadcast, Ramayana and Mahabharata, on Doordarshan (Rajagopal, 2000). The period saw the rise of commercialization of state television on one hand and the rise of a politically assertive and culturally fundamentalist

middle class on the other. Mankekar's work throws light on the gendered nature of the reception of these programmes and how the reading of these texts are translated into the emerging relations of power in Indian household settings.

Mankekar by focusing on the responses of upwardly-mobile, lower-to-middle class urban women to Doordarshan's entertainment serials, demonstrates the profound role of television in shaping women's place in the family, community, and nation, and also in the repositioning of class, caste, consumption, religion, and politics. Mankekar examines how both entertainment narratives and advertisements aimed to convey certain ideas about the nation. By focusing on the recurring themes in these shows like Indian womanhood, family, community, constructions of historical memory, development, integration, and sometimes violence, Mankekar analyses both the television text and her participants' perceptions and reactions to these messages. Her ethnographic analysis brings out the complexity of these women's daily lives, social relationships, and everyday practices. Mankekar pays attention to her role as an ethnographer and to the volatile historical and political context in the midst of which these programmes' integrationalist messages are transmitted and to the cultural diversity of the viewership. While her study is set in a single-channel setting, in her epilogue, she describes the arrival of satellite television and transnational programming to India in the 1990s and raises important questions which could be taken up for further research, two of them being relevant to my own work, 'what spaces do transnational texts create for resistance, subversion or appropriation through the production of desire, fantasy and imagination?' 'Whose experiences gain centre stage in these new cultural productions? She asks these questions in the context of "culture" which continues to be an important political weapon as the culture wars within India persist, religious and regional identities are sharpened, and inequalities of caste and class are exacerbated (Mankekar, 1999: 350)

Her findings show how women selectively appropriate and contest key narratives for their own purposes, and thus subverting patriarchal and nationalist discourses in the construction of their own identities and worldviews.

In January 1987, Doordarshan, the Indian state-run television, started broadcasting Ramayana, a Hindu epic in serial form to nationwide audiences. This broadcast violated a decades-old standing on religious partisanship. This was the time of growing tension between the Hindus and the Muslims, and it contributed to the largest political campaign led by Hindu nationalists in post-independence times, around the symbol of Lord Rama, the Janmabhoomi issue. Thereafter, the face of Indian politics changed once and for all. In Politics after Television, Arvind Rajagopal analyses this extraordinary series of events. While audiences may have glued themselves onto their screens harking back to an epic golden age, Hindu nationalist leaders were embracing the prospects of neoliberalism and globalisation. Television was the platform that made it possible for these movements to come together, symbolising the new possibilities of politics, at once more inclusive and authoritarian. Alongside, the study examined how the larger historical context was woven into and changed the character of Hindu nationalism.

Research in a multi-channel setting

With a plethora of channels, television now occupies an important position within the social-cultural map of India. This is why it is important to consider television in terms of the text of television and the way in which television is read and how particular texts-educational or otherwise-become reshaped on television and reshape television itself. The practice of

watching television does not exist in vacuum. It takes place with other social, cultural and domestic activities. As the review of past research has indicated, there has not been much attempt to understand these texts' role in culture and society, especially among oppositional or marginalized groups.

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During the 1990s, the Indian mediascape went through a remarkable set of transformations as a powerful set of transnational and national forces under the twin labels of globalization and liberalization transplanted people in India from a single-network television environment to one of multichannel, 24-hour satellite broadcasting. Vamsee Juluri based his research in the context of the rapid proliferation of satellite television in India.

Vamsee Juluri's (2003) Becoming a global audience is an attempt to construct a postcolonial approach to global audiences and evaluate the rise of global television in India and the changes this rise has wrought in the television landscape. Rooted in political economy, Juluri examines concerns of cultural imperialism in relation to the actual experience of television reception in India by addressing the broader politics of globality in Indian everyday life. The rise of satellite television in India in the context of economic liberalization in 1991 has been marked by the indigenization of global music television networks like MTV and Channel V.

He argues, however, that this "Indianization" is no cause for celebration and is a new form of nationalism and one that perpetuates the status quo of the capitalist world economy. Using in-depth interviews with Indian music television viewers and theoretical approaches drawn from political-economic, cultural, and post-colonial studies, he argues instead that the reception of music count-down shows and nationalistic music videos is a 'form of self-orientalism, a process in which everything feels like it is still India, but appears as if someone else was looking at it" (2003:2).

The notion of ideological and hegemonic struggle is evident in every aspect of Indian life and culture, and television has been doggedly involved in this struggle, constantly vying to carve a position of its own within India's popular culture. It is this element of struggle that makes it all the more important to study television as a cultural formation and recognize the struggle that is continuing around the medium.

Another study on similar epistemological lines is of Sara Dickey (1993) conducted on poor, urban South Indian viewers of Tamil Cinema. Dickey illustrates the poor comprise the main audiences in class terms when it comes to Indian cinema. But she cautions that the immense popularity of cinema in the lives the poor shouldn't be seen as the exploitation of the poor by middle-class producers nor be seen as a brave symbolic resistance by customers. The poor audience instead negotiates between these two opposing forces and the identification of viewers with the familial, relational, and emotional aspects of the narratives of Tamil films is what is tapped on by the producers.

Another study in the context of satellite television is Melissa Butcher's (1999) which investigated youth audiences and images of beauty and the body on Indian television. She highlighted how television audiences are constituting a new self of being Indian through their

engagement with transnational television. Butcher's work illuminates questions regarding themes of recognition, comprehension, and pleasure and its relation to the body.

Vasudeva and Chakravarty (1989) show that the institution of "mass-communication research" in India in the 1960s was implicated in the tensions of what was then the dominant tendency in international mass-communication research - the development communication and modernization paradigm. In other words, rather than dismiss this institution as a unidirectional imposition of western thinking on the postcolonial context, it is useful to see how the "Nehruvian" era that was so fundamental in its impact on mass communication research was itself both national and international in its outlook.

While it is true that "national development" was often the unquestioned goal for the institution of mass-communication research, the assumption of modern/Western goals of modernization at the social and epistemological levels was articulated to the desire for national sovereignty; in addition, the nationalist position was also evident not in any kind of an isolationist, insular, thinking, but also situated in the context of a growing feeling of third-world anti-imperialist solidarity. (Juluri, 2005)

However, there still remains some unproductive divergence between the "traditional" or "mainstream" mass-communication research approach and the more nuanced but not always politically engaged "media studies" approaches (Sinha, 2000).

In particular, Sinha says that while the scant mainstream studies of mass communication in India may have been somewhat "factual" and "technocratic," the cultural-studies oriented media studies have been "inward looking" and unable to engage with the connections between "textually and subjectivity" on the one hand, and the broader politics of these on the other (Sinha, 2000). Sinha adds that cultural studies of media in India have been unable to grapple with the politics as effectively as they do with the nuances of meaning and

everyday life especially in the light of Indian popular culture. Following Sinha's critique, one may usefully turn to the broader "politics of location" (Juluri, 2005) in communication studies in general, and how this has a bearing on what sort of studies do get conducted. More importantly, the question of whether media studies in India has the force and potential to do justice to the importance of its object of study needs to be addressed in this context. As Sinha points out, the possibilities for Indian media studies lie not only in terms of making the right methodological decisions, but more importantly by responding and remaking media studies with a suitable "local" epistemological focus that is appropriate to the global scope of its analysis. Audience studies in India are just beginning to engage with a previously neglected area in media studies.

Juluri's work on music television audiences points out how the experience of becoming a global audience through the reception of music television in India may indicate not just the complexities of hegemony under the present moment of globalization, but also highlight some of the epistemic possibilities that may be claimed counter-hegemonically not only as "Indian" but as "global" as well. His claim that music television has come to dominate post-liberalization television in India, however, is not supported by any data.

Scholars like Juluri argue that after a brief period of largely American programming, most satellite television channels have localized extensively in India. Both MTV and Channel V, for instance, frequently claim to be more "Indian" than the other. Thus, even if satellite television is "western" at the level of ownership, it is clear as Chadha and Kavoori (2000) argue, that the bulk of popular programming in India, and much of Asia, has been localized. But a pertinent question emerges from this claim that cultural imperialism is not so relevant anymore. Is the "localization" inclusive? Or is another form of imperialism existing in the form of intra-state imperialism? Strategic localization effectively conceals the exclusion and

marginalization that accompanies participation in transnational media engagement, termed "black hole" by Castell (Castell 1996, 2000). How do we resolve the homogeneity of the symbolic representation of consumerism with the heterogeneity and diversity of regional and ethnic identities and ways of life?

Most audience studies in India have not adequately theorized these (and other) complications and inconsistencies. A shift from generalizations concerning the nature of globalization and a focus toward the close analysis of particular contexts in the cultural interchange would provide some important answers.

The first challenge to cultural imperialism came in the form of audience studies that put into question the homogenizing influences of mass produced media content. Several seminal studies from the 1980s took into account the active role of receivers in interpreting, negotiating, resisting, or even subverting the polysemic meanings of mass media presentations. The findings of these studies provided evidence that audiences in both Western and non-Western cultural contexts brought distinct patterns of interpretation and use to bear upon their interactions with Western mass media products (Ang, 1985; Lull, 1988, 1990, 1991; Liebes & Katz, 1990; Morley, 1980, 1986, 1992).

However, highlighting the active nature of audience reception does not make the issues and concerns of cultural imperialism disappear. The cultural imperialism theory still has relevance and audience studies presented with the aim to refute cultural imperialism led to fears that such research might effectively shift attention away from the structural aspects of institutional politics, media systems and their control which still are very much present in many contexts. Schiller (1991) expressed this ground when he wrote, "There is much to be said for the idea that people do not mindlessly absorb everything that passes before their eyes. Yet much of the current work on audience reception comes uncomfortably close to

being apologetics for present-day structures of cultural control" (1991:25). Theoretical polemics have too often led scholars to categorically ignore structure or processes at one level while attempting to emphasize those at another. Or they attempt to find universal patterns at the expense of investigating particularities in specific contexts. By focusing on specific cases of the interface between transnational economic or media networks and local culture, and comparing and contrasting those cases, we may more clearly understand the structural and systemic factors behind the expansion of transnational commercial media operations and the complexities and consequences of cultural interactions and responses.

What this suggests for the study of both national and transnational media is that the key aspects of investigation need to shift from concerns with such things as international media and national culture imports and exports, or the establishment of universal ways of life in the emergence of an actual global culture, to an emphasis on the ways in which corporate media products, and the social process of commercial consumerism of which they are a part, are viewed, used, engaged with, adapted, adopted, or resisted in multi-cultural contexts. It is the system of neoliberal capitalism itself, dependent upon imagined myths of the market as panacea, and dreams of future acquisition, upward social mobility and cultural and personal autonomy, that is spreading inevitably, though unevenly, to affect people to varying degrees in nearly every part of the planet.

But it is not necessarily the spread of culture in any traditional sense. It is only the spread of commercialization, of both the logic of the market, and the aspirations of a life based on consumerism.

Ethnic Minority Audience Research

Audience studies that have emerged in India since the advent of satellite television in the 1990s have taken mostly an institutional, political-economy, policy-oriented and textual-analysis approach. Research on marginal and nonmetropolitan contexts has been minimal. Empirical audience research should be taken up to supplement textual media analyses. The importance of audience studies derives from the objective to include "other" voices in the discourse. It will unravel the role media play in bringing audiences into a condition of hegemony at the transnational, national and subnational levels.

Research concerning ethnic minorities has focussed mostly on content analysis of the portrayal of the ethnic minorities in both print and electronic media. One of the gaps in audience studies is the lack of information about media perception or evaluation of the media of ethnic audiences themselves: what they themselves might think, want, or say about media representations, the media's involvement in their everyday lives, or their media hopes for the future. Studies that cater to audience responses within ethnic minority communities is under-researched (Ross, 2001). In India, it is a rarity. I use the term 'ethnicity' for the purpose of my study to mean 'cultural and religious difference and kinship (see Hall, 2000; Mulholland and Dyson, 2001.)

By outlining the experiences and interpretations of audiences, the diversity of lived experiences will come alive. In attending to the meanings produced by social subjects and to the daily activities they perform, I have sought to explain those significances and practices by locating Naga audience in relation to broader frameworks of interpretation and to structures of power, inequality and Indo-Naga political issue. The study employing ethnographic methodology explores to answer the question of how the complex, hybrid identity of media consumers negotiate their various identity loyalties by situating the audience within a socio-

politico-cultural framework. A lot of resourcefulness and insightfulness can come from the margins. Gunaratnam makes a compelling case for the importance of post-structuralist epistemologies (or theories of knowledge) in making sense of the lived experiences of minority subjects. She argues that:

> To fail to recognize the contingency and the ambivalent complexity of lived experience maintains an essentialist view of 'race' and ethnicity, where experience can be seen to be wholly (pre)determined by racial and ethnic categories, that are themselves construed as unchanging 'essences', cordoned off from social, material and emotional relations (Gunaratnam, 2003:6).

Implicit in the above statement is to see an approach to qualitative research on 'race' and ethnicity in which the subjectivity of those from 'minority' groups is seen as an integral part of 'race relations', and which, if ignored and left un-interrogated, could threaten social order and cohesion. In this approach, the traditional, scientific model of research, based upon distant observation and the classification of 'race' through the visible (physical features), is displaced by an approach that is concerned with the relations between 'race', subjectivity and proximity in research. There is a concern with getting close to what minoritized people think and feel, and with discovering the links between thought and action/behaviour. The role of research on ethnic minorities in such a context then becomes to develop strategies, methods and practices that can gain access to the experiences and the opinions and attitudes of those in minoritized groups.

Research conducted throughout different European countries comprising of diverse ethnic communities has shown that there is a general feeling of dissatisfaction among ethnic minority groups about the media portrayal of minorities (Ross, 2001; Halloran, 1998; Gillespie, 1995). There is a predominant feeling of exclusion and non-, under- or mis-representation. They also hold the belief that the media portrayal of them influence other's

prejudices and negative attitudes towards them. Moreover, dominant cultures use the media to project and defend images of themselves as competent, unblemished, and so on, often implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) at the expense of ethnic minorities (Ross, 2000).

Talking of the Northeastern region in India, Hasan (2004) points out that the region and its communities are invisible on screen:

> Reflective and detailed reportage of the region's everyday is glaringly absent on the channels that 'matter'. One of the reasons for this glaring absence is that the cities and towns of the region do not come under TRP (Television Rating Points) towns. Audiences therefore are numerically insignificant against the mass viewership in major Indian cities to which sponsorship is wedded. In such a scenario, audiences in the region take what they get even as they become invisible in the images they consume. (Hasan, 204:127)

What does the audience have to say about such sweeping statements? Do they take what they get? Do they have an alternative? The audience would be the best judge. They would illuminate how they respond to, use and deploy media within their everyday lives, cultures and identity. And thus one cannot deny the importance of this field of investigation in this changing environment. More so, the continuing Indo-Naga political imbroglio and the enormity of the human consequences- both historical and contemporary- that ideas of nationalism and sub-nationalism, have played and continue to play, in structures of inequality and in the political mobilization of cultural differences and identities makes it urgent to investigate this area of study. This system of power and domination find expression in the production and circulation of popular cultural imagery and artistic forms (Said, 1978) and are intertwined with systems of cultural representation. Audience studies help to highlight the subtle discriminatory and divisive meanings embedded within and reproduced through the narratives and images of media representations. Although my investigation will not exhaust the complexities of the interactions between ethnic minorities and the media, it would

contribute to the understanding of different subjectivities of media audiences in different contexts and expose and challenge the subtleties of misrepresentation (racism/ exclusion) wherever it is found.

Both the UK and the US have established research traditions in media research, and both have generated considerable research in the field of ethnic minorities and the media, but in India, this is a fledging area.

Issues of inclusion and exclusion in the media need to be problematized. Once institutionalised and taken for granted, the lines harden into exclusionary barriers legitimized by cultural beliefs, ideologies and representations. In such scenarios, the marginalized and the excluded can become ontologically disenfranchised from humanity, misrecognized as "Other", exploited, oppressed and in very extreme cases, vulnerable to systematic, lethal violence. The mainstream media while publicly committing to the ideals and practices of an inclusive multi-ethnic, multicultural society all too often produce disarming examples of xenophobic reporting and racist portrayals. Contradiction and complexity characterize the media today. Audience studies with an ethnographic research design can delve into the complexities of minority interpretative processes and situated media appropriation and use.

Studies by scholars such as Ross and Hasan, reveal collective minority dissatisfaction and frustration with the media's inability to provide representations that portray their communities and cultures, their difficulties and diversity, in ways that are thought to be valid or fair. Opportunity to see themselves, in all their diversity, portrayed credibly on that most powerful of media – television, is a sentiment that spans across different communities after all. Case studies are important to grasp the complex link between understanding and collectivity. The role of media in a society cannot be contested and it should help to construct a multi-ethnic 'public sphere' (Husband, 2005). Husband argues for a policy of

differentiated citizenship rights that acknowledges the distinctive histories and contemporary experiences of various ethnic groups and proceeds to develop a case for a further human right, a communication right – 'the right to be understood'. This right, he contends, must be enacted in and through a multi-ethnic media public sphere.

Chapter Four

Mainstream Indian Media and Nagas: Representation and negotiation.

Introduction

Indian media have seen a striking transformation since the economic liberalization of 1990s. However, the relationship between Indian media and its more than 100 ethnic minority groups is under-researched. Indo- Naga political imbroglio which is one of Asia's oldest unresolved issues has been dragging on for decades touching all aspects of the society- political, social, and economic. In a politically sensitive region where issues of identity are at the forefront, how do the youth reconcile their culture and what is represented on Television? This chapter addresses this question and by providing a historical context of the Indo-Naga political situation examines the reaction or the testimonies of the Nagas to the portrayals on Indian mainstream media. By examining how audiences negotiate with media content, we can better understand the degree to which Indian media depicts or disregards complexity in its representations of the Nagas and the meanings audience make out of these representations. Instead of taking for granted the theories constructed by the state and the media, which project hegemonic narratives, a critical understanding of audience perspectives, without falling into the trap of 'cultural populism' (McGuigan, 1992)[8], can yield significant insights. A cursory look at the emergence of a unified Naga identity in opposition to India in the early 20th century to date will help us in establishing the intricate relationship that this issue has on the engagement of Naga youth with television and how the two cannot be understood in isolation.

[8] McGuigan defines Cultural Populism as "the intellectual assumption, made by some students of popular culture, that the symbolic experiences and practices of ordinary people are more important analytically and politically that Culture with a capital C" (1992: 4).

Historical context of Naga political issue

The Naga political issue predates Indian Independence and it is today considered to be the longest unresolved political conflict in Asia. Commenting on the Naga political issue which has been able to sustain its movement for so many decades unlike the ones in other Northeastern region, Phanjoubam (2015) says that the vital difference between the Naga movement and the others in states like Manipur, Mizoram, Assam and others is because the latter was more of a periphery striking back but in the case of the Naga, it launched itself on the grounds that they saw themselves as fundamentally different from 'mainlanders'. The Naga rebellion unlike the other similar insurrections spawned in the region, in the decades after Indian independence, cannot be, for this reason, just a question of the periphery striking back and instead, is more like the periphery seeing itself as fundamentally different. (ibid.) Because of the ceasefire, conflict is in abeyance but the undercurrents of antagonism are far from resolved.

During British rule in India, the tribal areas were declared as 'excluded', 'partially excluded' and 'un-administered'. In the case of the Naga Hills, it became a separate district under the Raj in 1881, and from 1935 to 1947, they were administered as an "excluded area". After India gained independence from the British in 1947 and in the wake of the partition of the British India into India and Pakistan, the Indian nationalist elite, took over political power from the colonisers. The post-colonial Indian state as part of its mission to build a strong and stable sought to integrate even the backward tribal communities living in the so-called 'excluded', 'partially excluded' areas of British India into the Indian Union. The 'unadministered' areas were also not left out in the process.

'Many Nagas, Mizos, and Manipuris, and even Assamese, do not consider themselves Indians, and it is necessary to understand why they feel that way' (Lintner, 2015: 3). When the Simon Commission visited India in 1929, the Naga Club[9] submitted a memorandum to the Commission expressing their desire for self-rule and not to be included in the Indian Union. The Nagas believed that the Indian state would be adversarial to the social values, customs, values, identities and the indigenous political structure of Naga society and so wanted to have a self-governing state[10] separate from the Indian state. Since then, by invoking the right to self-determination on the basis of their 'unique' history and 'distinct' ethnic identity, the Nagas have been resisting the idea of the Indian state and thus providing a counter narrative. This resistance continues to this day although there have been changes in the self-determination discourse. The ongoing Indo-Naga political issue is one of the world's longest-running ethnic insurgencies causing heavy casualties on both sides for decades (Lintner, 2015)

Prior to India's independence on 15 August 1947, the Nagas also declared their independence on 14 August 1947 from the British (Iralu, 2014). Comprising 16, 527 square kilometres, Nagaland was annexed to the Indian Union on 1 December 1963 and accounts for 0.17 percent of India's total population. With the redrawing of the map, Nagas were scattered in the states of Assam, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and neighbouring country, Myanmar. The demand for unification of all the Naga-inhabited areas under a single administered state, either 'autonomous or independent' is the bone of contention in the Northeast of India (Choube 1985: 163 cited in Ranganathan and Rodrigues, 2010). The Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagalim Isak-Muivah or NSCN-IM is at the forefront of

[9] During World War I, about 4, 000 Nagas were sent to France by the British. In their contact with the outside world, the Nagas became aware of their own ethnic, linguistic, social, and cultural uniqueness. On returning, they formed the Naga Club in 1918 at Kohima.

[10] The term 'state' has been used in a generic sense and also to mean a constituent province of the Indian federation. The Constitution of 1950 describes India as a 'Union of States'.

demanding Greater Nagaland based on the claim that the Nagas were, prior to the annexation of India, a territory under British governance. The demand for a union of all the Naga inhabited areas surrounding the present State of Nagaland under the Indian Union, has largely been ignored by the powers that be as well as the mainstream media (Bezboruah 2006: 91; Hazarika 2006: 357). Statehood within the framework of India's Constitution has been unacceptable to the leaders and the founding fathers of the NSCN-IM, Thuengaling Muivah and Isak Chishi Swu. It is argued by many researches that the Naga middle class drew inspiration from the colonial theories that asserted that the tribals of Northeast India were racially, linguistically, culturally, politically, and economically distinct from the Indians (Pandey, 2011). The Naga nationalists initially wanted the issue to be settled in a democratic and peaceful way but with the increase in the state's recourse to coercion and repression where destruction of homes and lives were carried out under the sanction, protection and legal immunity of Acts and Regulations like The Assam maintenance of Public Order Act, 1953; The Assam Disturbed Area Act, 1953; and The Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958, the Nagas gradually took to arms to fight and resist the state machinery.

The Indian political leaders were convinced that the Naga revolt would be contained by counterinsurgency strategy and that the Nagas would accept India's sovereignty in due course of time like it happened to other communities in the Northeast region. But it was not to be. The Naga struggle raged for decades thus forcing the Indian government to adopt a major policy-shift towards the Naga movement in 1990s and made several attempts to negotiate peace with the insurgent groups. It negotiated cease-fire agreements with Isak-Muivah (IM) faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (NSCN-IM) in the year 1997 and later with Khaplang faction of NSCN (NSCN-K) in 2001.

At the time of writing this dissertation, a framework agreement (peace accord) was signed between the Centre and the NSCN-IM (National Socialist Council of Nagaland- Isak-Muivah) on August 3. Much has changed in the Naga nationalist demand since the 1951 Naga referendum where 99% of the Nagas voted against being part of the Indian Union and establish a separate independent state (Yonuo, 1974: 202). Of late, although contents of the framework agreement has not been divulged, there is speculation that the demand for a sovereign Naga nation appears to have narrowed down to the demand of an autonomous, unified homeland within the republic of India. In early 2016, newspapers were rife with speculations that the Nagas would be granted a separate passport and national flag but the speculation was laid to rest when the Government responded by saying there was no such formal declaration by the centre. (Baruah, 2016; Kohima, The Northeast Today [11]). Also there are worries among the Naga civil society if the pact will include all components of public or be the agenda of just a few people at the helm and if such an agreement can bring lasting and enduring peace.

With Indo-Naga political conflict which is one of Asia's oldest unresolved issues dragging on for decades, the youth in Nagaland are at a crossroad negotiating two identities- one of being a Naga and the other, being an Indian. Against the backdrop of the long standing Indo-Naga political imbroglio, issues of representation of ethnic minorities on mainstream Indian media and the ways in which Naga youth negotiate and contest these representations form the next section.

[11] http://thenortheasttoday.com/landmark-move-goi-approves-separate-passport-and-flag-for-nagas/

Media representation and audience resistance

The role of the mass media in the society is debatable. Politics of images are a site of contestation and struggle since communication is linked with power. 'Representation' is a complex concept but for the purpose of the research, I restrict to the standard meaning of 'representation'. Representation means that something is/was already there or present and through the media, that something is re-presented (Hall, 1977). In other words, representation means standing in for something. The other idea of representation is whether the depiction of something is acceptable to the society that is represented.

There is a gap of communication between the shared meanings of the Nagas (explained in the following section) and how it is being represented by the media and it is this gap that the chapter attempts to address. While it is argued in many studies that adopts the interpretative paradigm that there is no fixed meaning of anything in the first place, I shall not get into that discourse because there are some agreed upon codes of the Nagas and which the Naga society prefers to accept as the true or preferred meaning; otherwise, there would be no framework of collective intelligibility to make meaning out of anything. These shared codes and concepts which are arrived at through a 'process of naturalizing a subset of differences' are internalised and mobilized by the members of the society to articulate group identity (Appadurai, 1996: 15). What are the shared conceptual maps of the Nagas? It is difficult to map what constitutes Naga culture but the categories that were once fluid and negotiable have been crystallized to become Naga culture. Drawing from different Naga scholars, I attempt to give a workable understanding of what Naga culture is although it is not an objective and standardized definition since there are always shifts in culture and their meanings over time. The Naga collective identity includes both material and immaterial ideas and values: a past that has often been painted by the British officers and administrators as

proud warriors and headhunters, of their feasts of merit and their cycles of rituals, autonomous village republics in the past, familiar origin and migration myths. Many scholars who have embarked on research on the Nagas make it a point to mention that there are so many Naga tribes and each tribe's language is intelligible to each other and so there cannot be a common Naga identity because of this linguistic diversity. Responding to this, Abraham Lotha maintains that underneath the diversity of different tribes, there are underlying cultural essentials that unite the Nagas as one people (Lotha, 2013).

Jacobs (1990) points out that the Nagas' belief in fertility "is a central element in the cosmology which unites the diverse Naga communities" (1990: 117). Jacobs also points out other markers such as ornaments, cloth designs, and symbols that are commonly shared by all the tribes. When it comes to the socio-political and cultural aspects, Ao (2005) draws out many factors that are common to the Nagas such as feelings of Nagaism, village democratic principles, and self-rule village administration (pp. 24-30). Sema (1992) and Venuh (2004, 2005) delineates the uniqueness of Naga polity as different from Indian polity and the role colonization played in restructuring it to its current form. The traditional Naga polity was village-centric and the system of administration varied from village to village and was either autocratic or democratic in nature. Giving an account of Naga polity, Elwin wrote, "Each village amongst the Ao (Nagas) is a small republic…it would be hard to find anywhere else more thoroughly democratic communities" (1969:324). This form of governance is claimed to be one of the basis on which Naga nationalists organised themselves to their right to self-determination as a people.

Chasie (2005) lays out five values to which Nagas "owe our very souls". According to him, the words, *kenyu* (taboo), *mhoso* (integrity, honour), *menga* (shame), *terhomia* (supernatural), *peyu*

(wisdom)[12] are values which shape the psyche of all the Nagas (2005: 121-123). Other markers are clan system, *morung*[13], headhunting, Feast of Merit, Naga nationalism. All of these markers have been mobilized by the Naga nationalists and this consciousness of a people as a nation was concretized by the formation of the Naga Club in 1918, the memorandum to the Simon Commission in 1929, the declaration of Naga Independence on August 14, 1947, the refusal to join the Indian Union in 1950, and the Plebiscite on May 16, 1951, and the boycotting of Indian elections in 1952.

Also the spread and the embracing of Christianity has been instrumental in the creation of a joint, pan-tribal Naga identity. Tales of migration, myths of origin and memories have also contributed in the cultural construction of nationalism.

All of the above ethno-historical and socio-cultural reasons are invoked by Nagas to augment the argument that the Nagas belong to one society. Although there is a sheer range of differences and variations in the social and cultural fabric of the Nagas, Hodson (1911:19) warns that it should not permit us to lose sight of the 'essential unities underlying this wealth of variety'. Kaiser (2007) marvels that for all the formal diversity, the textiles made by various Naga groups; the wood carvings on house entrances and particularly on the *morungs*; and the songs are all highly developed art form specific to the Nagas and can be immediately recognizable as 'Naga' (p. 235). These cultural categories and criteria assigned both from within and without are now being consciously mobilized for identity politics, an 'us' and 'them' identity claims. This categorization is termed as 'instrumental conception of ethnicity'

[12] All these local words are in Angami language. Angamis are one of the Naga tribes. In Nagaland, the name of the tribe and the language spoken by the people belonging to that tribe bear the same name. In the last couple of decades, an effort has been made to develop a standardized Angami language along with a few other languages collectively called Tenyidie.

[13] Morung was a dormitory for the young people in the Naga traditional society. It was a tradition for all the boys after attaining puberty to live in the Morung for a certain period of time to learn the skills and crafts of community life. It was called by different names in different tribes and the customs varied from tribe to tribe and within the tribe, different villages had their own variations.

(Appadurai, 1996:14) as opposed to the primordial idea of ethnic identity. Overtime, this instrumentation becomes so concretized that it slides into a primordial form and occasionally spills into xenophobia and all kinds of ethnic conflicts. Naga nationalism has been drawing on these differences and struggling for stronger recognition from the nation-state and to achieve its goal of pan-Naga identity that transcends existing nation-states. Thus, the form of Naga identity that has been formed is of an ethnic and national character. This type of collective identity is best described by Weber as: "Human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or of both, or because of similarities of physical type or of customs or of both, or because of memories of colonization or migration" (Weber, 1997: 38).

Nagas as a people has been written about by colonial administrators and ethnographers in the form of military reports, description of cultural practices and monographs and these writings have informed scholars, administrators, missionaries and the public. With the coming of electronic media, Nagas as a people and their way of life got circulated through images. Images are powerful and they have a lasting impression on people's minds. Although media is not the only means by which meaning is circulated in the society, it is one of the most powerful platforms of circulation of meanings; more so in our media-saturated world. The circulation of meanings almost immediately brings forth the question of power: 'who has the power in what channels to circulate which meaning to who?' (Hall, 2005)[14]. Power can never be subtracted from the question of representation. From the analysis of responses of the participants, it is felt that Nagas as a group of people like many other minority groups are misrepresented, underrepresented or are glaringly absent from the media. The

[14] Transcript of a lecture titled "Representation and the Media" delivered by Stuart Hall and reproduced by Media Education Foundation in 2005 for educational and non-profit use by the public.

representation is mostly misinformed and selective. The coverage of the *Dimapur lynching*[15] in the mainstream media is one clear example of the media representing and reinforcing the stereotypes of the Nagas as "savages" like it was rampant in the anthropological writings during the colonial times.

British writings on Nagas by military personnel, administrators, anthropologists and missionaries, mostly portrayed them as exotic, wild, savage, ignorant, stubborn and hostile to British interest. Lotha (2007) places the development of Naga ethnography under Administrative (1878-1947). Some monographs include T.C. Hodson's *Naga Tribes of Manipur* (1911), J.P. Mills's *The Lotha Nagas* (1922), *The Ao Nagas* (1926c), and *The Rengma Nagas* (1937); J.H. Hutton's *The Angami Nagas* (1921a), and *The Sema Nagas* (1921b), Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf's *The Naked Nagas* (1939); Henry Balfour's manuscript *Diary of a tour in the Naga Hills* (1922-23).

For the purpose of providing a representation work of the colonial era on the Nagas, I will cite a few examples from the chronicles that typified and stereotyped the Nagas according to their worldview. In one of his writings, Haimendorf writes that "I would soon be among real 'savages'" (Haimendorf, 1939:2). It is also said of the Nagas that "war is normal; peace is abnormal" (Mills, 1988: 71). Another English officer wrote, "They are the wildest and most barbarous of hill tribes, and looked upon with dread and horror by neighbours of the plains who consider them as ruthless robbers and murderers" (McCosh 1837: 136). Since the Nagas had no written history, this kind of writing by 'others' set the tone for the historical identity of the Nagas and irrespective of their reliability or not, post-colonial writings about the Nagas have been replicated, after the colonial writers had left, both by the Naga and non-Naga scholars. Terms like "headhunters" have become synonymous with the Nagas and due

[15] On March 5, 2015, a man accused of raping a college student, was lynched to death in public view by a mob in Dimapur. Media carried a lot of reports and analysis on the incident. The incident was reported by media from multi-perspective angles ranging from politics, nationality, framing etc.

to a lack of work revising this kind of exaggerated representation, the colonial portrayal is being sustained to describe the contemporary Nagas. These writings by both colonial and post-colonial writers have shaped the understanding of the Nagas and the labels hold to this day.

No critical questioning is conducted on the colonial writings and it is only recently that critics have started to question the methodologies, point out the biases in the construction and reclaim Naga identity by demythologizing colonial portraits about the Nagas. A Naga scholar in attempting to revise the descriptive Euro-American writings especially on the oft-used description of Nagas as 'headhunters' says that "by using appalling and malevolent terminology, this cultural trait of the past was misrepresented and given a dreadful meaning which efficaciously stereotyped the colonized as more barbaric and violent than they actually were" (Thong, 2012: 385). Although a few corrective work has begun in the study on the Nagas, not much headway has been achieved and the trend of stereotyping the Nagas as though they were frozen in time based on the earlier writings abound both in print and electronic media.

Stereotype fixes the meanings that are given to groups. It is a form of colonialism. When we look at the representation of the Nagas on mainstream media, stereotypes are aplenty as we shall see in later sections. These stereotypical representations flame ethnic consciousness and in the process nationalistic aspirations only intensify. "Nagas by blood", a slogan which have been raised time and again in Nagaland where ideas of collective identity based on shared claims to blood, soil, memory and now religion, gets ignited. And the idea of Naganess as a unique, homogenous form of cultural difference gets further entrenched and the stakes associated with such identities become enormously high.

Communication is always linked with power to those groups who wield power in a society. Instead of just accepting representation of images at face-value, it is important to interrogate the representation and doing that unravels a lot of complex issues of power. When we are immersed in a flood of images, we might just come to accept them as part of the natural world. Television becomes like an extension of the human consciousness (McLuhan, 1964) and we don't question the extension but if we step outside of it, then it is made up of a complex web of many factors, power being one of them. When certain ideological assumptions begin to saturate everyday discourse, they become common sense and the status quo prevails. We need to critically examine these images and the ideologies behind their portrayals and representation.

As Hall (1977) explains, representation starts right from the encoding process, when it is being produced and unless the encoders/ producers have a deep knowledge of the social, cultural, political, religious worldviews and background of a particular group of people, then the gap between the encoded and decoded meaning will never be bridged and stereotypes will only be reinforced. Several textual and discourse analysis of minority representation on television (Sen, 2011; Mehta, 2008, Basnett, 2010) have argued that mainstream Indian television portray and position the minorities stereotypically and negatively. These studies have found a pattern of bias in the representation of ethnic minorities. The biases are evident in the lack of background information and broad generalizations, negative stereotyping, ignoring historical context, and so on. To challenge this, these gaps will have to be contested, interrogated, debated and discussed.

Although meaning is contextual and shifts and is not fixed, identity constructions are extremely difficult to be wiped out once carved and often gets etched in the imaginations of the viewer and the everyday is viewed from the lens of the media constructions in reality as

well, thereby, fixing meanings. This fixation of meanings closes, naturalizes and hides the complex processes of representations. And it is ideology that is deeply implicated in those various processes. The construction is taking place outside of the dialogical spaces inhabited by the Nagas. The limited images of the Nagas effect how others perceive the Nagas in the real world and often it can have ominous implications. And in a profit-oriented market, the denaturalizing process will hardly be done by the producers to whom TRP (Television rating point) matters the most and Nagaland does not even come under the TRP towns.

A sense of being fairly represented and portrayed in the media may lead to minorities feeling a sense of belonging and inclusion. Along this line, Husband (2000), emphasizes the role of the media in creating a multi-ethnic public sphere, where diverse groups can feel they are making a contribution.

For more than four decades, the relation between the media and ethnic minorities, and the role of the media in a multicultural society have become areas of interests for academics, media producers and policy makers. The representation of ethnic minorities in the media, how they use media, and their degree of participation in media production, are all deemed to be indicators of social participation and integration. Media can play an important role in creating a feeling of 'belonging', a feeling of being included, of being part of society.

Political interests, powerlessness, situational/ contextual disconnect (one-sided communication)

The relationship of the mass media to power in society; how control is exercised over the media; and the nature of the power exerted by the media are recurring themes in many academic studies (Curran, 2002). Media owners can manipulate content and reproduce the

relations of the dominant class. The dominant class maintains its power through control of ideas and culture. Although there are a number of channels to choose from, certain groups of people don't feel a sense of belonging and don't enjoy greater freedom of choice. One of the reasons why Indian television does not represent Northeast could be because the cities and towns of the region do not come under TRP (Television Rating Points) sample towns. Audiences therefore are numerically insignificant against the huge viewership in major Indian cities to which sponsorship is wedded (Hasan, 2004). In such a setting, audiences in such places receive what they get even if they themselves are not visible in the images they consume. Television fails to reflect India's cultural diversity as an interviewee succinctly points out,

> ...in a place like Tuensang where we don't have access to such, you know, options, television becomes the only option and so it's a very dicey position but we're left with no option, so you know some of the debates which are happening on the television, on issues, and you really don't have a choice because they decide what themes to be because every channel has their own interest, they also have their own political leanings... (Personal interview, Tuensang).

The issue is not just one of non-representation but also about the cultural disconnect one feels because of different cultural, religious backgrounds and these further increases the feeling of alienation.

> But then the whole concept of honour killing is not explained through the media; it's only when you go to people, speak to them and they tell you the context of the Northern India where honour killings are very common thing, right across India, Northern India, even up to Pakistan and things like that...(Talwar case) (Personal interview)

With no context provided which is endemic to most television programming, audiences are left to their own devices to 'rewrite' the stories. The quote above also points to a reciprocal

stereotyping of the 'other'. With no cultural proximity and the media lacking contextual information of an event/ phenomenon, the stereotyping on both sides is perpetuated.

Stereotyping and its ills

Media is a teacher in many ways. How media inform, entertain and create publics has been described as a process of cultivation by George Gerbner (1969, 1976). Cultivation theory came out of several large-scale research projects in the 1960s that concerned with effects of television programming with a special focus on violent programming on the attitudes and behaviours of the American public. The cultivation theory posits that television viewing can have long-term effects upon the audience and change their attitudes. It assumes that over a considerable period of time, particular symbols, messages and meanings on television become dominant and are taken in as the truth. The effects are small, gradual and indirect but nonetheless are cumulative and significant. According to the theory, the frequency of viewing also has a bearing on the subsequent influences. It also says that these attitudes are already present in our society and the media take cues from them and package and re-present them to their audiences. By doing so, television and media maintain the dominant ideologies and do not challenge it.

Violence and insurgency in the Northeast figure predominantly on mainstream Indian media and these frequent portrayals gets absorbed in the minds of the viewers. Visual media serves an impetus to people's perceptions leading people outside the region to write off Northeast as a violent and unsafe region. This selective, singular portrayal has sometimes threatening implications for minority and other ethnic groups. Stereotyping can have serious ramifications to a people because it has the potential to colonize the mind (Fanon, 1963). According to Fanon, colonizing of the mind is "the emptying of the native's brain of all form

and content", which "by a kind of perverted logic…turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it" (p. 210). Following in the footsteps of the Euro-American colonial writers, the Nagas have also self-primitivized themselves and there is an abundance of such self-primitivization in both secular and ecclesiastic writings thus sustaining and perpetuating the colonial depiction. As the quote below show, perceptions of minorities, other ethnic groups and societal groups, such as women, gays, and the elderly are largely formed from media. The media also serves an educational platform for people who have little or no direct contact with members of the groups being treated.

> I was studying in Bihar in 2005 and that time I came to know that many people don't know who the Nagas are. When I go out, people would shout out 'Nepali, Nepali' to them maybe because of the similarity in appearance. When I tell them that I am a Naga, they would ask me, "yein naga kya hai?"[16] They don't know us because of no exposure and so they don't come here and show us on TV and so it's the responsibility of the politicians to see to it that people know Nagaland…We are all Indians although we have different religions, customs and culture. After staying in Bihar, I don't want to be an Indian honestly because they consider themselves superior and they don't like us and for this reason, I left my studies and returned back. They don't value and regard us in that part of India and with no offense to them, I just don't want to be an Indian. Even in the classroom, however well we perform, they don't appreciate us and it's always their own that they favour. And so it'll be good if we become a separate state. (FGD, Gabriel Ministry, Tuensang)

The influence media has on the public image of minorities is one of the many complex features of the unhealthy relationship between minorities and the media. In interactions with the others who have no first-hand experience of a particular minority community, members of that community recognize the media's power to influence others' perception.

Northeast figuring on mainstream media is of relatively recent vintage and to some extent have received a long overdue media presence. While these breakthroughs are certainly

[16] What is this thing called Naga?

welcome, crucial issues of portrayal and participation remain to be resolved. Boxed in by stereotypes, the depictions of the Nagas have been questionable in nature. Talking about the development of different art forms in India and the same being denied to the Naga people and their culture because of retrospect representation, an interviewee retorts:

> Why should we be represented and reflected as museum pieces, naked people for all times to come. If you talk about the dances of India, you talk about Kathakali, you talk about kathak or Bharatnatyam, you talk about anything under the sun in the Indian dances, do you think that the Indian civilization just came about in that form? No. Over the years, it evolved and as it evolved, it changed. And as it changed it became more refined. (Personal interview, Kohima)

The philosopher, Charles Taylor, held the view that identity and recognition are related. To quote him:

> Our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the *mis*recognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being (1994: 25).

Stereotypes assigned to a people can have serious ramifications reducing people to mere artefacts and such fixities in representations can have subtle and lasting manifestations in the minds of the people which are not easily removable. The implicit attitudes cultivated out of negative portrayals of a people can sometimes turn into explicit attitudes and deep-seated emotional antipathies toward minority groups (Gawronski and Bodenhausen, 2006).

The projection of the Nagas as "savages", "uncivilised" in many anthropological writings (discussed earlier) during the colonial times is reinforced again, but this time in the post-colonial writings using the same framework.

> I was not happy with the Last Man Standing on the Semas because it only showed the barbaric side of my people and we were shown as people cutting heads 50-60 years back. They just stayed in one village among the thousands of villages and only the primitive aspect was shown. (FGD, YouthNet, Kohima)

> Media really influences others, they change the mind-set. So, instead of showing all the conflicts, the happenings that are going in Nagaland, those anti-social things, it's just 10%-20% of the happenings and the media projects just this. And what about the 70-80%. So, if they project all those things, the culture, cuisine, attires, lifestyle, tourism, they can display all those things though media, then I believe, you know, that will really change the mind-set of others also. (FGD, Alder College, Kohima)

People in different regions have different versions of the single Naga story received from popular culture and this is a reinforcement of colonial anthropological writings. Anthropological accounts by the west began the tradition of telling Naga stories in the west, for the west, a tradition of narrativizing Nagaland as a place of negatives. And many people have bought those stories and it continues in the independent, post-colonial times as well. Then it was about power, and today too, it is about power. Single stories create stereotypes and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are not true but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story. As such, this is one kind of colonialism as Thong aptly remarks, "Colonialism, whether past or present, thrives on inventing mythological narratives and stereotypical images of the colonized" (Thong, 2013: 389).

In a recent development, responding to the high incidents of discrimination against the people from Northeast especially in the capital city, Delhi, the government has finally stepped in to curb the stereotyping and name-calling "chinki". The Ministry of Home Affairs passed a circular asking the states and Union Territories to book people calling "chinki" to people from the Northeast. The offenders would also be required to serve a term of 5 year.

This intervention by the government has caught the attention of many and whether the enforcement of such laws will change the mind-set is being debated.

A forgotten frontier

The stereotypes are reinforced even in the 21st century. In all these years of conflict, allegations of neglect and deaths due to the violence, media representations revealed a range of attitudes toward the Northeast and Nagaland. From the extreme indifference of the mainstream media which makes this region invisible to the world, to the extreme bias of the regional media, which supports resistance movements, and to journalists being killed, the Northeast has witnessed various swings of the media's attention. In all these, one overriding sentiment remains that of neglect of the region by the mainstream media. It's is absent in the Indian consciousness. It is an accepted framework in media coverage and does not raise eyebrows. The skewed coverage has become part and parcel of mainstream Indian media.

Many youngsters in this study felt that Northeast is treated more like a colony and not as one of the other states of independent India, with its own issues, identities, and cultures. So deep-rooted is this split that news reports from the region that find space in mainstream media almost appear like concessions or charity being doled out to the region and its people. This creates a feeling of frustration in most viewers as is expressed by this respondent,

> People don't recognize us and we have no option but to watch foreign channels. We don't like watching Indian channels because most of the programmes are in Hindi. (FGD, Purple hearts, Tuensang)

When Northeasterners are seen in the media, more often than not, it's around sports, entertainment or crime, which feeds into the time-honoured tradition of negative stereotypes.

> As far as the projection is concerned, it is mostly Hindu-centric. I don't watch TV much but whenever I watch, I always see the Tikka serials, you know the ones which are Hindu-centric because the Indian culture revolves around religion and as far as north-east is concerned, our projection is only when there is war and when there is anything negative, the positive side of our culture is not projected on the national TV channels. (FGD, YouthNet, Kohima)

What we see here is a deep feeling of dissatisfaction among ethnic minority groups about the media portrayal of them and reaction to the biased nature of television programming. Television privileges a particular cultural community and the smaller ones remain invisible in the bargain. These expressions point to notions of exclusion and non- or misrepresentation. Having the feeling of being given a fair share of treatment reflecting the ground reality without prejudices or at least having the feeling of being represented, helps to create a sense of belonging, or what Tufte (2001) and Appadurai (1996) calls 'locality', feeling at home somewhere.

Many of the participants were of the opinion that a lack of knowledge about Naga culture is one of the main reasons behind the prejudices that the Nagas encounter and to curb that mainstream Indian television should include multicultural programmes so that people from other regions can be informed about Naga culture and this will help in dispelling misconceptions of the Naga way of life and their culture.

> People have got all kinds of wrong idea about the Nagas and their culture and tradition. They think Nagas are headhunters...Some even fear to visit Nagaland because of all these ideas. Programmes should not just focus on our past and the insurgency but also how we live everyday. There is so much to say about our culture (FGD, Yimchunger Group, Kuthur Village).

Harping on the past history of the Nagas as headhunters is a common theme in most of the documentaries on Nagaland screened on both national and international channels and this was resented by many of the participants. A complex practice by the Nagas like headhunting in the past is still portrayed and narrated in such a way as though it still were the order of the day. They feel the need for other aspects of the Nagas to be represented and not the same stereotypes being portrayed time and again. The participants reiterated that the region becomes visible only when there is conflict and the region becomes a spectacle and a theatre of conflict for viewers from other regions.

This feeling of exclusion and invisibility only strengthens their sense of alienation from the mainstream and further diminishes an sense of belonging. The absence of Naga characters in fiction series, soaps, talk-shows, game-shows, or other entertainment genres shows the neglect meted out to smaller audiences in the fringes of the nation-state and little effort is being made to show the multi-cultural, pluralism of the nation and cater to the diversity of the audience. The media tries to homogenize diversity, and diversity within and between the numerous different ethnic communities is ignored.

Memory in the public sphere

> We should not forget our culture, we should listen to stories from our grandparents and keep on rewinding them. It is our duty to pass on these stories to the next generation. (FGD, Gabriel Ministry, Tuensang)

Memory, although connected to the past, is not static and is closely linked to the present and the future. We remember in order to give meaning to the present and thus gain power over the future. All of us are formed as human persons by what we have experienced including

sufferings that we have borne. Victims often remember in a way that nurses resentment even hatred and stirs up deep longings for revenge. As Hodgkin & Radstone (2003) notes, the focus of contestation, then, is very often not conflicting accounts of what actually happened in the past so much as the question of who or what is entitled to speak for that past in the present. It becomes a matter of representation – rather than finding out about the truth – which memories should be publicly represented and in which form and whose voice will be heard (Friedman, 1992). It is a question of power- who is able to lead the public discourse and decides which memories to ban and which to promote.

In the case of the Nagas, since they don't figure in the nation building process of Indian history, with its cultural nationalism and strident majoritarianism slant, be it written or visual, the handing over of memories happens in the form of orality from one generation to the other. "For every narrative depends on the suppression and repression of contrary, disruptive memories – other people's memories of the same events, as well as the unacceptable ghosts of our own pasts" (Hall, 1998). This silence which is the accompaniment of memory is brought out in the responses of the Naga audience when one respondent justifies her 'otherness' in relation to an Indian. A public sphere that disregards history, however bitter, and silences it brings out a verbal discourse like the voice below, a memory besides the official memory discourse,

> It was just our parents who have been so oppressed by the Indians and it's just one generation down and for them Indians signify oppression and then the hatred is just there and so we've been handed down that feeling. Anything to do with the Indian way, we dislike it and we do not want any part of it. And that's why mentally we're more open to others than Indians. (FGD, Alder College, Kohima)

Belonging to a tribe in Nagaland where her grandparents' village was razed to ashes by the Indian army, she has a vivid memory of the incident narrated to her by her parents and the

memory has become part of her. Such historical accounts, as we see in the quote above, is not experienced by the speaker, but has been told by older people, and it is remembered and retold as if the speaker has witnessed the events herself. Those events of the past become permanent collective memory. Jacob Climo calls this phenomenon vicarious memory, 'a memory that an individual holds with great personal and emotional commitment yet it is a memory of an event or experience that the individual has not experienced directly' (Climo, 2002: 118). This implies that events, which were significant for a society, can be incorporated into personal memory although they have not been experienced personally. This phenomenal transfer takes place across generations among the Nagas and is experienced emotionally and ideationally by the next generation and the next and it goes on. Hodgkin et al. (2003) argue that memory, although often perceived as very personal, always has to be seen in its wider cultural context and that it draws on larger cultural narratives. That memory construct their collective identity of the contemporary Nagas can be further illustrated by the following comment,

> I have many Indian friends and we get along well but I don't feel Indian. When I remember that my mom's brother, a respectable man in the village, looked up to by all had to kneel down and made to do humiliating things in public makes me angry…that scene comes to me again and again and really disturbs me. (FGD, Yimchunger group, Tuensang)

Such intergenerational bitter memories are what often fuel long-standing conflict as families and communities pass on stories of suffering to future generations. Individuals and entire communities can become so obsessed with their memories of wrong inflicted on them that they even define themselves in terms of victimhood and they become paralyzed by the past. Appadurai's (1996) explanation for inter-ethnic violence is national implosion, not irreconcilable primordialist differences. He says that ethnic violence is the product of a

collective strategy of solidarity in a desperate attempt to find security. This solidarity of a people is more to secure an identity being informed by a political history and not quite an enclosed and static nature of ethnic groups. How should memory be dealt with of a group who has experienced violence and conflict for a long time?

Often times it is not the deep knowledge of history that leads to victimhood but rather a serious lack of historical knowledge, an inability to recall and understand how the historical record has played out. Merely affirmative action like reservations for SCs and STs is not enough if it is not accompanied by economic investment into those regions. And even more important is to live in a society where history is truthfully engaged and not stifled. If not then, strongly worded accounts like the one below which keep on appearing in local newspapers coupled with memories of the past handed down from one generation to the next will only entrench the hostility deeper. And this would mean denying the youth of a dialogical space where the past events can be approached reasonably.

> Indian politicians and generals can go on fooling the Indian public with this theory and that theory, but please know this, that neither we Nagas, nor the rest of the world, are ignorant of world history and geography to believe the Indian political lie that Nagas are Indians and Nagaland is Indian Territory. (Iralu, 2015)

Cultural imperialism, intra-imperialism and infra-politics (hidden transcripts)

Of the various notions about imperialism circulating today, the dominant view is that it does not exist. It might not be recognized as a legitimate concept, but it exists in subtle forms not only between nations but within the nation itself.

In the 1970s, development and modernity theories moved on to 'cultural imperialism' caused by the 'transfer' of western values to traditional local cultures. This concept is still very much applicable in Nagaland where the youth is caught between globalisation and tradition. Although people's everyday experiences are 'local', these experiences are increasingly shaped by global processes particularly through mass media. An interviewee sums it up well when he says that,

> We have a very rich culture. We have different languages, costumes, folk songs, folk dances. But if we look at the present scenario, there is a lot of western influence. It looks as if the modern generation is responsible for the loss of tradition. They don't know their folk songs, their origin stories and that special bond of love is also not there. (Personal interview, Mokokchung)

Barker argues that 'television programmes are not simple reflections of the world but specific constructions of it and thus represent forms of knowledge about the world' (Barker 1997: 12). This idea was reflected in many responses when they expressed their displeasure at the representation of the Nagas on Indian mainstream media. A respondent opines,

> National channels don't really cover Northeast or for that matter Nagaland well. We only get snippets like 'NSCN's Muivah has come', 'He has gone'. Interestingly, it's channels like BBC which carries the Naga issue. Infact, when they cover even the Naga issue, they actually visit the NSCN's camp in Nagaland and not just report from there….I remember seeing very solid work on Naga history and things like that…as for the national channels, they only show the mainland culture and I think they are influencing us more because of this one-way exchange…their culture reaches us and the reverse is hardly there…that's the saddest thing. (Personal interview, Tuensang).

His views suggest that a form of internal imperialism exists in India where only the dominant culture is passed off as the national culture and lives and people in the fringes does not interest the television producers at the centre. Some perceive 'globalisation as an opportunity for change, while others see it as having fractious effect on local cultures by creating new

global communities with common interests' (French and Richards in Held 2000: 10). The extract conveys a sense in an increasingly global world, whichever part of the world we live in, our everyday lives are shaped by decisions and events over which we have little control. There is no denying that Naga society is changing politically, socially and culturally and 'media is but a sub-net in this process' (Giddens 2002: 10). However, as French and Richards notes, there also is a fear among the Nagas that their culture is on the verge of extinction because of all the global cultural forces and this was expressed by many of the research participants.

Developments in systems of communication in the late 1960s have contributed in ushering in the process of globalisation and the arrival of satellite communications has modernised the world and effected a break with the past. Besides providing instantaneous news and information, it has transformed the very texture of the lives of both the poor and the rich. Globalisation takes place on multiple political, economic and cultural levels. It involves a complex set of processes. It takes away power from local communities and brings about an increased awareness of particularism, thus reviving indigenous cultural aspirations. Instantaneous global financial markets and global political networks are also some of the key dimension in globalisation.

In a globalised world, companies that aim to go global with their products try to understand the local cultural pulse of the people. In the case of television corporations seeking global markets, they adopt strategies to tailor their products to cater to niche audiences and this is carried out by employing local producers or dubbing or sub-titling the programmes in local languages. Today, the global network of media corporations is a vast and complex body comprising of numerous players. While local and regional players actively import and re-appropriate foreign products and formats, the transnational media corporations actively

pursue their local partners to localise the products according to the audience. As is typical of other industries, globalization and diversification happen simultaneously and the two processes are intertwined (Arsenault and Castells, 2008).

When we look at Nagaland, we see that the youth are fast catching up with globalisation but at the same time, we also see that there is a nostalgic revival of ethnic identities which is manifested in various Naga discourses. This resurgence might not lead to an epochal change as is assumed by many media imperialism and cultural synchronisation theories but we definitely cannot dismiss the sway media imperialism has as well. Although many channels are creating more regionally or locally adapted versions in the form of dubbing its messages to local needs and culture; an example in India being the bilingual idiosyncrasies of MTV (Pavarala, 1999), this trend doesn't take into account the numerous languages and dialects of the ethnic communities and so such approaches still remain foreign to them in the same country.

So, what does the growth in the television industry in India vis-a-vis globalisation mean for smaller communities like The Nagas?

The very fear that Indian leaders harboured after freedom in 1947 that new mass communication media (radio and television), if they become private would encourage advertising and consumerism thus leading to cultural imperialism by raising people's needs for foreign products, both cultural and material products, (Mitra, 1986) has in a way come true among the Naga youth. When asked if they watched DD which is the only platform where local content is available, the youth responded that it was boring and lacked high quality information and entertainment programmes. Because of unavailability of other Naga channels, there is a lack of competition on the software front. In a crowded market scenario where television networks look for niche markets, it requires that they produce local

programmes in local languages by local talent that cater to local audiences in a multi-lingual, multi-ethnic country. Why then is Nagaland left out?

The monopolistic Doordarshan failed to represent the multi-lingual and multi-religious character of the nation, struggling against being fitted into one straightjacket. From Doordarshan's 'dull' and 'boring' (Gupta, 1998) programming due to its stifling control by the Information and Broadcasting Ministry, the bureaucratic managerial structure and lack of competition to the multi-channel media environment where most of the foreign media has changed localising their programmes, nothing much has happened in Nagaland when it comes to Television. A. Lassa (2010), Additional Director General, Field Publicity, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, while highlighting the problems faced by DDK Kohima, lamented that 95% of the people of Nagaland were deprived of direct access to various local programmes and news being telecast due to non-availability of transmissions.

For cultures like Naga society where the ethno-linguistic cultural identity is more important than the national one, it becomes difficult to expect allegiance to the nation overnight because the allegiance even among the Nagas for all the talk about 'Naga identity' still lies with the tribe, village and clan. In Northeastast, Kohima and Itanagar are the only two states without satellite unlinking facility and so the people cannot view DDK Kohima terrestrial broadcast since many of the houses have only Direct-To-Home (DTH) subscription.

The myth of "cultural backwardness" assumption where the Third World peoples were talked about as culturally retarded in their attitudes, customs, and technical abilities goes back to centuries of colonization and is reinforced today. Without romanticizing indigenous societies, we can say that they were culturally or socially no less inferior.

Instead of questioning the colonial disjuncture where mosaic cultures were made into monolithic culture, the decolonized nation is doing the same thing internally, attempting at

ideological coherence. If, therefore, a communicator is to be understood by the audience, s/he will have to start by employing definers of broader frames of reference and then proceed to demonstrate a concern for the characteristics that define narrower frames of reference such as the personal interests and needs of the receivers. Often, the communicators designate their own frame of reference, thus mechanizing communication. In the process, a monologue and not dialogue define communication.

The need for a shared public culture

From the responses of the research participants, there arises a need for visibility, for a shared public culture where there can be free and democratic exchange of culture without one culture dominating the other. To elaborate on this, a theme that emanated from the discussions with the research participants and my own stance to reach for some solution to address these serious issues with justice as the framework, I thought it necessary to engage with some political philosophers. These philosophers have worked on this idea of multi-culturalism and the need for 'enlarged mentality', ideas that are important for understanding this human condition- the need to participate and to be treated as equals. A multi-cultural society like any other society needs a broadly shared public culture to sustain it. But this shared culture can only grow out of the vigorous interaction of majority and minority cultures and not by their relative isolation. If we continue to think of cultures as unchanging, self-enclosed monads, then the idea of a multi-culturally constituted shared culture may seem incoherent. But a moment's reflection will remind us that this is what indeed happens on a regular basis in our daily interactions with each other in local neighbourhoods that are not ethnically segregated.

Negotiation and dialogical approach

Which are the differences that are reconcilable are questions that strike at the very heart of politics in a pluralistic society.

In the conventional liberal model of political life, cultural and religious identities and vocabularies are at best seen as irrelevant and at worst they are hostile to a well-functioning democratic society. The political task is then narrowed down to the process of abstracting a set of formal rules or procedures from the comprehension or thick worldviews and moral vocabularies of the various communities that make up the polity. Citizenship thus becomes the primary modern identity. There are other thinkers in recent years, however, who pointed out that the two fundamental human needs for freedom and for belonging are not in necessary contradiction. There is no true freedom without belonging and there is no true belonging without freedom.

We as human species are culturally mediated and we are humans in different ways, neither wholly alike nor wholly different. Our similarities and our differences are both important and dialectically related. If nature is moulded by culture, it is also resistant to it. If culture transgresses nature, it is a project to which nature sets rigorous limits. We are neither disembodied, arbitrary self-creators nor are we mere products of our environment. When we think of culture, it is important to know that all cultural boundaries are fuzzy, they are porous, they are dynamic, they are internally differentiated, and they change through interaction with others.

Now we should respect all cultures in the sense that we respect the men and women whose culture it is and we defend their right of access to it. We can also endorse what the philosopher Charles Taylor has argued that all cultures are entitled as a starting hypothesis to what he calls the 'presumption of equal worth' (Taylor, 1994:72). He writes all human

cultures that have energised whole societies over a significant period of time have something vital to say to all human beings. But as Taylor himself notes this does not mean that we should never critique all cultures including our own if after a sensitive and sympathetic engagement with it, we conclude that they embody and perpetuate views of God or of human beings or of the non-human world and so on which are deeply flawed. However, such a critique would be more effective if it could resonate with some neglected aspect in the worldview of the history of that culture.

The original inspiration for change arises from triggers in the wider social and cultural landscape, the way that the critique is grounded and articulated should as far as possible be from within. (Yoshimi, 2004).

While toleration is an important political value, it is equally important to understand that cultural or ethnic groups do not interact with each other on a level-playing field. However well-intentioned, purely anthropological approaches to culture hide from view the actual political, historical and economic conditions within which groups define their identities or have identities ascribed to them or even imposed on them by dominant others. So, the achievement of civic rights goes only half-way.

Difference alone does not lead to violent conflict. Ethnic conflicts are not the result of ancient hatred or unbridgeable cultural differences. It is when differences are used to claim superiority over others and to justify political or economic discrimination against others that the fires of violence and conflict are lit. The government should be able to articulate and promote an inclusive national narrative that would give people of all linguistic, cultural and religious identities a sense that they belong as equal citizens of the country.

From the discussions of the television programmes with the participants in my study, we see that the polysemy of the original text and the 'tertiary text' of the local culture allow the

development and elaboration of meanings which serve the viewers' purposes regardless of the producers' preferred readings. Whether we wish to celebrate these differing interpretations as examples of semiotic guerrilla resistance (Certeau, 1984) or not, they do question the gloomy assumptions of cultural theorists from the Frankfurt school to Baudrillard rendering them unjustified and untenable. What follows is that the meanings of a TV programme are not fixed and simply cannot be read off the 'text'. But they also suggest that the process of meaning generation is not totally open-ended and one can trace similar patterns of meanings amongst viewers who are within the same social group thus leading to the concept of an interpretive community (Radway, 1984).

A continually contested but coherent public culture is possible, one that grows out of the conversation between different cultures and does not replace them but respects their diversity while at the same time providing a shared vocabulary of common interests. Such a broad-based, deliberative public culture is more likely to enable different individuals and communities to identify with the political community and to encourage democratic participation by all than the mere invocation of civic nationalism or "constitutional patriotism" (Habermas, 1996). The meaning of political values such as justice, equality, liberty and so on should always be negotiable and new conceptual languages develop through critical dialogue across the whole spectrum of society. This could lead to a richer public culture that is less polarised, less confrontational. Not all will approve of it entirely but all will find some aspects that they recognize as their own and will give it more allegiance than to a public realm that is dominated by a single hegemonic discourse.

No country can be united in terms of its legal and political institutions alone because these institutions are embedded in and nurtured by the wider societal culture. The constitution regulates political community, does not create it. In talking about the hegemonic power of

the Indian state with regard to smaller section of the population, Dolly Kikon asks, 'Why does a multicultural democracy like India lack a framework to tackle demands of ethnic groups and nationalist movements, other than a coercive one?' (Kikon, 2005:2836). The resolution to such conflicts could begin when both sides negotiate from a position of equals and an end of largely viewing dissent as a sign of subversion and anti-antinationalism.

Enlarged mentalities

All cultural groups in a pluralistic society whether they be considered religious or secular must challenge its members to be self-critical to develop what Hanna Arendt called 'enlarged mentalities', so that while not called upon to surrender the core conviction that they may hold, they must still be called to practise an empathetic appreciation of other viewpoints. Whether groups can nurture such sensibilities in their members is a good test of their contribution to public life and to the common good.

Societies in South and South-east Asia have been home to countless ethnic, religious and tribal communities, many of which were only united into modern nation states by colonial administrations. In other words, the creation of a nation-state as diverse as India was not based upon voluntary or forced immigration. The communities lived as self-governing communities until required to unite under colonial administrations. This is the case of many post-colonial nation states. Latent inequalities undergird Indian society. The argument for inclusivity should not focus only on diversity for better interaction but to address historical pervasive racism and inequality. Discarding historical inequality and focussing only on diversity would yield nothing substantial except to further the interest of the dominant groups more.

Drawing from four Arendtian themes – plurality, the public realm, power and perspective appreciation- I argue for "politics of enlarged mentality" as a solution to issues of minority representation in the media. This term suggests an alternative conception of citizenship that surpasses the limits of both the liberal and civic republican traditions. This is a politics based on enlarged mentality combining context sensitivity with principled judgements. This would take the debate to a new plane. Most of the national rhetoric are not hospitable to the rights of the minorities.

Plurality

Arendt views the realm of action most political because it is most about human interactions and communication with others. Arendt gives a privileged position to plurality which she says "is the condition of action, is specifically the condition- not only the condition sine qua non, but the condition per quam-of all political life"(1958: 7).

According to Arendt, human beings have the capacity and desire to act in ways that go beyond the labour of *animal laborans* and the work of *homo faber*. Beyond satisfying the necessities of life (which allow us to live at all) and fabricating worldliness (which provides material structures in which to live), human beings need to disclose their unique distinctness through action and speech (so that we might live as citizens). Human beings show their uniqueness through speech and action; it is the presence of others- rather than things- that defines this aspect of the human condition.

Action is always interaction. The presence of others and the ability of all to interrelate create the need for a public realm. And the reason for interacting is that we differ from each other. This human condition of plurality concerns "living as a distinct and unique being among equals" (1958:178). Arendt develops a conception of equality that does not mean sameness.

While trying to avoid pitfalls of locality which tends to become xenophobia, it is important to recognize that subjectivities and particularities cannot be ignored.

The public realm

Arendt describes the public realm as "the space of appearance in the widest sense of the word, namely, the space where I appear to others as others appear to me, where men exist not merely like other living or inanimate things but make their appearance explicitly"(Arendt 1958: 198-99). The public realm springs naturally out of the human capacity to gather together for the purpose of acting. Thus we see that if the activity is arrested, then the particularity disappears. For Arendt, a "life without speech and without action…is literally dead to the world" (1958:198). Denied this space of appearance, the reality of one's self, of one's identity cannot be established. For Arendt, identity is not about sameness. In her view, sameness is anti-political. But our political world using self-righteous rhetoric of preserving cultural identity insists in many ways that difference is anti-political. In the Arendtian public realm, citizens are equal without having to be the same. Thus equality and diversity can co-exist when political action rests on plurality: "the attempt to do away with this plurality is always tantamount to the abolition of the public realm itself" (1958: 220). It is in the public realm that issues, however controversial, should be debated. In a personal conversation in with one of the participants, talking about justice and equality, he had this to say:

> The elite of the mainland when they hear about the Naga or north-east people, all of a sudden, the first thought that comes to their mind consciously or sub-consciously is that 'those backward people, we feel sorry for them', they don't remember that we are equally human beings like them. And so we feel alienated. The moment a person understands the meaning of what it means to be human and that a beggar on the streets of Delhi is equal to the richest man in Delhi, then this thing can be sorted out. (in a personal conversation with one member of YouthNet group)

It is precisely these kinds of questions that need addressing in public spaces. From that genuine engagement with the other proceeds peace and prosperity, freedom and security, sought otherwise through false priorities. This public realm should be one of inclusion and trust. The only way to banish distrust, insecurity, feelings of alienation is through genuine dialogue. This kind of representation can be brought about not just by juridical and informational processes and structures only, although these are important, but also by an attitudinal change.

Importance of Perspective appreciation

It involves cultivating the ability of citizens who interact in a public realm to take on the perspectives of others, on the way to determining what could be in the interest of all members of a democratic polity. Arendt calls this process of attaining contextual judgements "representational thought." One of the reasons why so much miscommunication takes place in a pluralistic society is because principled judgements lack context-sensitivity resulting in abstract justice or formulaic thinking. Attempts to devise common measurement or denominator (1958: 57) in a multi-ethnic and pluralistic society are doomed to fail because of the simultaneous presence of innumerable perspectives and aspects.

Responses of many point to the desire of wanting to be seen and heard by others without changing their identity. In the process of appreciating perspectives, there can be a shift in perspectives towards a substantive good rather than the mere preservation of rules to protect each individual's account of what their own good might be. This relational dimension in Arendt's political thought is not clearly visible in the liberal view, however much each conception claims to value a plurality of views. Thus, it is plurality, which, properly understood, gives rise to the public realm and which in turn preserves plurality. Plurality and

public realm are co-dependent. Another important purpose that the public realm has is *power creation.* This is best achieved through perspective taking.

Certain phenomena or situations defy measurement and cannot be reduced to any formula. In such situations, it is necessary to consider the variety of perspectives that create a particular situation as it occurs in the public realm.

Kant has also something similar what he calls "Taste as a kind of *sensus Communis*". Here he defines a person of "enlarged mind" as one who can shift "his ground to the standpoint of others."

> By the name *sensus communis* is to be understood the idea of a public sense, i.e. a critical faculty which in its reflective act takes account (a priori) of the mode of representation of everyone else, in order, as it were, to weigh its judgement with the collective reason of mankind, and thereby avoid the illusion arising from subjective and personal conditions which could readily be taken for objective, an illusion that would exert a prejudicial influence upon its judgement. This is accomplished by weighing the judgement, not so much with actual, as rather with the merely possible, judgement of others, and by putting ourselves in the position of everyone else, as the result of a mere abstraction from the limitations which continentally affect our own estimate. (Kant, 1991)

From Kant's statement above, we can infer that it is empathy that lies at the heart of any genuine dialogue, absent of which no understanding can take place. Thus empathy entails "to think for oneself, to think from the standpoint of everyone else: always to think consistently" (Kant 1991: 152). To accommodate another person's perspective would require detaching oneself from the subjective personal conditions of his judgement, which cramps the minds of so many others, and reflect upon his own judgement from a *universal standpoint* (Kant 1991: 153). It involves not just thinking beyond a politics of self-interest but shifting of one's ground. Otherwise, everyone's self-interest would be preserved and no common ground would ever be achieved. Liberation from excessive self-interest is necessary if any of us is to

successfully represent to ourselves the standpoint of others. To achieve 'enlarged mentality', the actual presence of others and considered attention to particularity is indispensable.

A participatory public sphere requires not only more engaged reflection but also a willingness to listen to others. In talking about the dissatisfaction expressed by the audience that Nagaland is poorly represented, Arendt's ideas about enlarged mentality proves helpful. Her ideas are sensitive to the integrity of contextual particulars. She emphasized as important that, through an enlarged mentality perspective, "a particular issue is forced out into the open that it may show itself from all sides, in every possible perspective, until it is flooded and made transparent by the full light of human comprehension" (Arendt 1958: 242). For Arendt, "to think with an enlarged mentality means that one trains one's imagination to go visiting" (Arendt 1982: 43). In an enlarged mentality perspective, the particulars are given importance before arriving at a general standpoint. The final conclusion that is arrived by considering different viewpoints is more likely to be a more valid representative thinking and less likely to suffer from intractable partiality. This is not to lose sight of oneself as some would fear but to release ourselves from the limits of self-interest and to appreciate the positions of others more. For Arendt, representative thinking encourages shifting ground to others without necessarily assuming conformity to other perspectives. It is not just swapping views because that would mean exchanging prejudices and thus continuing them: it means to come up with a new perspective or to produce a generalized view. This generalization or universalism should be 'interactive' and not 'substitutionalist' as the distinction is brought out by Benhabib (1996) invoking Hegel.

National TV programmes lean towards a substitutionalist universalism where experiences of a specific group of subjects (the majoritarian) are projected as the paradigmatic case of the whole human. When such universalism becomes the norm, then feelings of alienation by the

other groups whose experiences are different intensifies and identification with that historically favoured social group's political identity is not achieved. Much of the dissatisfaction among the audiences arises because not all members have these ethnic, genders, age and socio-economic traits or the privileges. To simply substitute the self-identifications of this dominant group for those of groups that are struggling for greater public recognition misses the significance of understanding concrete differences in the first place. Paying attention to such differences provides a relevant beginning point for moving toward what could become a more genuine universalism, an 'interactive' universalism which is a more concrete and actualized version of universalism.

Here we see an extension of a sphere that is culturally favoured to spheres or people who are struggling for concrete recognition. The people cannot get the head or tail of the narrative because the universalism is substituting and not interactive. The interactive approach redefines universalism by not abstracting differences between social groups. Doing that would divert attention from the concrete distinctions that need to be recognized. The socioeconomic, gender, cultural and historical differences must be considered to make citizenship substantively meaningful for all. This creates a sense of belonging, a feeling that one is not just a part in it but of the institution. Simply granting entry into the public domain without a simultaneous acknowledgement of their historical experiences and cultural identity would be to miss the point of an actual inclusion. To confer an identity which does not belong to the minorities would not provide a long-term solution to issues of identity. The concrete dimensions will have to be taken seriously and institutional practices renegotiated. Unlike substitutionalist universalism, an interactive approach proceeds more from the ground up, and does not deny our embodies and embedded identity, but aims at developing moral attitudes and encouraging political transformations that can yield a point of view acceptable to all. Universality is not the ideal consensus of fictitiously defined selves, but the

concrete process in politics and morals of the struggle of concrete, embodied selves (Benhabib, 1992). While recognizing concrete social differences, Benhabib argues that it is both necessary and desirable not to abandon universals because interactive universalism bases its moral claims on a commonality among all members of society, while acknowledging unique situations of each social group. To "yield a point of view acceptable to all" is challenging and cannot occur through substitutional extensions and naive formalism. It demands a more socially responsible process that brings the virtues of understanding and caring that we prize in our more intimate relations into our social relations as public citizens. Without shifting our ground, voices go unheard and needs are ignored. A politics of enlarged mentality recognizes that the other is also worthy of respect and dignity without having to leave the particularity behind. In a democracy, all experiences, needs and perspectives should have a voice and respected. Young (1995) maintains that "the only way to have all group experience and social perspectives voiced, heard, and taken account of is to have them specifically represented in the public" (p. 190). She goes on further to say that, "a democratic public, however that is constituted, should provide mechanisms for the effective representation and recognition of the distinct voices and perspectives of those of its constituent groups that are oppressed or disadvantaged within it" (1995:188-89). For this to be realized, Young advocates that institutional mechanisms be set up so that "decision-makers are obliged to show that they have taken these perspectives into consideration". This proposal for group representation finds its parallel in Kant's requirement that shifting one's ground to others' is necessary for sound public judgements. It also bears similarity in Arendt's understanding of representative thought, and in Benhabib's interactive approach to universals. Thus a 'heterogeneous public can be developed. But how can we be sure that this claim for recognition is just and not a mere expression of self-interest as is mostly the case these days? Young (1995) answers this by suggesting that the test is best made when

"persons making it must confront the opinion of others who have explicitly different, though not necessarily conflicting, experiences, priorities, and needs. (p. 191). Group representation ensures that social embeddedness and historical reality are neither trivialized nor repressed, but drawn out and engaged. Engaging with the particularized others is a strength not a weakness. This is more than tolerance that liberal ideas espouse. This is respect and care, an engagement that will counter narrow and intolerant versions of nationalism and citizenship.

Having looked at the perception of the Naga audience about the representation of the Nagas on mainstream Indian Television, their non-identification with mainstream Indian channels ,the non-availability of production facilities and also looking at the issues from a political philosophical viewpoint, we now need to examine the alternative media that the youth engage with. The next chapter deals with Korean popular culture and its readily availability and popularity among the Naga youth.

Chapter 5

Naga youth engagement with Korean popular culture: An alternative avenue.

Introduction

Since the late 2000s, Korean satellite channel (Arirang), music and movies have been having a sway among the Nagas, what is popularly termed as 'Korean wave' or 'Hallyu' (Chinese) or Kanryu/Hanryu (Japanese) (Mori, 2008). The popularity has led to the youth interspersing their everyday conversations with a few Korean words like *Sarang hae* (I love you), *Oppa* (elder brother), *anna saiyo* (hello); interest in learning the Korean language; formation of fan clubs; experimenting with Korean cuisines; adopting Korean fashion etc. Dramas like Winter Sonata (Gyeoul yeonga), Kwak Jae-yong's My Sassy Girl (Yeopgijeogin geunyeo), The Classic (Keulraesik), Jewel in the palace (daejanggeum), Stairway to Heaven (Cheon-guk eui Gyedan) line up CD rental stores in places like Kohima.

It is generally agreed upon that the Korean Wave, a phenomenon describing the popularity of Korean popular culture overseas, had its genesis with the broadcast of *What is Love all about? (Sarangi muogillae)* in China (Shim, 2008). Thus, the term Hallyu-Korean wave was coined by the Chinese media in 2001 to describe the rapid rise in popularity of Korean popular culture (Korean Culture and Information, 2011) to other countries though mass media. The popular culture includes Korean television dramas, movies, pop music, fashion, internet games etc. The phenomenon emerged as part of President's Kim Dae Jung's administration's policy to overcome the financial crisis affecting the Asian continent in 1997.The government's goal was to restructure the Korean industry and turn it into a product for export, not just for domestic consumption. Along with the 'hardware' industry which Korea was already famous for, it made its foray into 'software' expansion and has

never looked back since. The exports were facilitated by international market conditions, the liberalisation of economy of many South-east Asian countries. Ever since its emergence, the 'Korean Wave' as it is commonly called, has been transcending regional boundaries and has found worldwide reception. Korean wave is now an instrument for mobilizing cultural sentiments in the service of transnational spectacles and commoditization (Appadurai, 1996). Driven by the phenomenal success of its cultural products in different parts of the world, the government included 'cultural technology'[17] as one of the six key technologies along with IT (Information Technology and BT (Bio Technology) to propel the Korean economy in the 21st century and pledged to invest an enormous amount of finance and extend the necessary administrative support to domestic cultural industries. (Huat & Iwabuchi, 2008).

Cho hae-Joang (2005) places the responses and arguments surrounding the Korean Wave under three broad categories. She terms the first as the 'cultural nationalist perspective', which proposed different reasons for the spread of Korean pop culture vis-à-vis American or Japanese cultural products, including Korea's embrace of Confucian family values or the presence of anti-Japanese sentiment in the rest of Asia. The second one, the 'neoliberal perspective' focused on the mass-market appeal of Korean pop culture, and the development of new markets and distribution networks in the Asian region. The final one, the 'postcolonial perspective' was taken up primarily by cultural researchers interested in modernisation and global shifts, and among other issues considered the building of an 'Asian cultural bloc'.

As many studies show, there is no uniformity in the engagement of different audiences in different countries with the wave. Reasons for its popularity have been varied across places.

[17] The technologies that produce television drama, film, pop music, computer games, animation, etc. (Shim, 2008: 28)

This chapter explores the engagement of Naga youth with Korean media and discusses the reasons behind its popularity. It will attempt to address the question, "How does an audience watch/ read a transnational media product?" The chapter points out the main characteristic features of watching Korean dramas and the nationalistic views expressed in the responses.

This chapter also explores another dimension about the mode of engagement of the youth with Korean media - the ways in which Naga youth, denied time and space by the mainstream media in India, have found in Korean media an alternative way to engage themselves. It also examines the complex process of reception of Korean media by the Nagas to re-negotiate the broader terrains of modernity, identity and national culture. The reception process also illuminates the political tensions between the centre and periphery and reflects the political status and identity of the Naga vis-a-vis the mainstream Indian identity. The tension between Naga nationalistic sentiments and de-indianization comes out in this transnational media engagement. This sub-culture cannot properly be decoded and understood without invoking the Indo-Naga issue which has been explained in the previous chapter. Although technically and constitutionally, Nagas are also Indians, the respondents used 'Indian' to refer to the non-Nagas, the 'mainstream' Indians of Dravido-Aryan origin. In Nagaland, the people falling in this category are called "plain ma"[18]. The mention of the term "Indian" when they refer to people from other parts of India can be interpreted as distinguishing themselves from India and asserting their Naga identity by constructing the 'other'.

By integrating and embedding the present viewing preferences into the wider past history and future implications of a nation would tease out the importance of such practices which otherwise would be dismissed as mundane and irrelevant.

[18] This is a vague term and is used even for people from North-eastern region like the Assamese.

In this chapter, I will examine the role of Korean media as an alternative source for the Naga audiences in their construction of cultural identity and as a mode of resistance to the dominant media. In the process, issues of Naga identity and difference as opposed to the monolithic national narrative will also be explored.

Because of the complex nature of reception of media texts, my attempt is a multi-layered analysis of Naga youth's engagement with cultural products from overseas, focussing on its popularity, meaning-creation, and negotiation, against the larger context of Indo-Naga political issues and an 'imagined' pan-Asian cultural identity. There are various reasons for the popularity of Korean cultural and media products among the youth and the prominent ones are described in this following section.

Reasons for its popularity

A lot of studies have tried to explain why Korean media became very popular in many parts of the world. Different studies came up with different theories to explain its popularity – cultural proximity/ affinity, Confucianism, de-westernization, alternative cultural imperialism, and a pan-Asia solidarity/ community. In the Naga context, the reason for the popularity of the Korean Wave does not fit neatly into any of these categories. It has elements of some of them but not entirely. The narrative structure, the visual styles, scenic and beautiful environments, fashion, physicality of the actors, modernity with elements of tradition, love stories and human aspects, etc., are the various aspects that contribute to its appeal. The upward mobility and aspirations of the Naga youth, caught between tradition and modernity, find expression in these Korean films. In contrast, the power struggles and complicated plots of Hindi serials were not appealing to the audience. The main argument that stands out for the success of K-Pop in Nagaland was its cultural affinity. Confucianism which was

supposed to be the connecting thread for its popularity in other Asian settings as explained in many studies (Yoo & Lee 2001: Yang 2006) does not apply to a place like Nagaland where majority of the people are Christians. It was the physical resemblances and the family values that were most cited by the respondents for the appeal of Korean media. The communitarian aspect argued for by many researches to consolidate the Asian community also is a simplistic argument because its appeal is only in certain pockets and not universal.

Cultural similarities (proximity):

Cultural similarities came up again and again in the responses where respect for elders, strong family ties, was the point of attraction. Food was another point that was mentioned. Naga cuisines include a lot of fermented food items like *axone* (fermented soya beans), *baasdenga* (fermented bamboo shoot) and fermented dry fish. Nagas have a penchant for fermented food and the youth found similarities with Korean cuisines. Korean food like *kimchi* (fermented spicy cabbage preparation) became quite popular during the heydays of Korean wave in Nagaland. People started to experiment and savour Korean cuisines like k*imchi* because of the similarities in the cuisines. Gauging the popularity of some Korean cuisines among the Nagas, a delegation from The Korean Culinary Arts & Science High School, Seoul, South Korea visited Mount Mary Higher Secondary School in Chumukedima, Dimapur in January, 2016[19]. The main objective behind the visit was to establish a culinary school in Nagaland. While a food and cultural exchange programme was organized with the students and faculty of Mount Mary Higher Secondary School (MHSS), Chumukidema, Dimapur, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between the two schools for setting up a culinary school. While a cultural traditional performance was displayed by the students of MHSS for the Korean delegation, the students from Korea prepared Korean

[19] Morungexpress.com/mmhss-host-korean-school-on-exchange-prog/.

dishes for the hosts. This choice of a school and students for food and cultural exchange and later on to sign an MoU is to tap into the Naga youth's affinity for Korean popular culture.

Figure 3: Students and faculty of Korea Culinary Arts and Sciences High School and MHSS (Chumukedima, Dimapur) (Image courtesy: Morung Express)

None of the research participants talked about the stereotypes of foreigners in Korean dramas although Korean dramas are well-known for its stereotypical representation of the Chinese and Japanese. These stereotypes have been highlighted in studies among the Japanese and Chinese. But in the case of the Naga audiences, this never came up. This overlooking of stereotypes which came out so strongly in their narration about their representation on mainstream Indian media also cannot be ignored. It points to the easy identification of the Nagas with the East Asians although on closer scrutiny, the similarities are minimal besides the Mongoloid features. As long as there are physical similarities, the other differences and representation didn't seem to matter. This can also be seen as a rediscovery of the 'local' that was ignored when westernization was like the norm during the past decades. A sense of belonging underlines its popularity. The Korean becomes an idealized other. Their familiarity with the names of the actor/actress and easily recalling to

memory the titles of films and serials shows the popularity of the Korean visual media products among the youth. And the favourites or hits are shared by many.

Cultural proximity as the reason of popularity of visual products is not endemic to Korean Wave. Studies conducted among Nigerian consumers of Bollywood have found that 'cultural proximity' in terms of the presence of virtues like shame and respect is the reason behind the popularity of Bollywood among Nigerian audience (Larkin, 2008).

> One reason I think why it's so popular with the young people is because we look like them and so we can relate, I mean we cannot really relate with the mainland Indians, those saas-bahus serials, that's just not us. We are more Korean than Indians that way. (FGD, Alder College, Kohima)

Although Confucianism is not the belief system of the Nagas, subordination of individual views to the common good which is one of the ethical principles of Confucianism is in consonance with Naga traditional values. Family values are seen to be at the heart of Naga worldview and thus affirms easy identification with Korean dramas which lay a lot of emphasis on filial piety. The Naga youth seem to understand the Korean media products through its cultural capital and thus be sutured into its subject position in the text.

> The Naga youth will never follow Indian culture. For me, I feel that it's better if they follow Korean culture rather than following western culture because western culture is too open and far away from us and we are somehow nearer to Korean culture. In Korean culture, the respect for elders and the family bonding are things that we can relate to but in American culture, they are too open and being too open is not good (FGD, SETM, Dimapur)

These family values are considered as an indicator of 'Asian-ness' as researches have pointed out in studies conducted on the popularity of Korean cultural products in East and South-east Asia. But this Asian-ness cannot be reduced to a monolithic Asian modernity (Ang,

2004) because 'Asian values' are vastly diverse in terms of religion, tradition, politics and culture.

***Visual rhetoric*:**

Korean dramas mostly represent modern cultural scenes in urban settings. Korean popular culture has employed aesthetic strategies very efficiently and has spared no effort to entice its viewers. The films are youth-oriented, genre-savvy, and visually sophisticated. It is a conscious attempt to capture the overseas market.

The physical appearances, trendy fashion and the scenic environments also found place in the reasons cited by the respondents. Although they were aware of the plastic surgery market in South Korea, they vied for the looks. Media representation became the reality, shaping their perceptions through these dramas (Gerbner et al, 2002).

> Arirang is having a very big influence on the Naga youth at least wardrobe-wise and hair-styles. If they adopt something like language to go to Korea and make a living since there is a huge problem of unemployment, then it's good otherwise just learning the language and staying stuck in Nagaland is useless. (FGD, Science College Alumni, Dimapur)
>
> I know of many who bunk colleges and watch the Korean serials and it also drains economy because a lot of money is spent in buying CDs. But it has its own advantages because people get opportunities to go abroad and it also gives the Koreans a platform to come to Nagaland and we get opportunities for cultural exchange programs. We come to know of other people's culture which is knowledge. (FGD, Chang Working Professionals, Tuensang)

These responses point to a people's longing for identification with something bigger and also reflect their youthful aspirations beyond the local - to venture out and explore. These trendy drama series are symbolic of an intense capitalist-consumer modernity cloaked in subtle visual rhetoric and its easy acceptance and reception in far-away places is reflective of an

ever-growing consumerist modernity. It also captures the aspirations to improvements in their material life. Also, Nagaland has always been talked about for its natural beauty and thus topographical similarities seem to be another reason for its appeal.

Fashion factor

Nagas are often associated with fashion and are referred to as fashion-loving people and writings on Naga youth have descriptions like "fashion-forward" (Motherlandmagazine, July, 2010; Eastern Mirror, 2015)[20] accompanying such writings. The "exoticization" of the Nagas continues but this time with modern terminologies and the youth feel the need to live up to the expectation as a "fashion- forward" people. Walking down the streets Of Nagaland both in urban and rural areas, one notices the youth sporting fashionable hair-styles. Nagas are quite fashionable and lay a lot of emphasis on appearance and clothing. Most of the hair-styles are similar to the actors of popular Korean dramas. If the trend changes on screen, the hairstyles of the youth follow suit. This kind of imitation speaks of locality being produced in new globalized ways (Appadurai, 1996). The response below encapsulates the desire to be like the Koreans on screen and to make a career out of this interests,

> I watch Korean movies. I like them a lot. Their complexion is very nice especially the girls. The stories are quite romantic. I like the hairstyle as well. I used to sport hairstyle like them before. I don't understand Korean but I like the tone of the language and how they speak. We are also a bit similar. There are a few words which are similar to our language too. I mainly watch for the hairstyle. I don't know how to cut hair but I think to myself that if I don't get a job, then, even if I am a guy, I'll open a parlour in Tuensang and borrow the hairstyle that I see in the movies. I also like the way they dress and we learn how to dress like them. (FGD, YCYE, Tuensang)

[20] www.motherlandmagazine.com/northeast-issue/paris-milan-dimapur.
www.easternmirrornagaland.com/in-conversation-with-jessica-kesogi/

> The interesting thing is the places, clothes. These are what is appealing. You bear the narrative just to see what they are going to wear next. (FGD, Alder College, Kohima)

Most of the respondents, both male and female, were quite appreciative of the fashion sense of the actors/ actresses in Korean films. Among different things, clothing and hairstyle were what appealed to them the most. Although the narrative and some plots could be quite dragging, what glues the youth to the films are the trendy clothes that the main casts of these shows wear.

The Nagas' penchant for clothes and fashion is mainly attributed to the coming of Christianity in Nagaland and Yanger[21] (2011) explains this phenomenon lucidly,

> When they (the missionaries) came here, they came with a zeal to Christianize us. It offended their senses that we were scantily clad and so the first thing they went about doing was introducing clothes to us. The clothes that the church introduced were at first the traditional garments worn in the neighbouring states, but soon *dhotis* and *kurtas* gave way to western dress that the converts started donning to imitate the style of the missionaries. It was like saying 'we have dissociated ourselves from that past, the pagan past of animism, and here we are, the Christians, the new Nagas'. That was definitely expressed through dress. Because of our anti-Indian sentiment, their clothes could not be accepted. (Motherlandmagazine, July 2011)

As tensions between Nagaland and the Indian government flared in the 1950s and 60s, the anti-Indian sentiment increased and to resist the repression, clothing also became a means of opposition. The statement made through clothing took on a symbolic meaning of resistance against the military repression which was associated with domination. Wearing western clothes became a way of asserting a separate identity from that of the mainland Indians. Fashion or clothing as a political statement is not confined to Nagaland alone. Manipur, a neighbouring state echoed this sentiment as recent as 2001. An armed opposition group,

[21] Sentila T Yanger is an entrepreneur from Dimapur. She is a Padma Shri awardee in 2008 for her contribution towards empowering local women through handicrafts.

kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL) called for a ban on women wearing 'mainland' attire of saris, salwar-kameez which ultimately was not successful. Interestingly, in asserting their 'unique' identity, it is the female clothing that becomes a site for political assertion. Although Northeast is lauded for its egalitarian society, the inside story reveals a strong patriarchy still in place. In a provocative article titled 'Witch-hunts, dowry deaths, North-East has it all' Nath (2012) brings to the surface the deeply entrenched patriarchy that besets Northeastern societies. He cautions that one shouldn't turn a blind eye to forms of gender discrimination that are not so visible and dramatic that go unnoticed. He highlights the plight of women in these words:

> Women have no representation in the traditional decision-making bodies of many Northeast ethnic communities, it's a fact. Some women's associations have demanded representation in decision making bodies. Their plea is rejected on the ground that customary laws do not permit such a role for them. It is also a fact that customary law of most ethnic communities in the Northeast grants man direct or indirect control resources. In many cases, such laws only strengthen inherent biases. (Nath, 2012)

He says on to say that the construction of the 'liberal' ethnic communities is an old ploy and a male construct again and that the women from ethnic communities although they feel discriminated against have internalized the clichéd images of the non-existence of gender bias in their societies. This explains the clothing restriction only to the women and not the men. Traditional patriarchal prejudices still prevail and many restrictions on women are granted sanction under customary law. Nath asserts that the construction of the Northeast as an egalitarian and empowering space has derived from a dependence on colonial anthropological texts and also due to a lack of knowledge. In the run for nationalism and self-determination, inherent forms of gender discrimination that mark Naga society are set aside.

Behind the shield of tradition and the internalized stereotypes of an egalitarian society touched upon briefly earlier, Naga men and women come together when it comes to the 'other' considered to be a greater force to tackle despite the internal gender imbalances. The significance of clothing is not lost on the Nagas and cultural othering is subtly carried out through fashion. Identity in opposition to the mainland India is expressed in clothing. 'Us' and 'them' takes centre-stage once more and fashion becomes more than just clothing. It becomes a weapon of the weak (Scott, 1985) to assert one's identity and to maintain distance from the 'other'. Comments like 'our culture is different and so we don't wear sari', 'we need to preserve out ethnic costumes otherwise it will disappear', show that the national frame is always invoked considering the fact that these states have had and some still have a very sensitive political history with the government of India. The collective experiences of Korean media seems to be creating imagined sodalities among the Naga youth with each other and also among other East Asian community, thus transcending national boundaries.

Emotional themes

The themes of Korean films and teleserials are mostly a concoction of friendship, love, romance and family. The typical plot projects a picture of prosperity, overcoming obstacles and sacrifice. "Desexualized" romance in the narrative is the main selling point of the Korean wave overseas. The depiction of male lead characters as being highly sensitive and romantic, ready to sacrifice all for their loved ones, has found a huge appeal among the female viewers. Studies done among Japanese, Indonesian and Czech Republic audiences (Mori, 2008; Hirata, 2008; Nugroho, 2014) have found similar results regarding the concept of a romantic and caring Korean man. In these studies, the audience recall with nostalgia

how love in its pure form has been lost in the modern era and been replaced with individualism, pursuit of career at the expense of love etc. These attributes have been attested as one of the main factors behind the popularity of *Hallyu* among women by other scholars (Takeda, 2014). Although it was older women who mostly spoke with a sense of nostalgia in those studies, it was not very different among the youth in Nagaland too.

> I like their appearance and the story line which is quite emotional. (FGD, Yimchunger Tribe, Tuensang)
>
> Some of the Korean movies/serials are really touching. (FGD, Gabriel Ministry, Tuensang).

In contrast to the female viewers who found a big appeal in Korean male actors, the male viewers were very critical about both the female viewers liking the male actors and also the actors who they thought to be 'unmanly'. The next section looks at the prevalence of partriarchy in Naga society and how it affects male and female viewership.

Gender Divide in the reception process

> Korean, I find the guys very sissy and girlish and there's nothing to learn in them but the young boys and girls really imitate them. (Alder college)

Interestingly, male viewers were quite appreciative of the actresses but responded with scorn and were very critical of the actors stating that they find the actors 'sissy' and think they have a homosexual orientation. The soft masculinity which greatly appealed to the female viewers was an aspect of ridicule and derision among the male audience. They recoiled at the idea that girls would like such men. This is reflective of Naga society's patriarchal notion of masculinity where a man has to be macho-looking and portrayals of men on Korean media that tend to counter them are dismissed as effeminate. This is symptomatic of a male-

dominated patriarchal notion that dominates the cultural and social discourses of Naga society. Deeply inscribed in Naga culture and language are codes regarding women's subordinate position to men. The female opinion is marginalized and ignored even in this kind of discussions. The very qualities of men in Korean movies like 'gentleness', kind-heartedness', 'caring', which the female respondents showed appreciation for were frowned upon by the male respondents. Constrained by conventional gender norms, the young women find in these products a cultural capital for their own subjectivities and negotiate their gender identities. They function as a channel to a fantasy world where women can express their desires for a pure romance, for being cared for and loved by men providing them an escape from everyday stress. The female viewers by liking the male characters portrayed in Korean dramas were discovering new types of masculinity and in the process consciously or unconsciously resisting conventional gender imaginings. By negotiating the restrictions imposed by society through their viewing Korean popular and appreciating the male actors, they were forming an "interpretive community" (Radway, 1984: 8). The imagined community invoked by the Naga men is one that is constructed through traditional customary laws[22] and practices both in the public and private spheres that deny agency to women. Similar to Radway's theorization of "patriarchal marriage" (Radway, 1984: 9) to define the correlation between the patterned answers of the Smithon women who were her research subjects and their similar social location, the female respondents in my study displayed a social positioning which was overwhelmingly decided by patriarchal norms. Their attraction toward caring and gentle Korean actors can be seen as a challenge to set norms prevailing in the Naga society. The respondents' similarities in the responses attest to a community that is informed by the social and traditional mores existing in the society and

[22] There's no overarching customary law of the Nagas. Different villages have different clauses. Naga customary laws, practices and their usages are given special protection under Article 371(A) of the Constitution of India.

which are deeply entrenched and difficult to be challenged. The existing public sphere leaves women no place to speak. Commenting on the patriarchial social structure that characterizes Naga society, Jamir (2009) writes, "The unbalanced gender relations in tribal societies like the Nagas is made possible by a rigid dichotomy between the private and the public spheres represented by home and the domestic affairs in the former, and the outside world of governance and decision-making in the latter" (2009: 18). Being embedded in such a patriarchal social structure, the viewing experience for women seemed to be more complicated for women than men

Korean dramas seem to act as sites of hegemonic discourse, trying to balance and negotiate gender inequalities in the society. Comments like "Only girls watch such things" by some male respondents clearly undermine the preferences and tastes of the female viewers and consider their liking for 'effeminate' men as a deviation from the norm, thus constructing the female viewers as being devoid of agency. "Men's status as 'men' is reaffirmed" (Eck, 2003) by making such gendered statements and they assume a culturally conferred right to pass such judgements about women's taste and preferences. By stopping female from watching such programming, the female is still treated with a 'sense of ownership' (Berger, 1977). This also points to the invisibility of "effeminate" males in the public sphere in Nagaland and societal norms espousing firm expressions of masculinity. The heterosexual masculinity is reproduced and sustained by the customary laws and traditions and their expertise on how a man should be hardly goes challenged and barely warrants introspection. The responses mostly of the men are a recitation of the social script that they have got accustomed to – any other rendition would have been antithetical to the long established script. In a highly patriarchal Naga society where the traditional mores grant more power and control to men, the popularity of Korean films, and more specifically, the idealized Korean male, among the Naga women is seen as a threat to traditional patterns of family and gender. Viewing Korean

visuals provides an opportunity to observe the gender identity work the young men and women perform when confronted with this cultural materials. Devoid of gender frame with which to discuss gendered viewing since the institutions like home, churches and public spheres are mostly silent about gender issues, the young people could not provide focussed nuances about gender. Although gender and sexuality was not discussed at length by any of the groups/ participants and they lacked the tools to speak about gendered viewing, these responses have shed light on the systemic differences in how men and women interpret cultural products. Most of them were hesitant to speak explicitly and Eck (2003) in his study of analysing responses by male and female on male nudity says that "their hesitancies and embarrassment indicate the incomplete and fragmented cultural scripts on which they are relying" (p. 706). That there are different ways of seeing and interpretation by men and women through patterned, gendered lenses and how this interpretation allows men and women to construct their identities was not one of the objectives of the study but an examination of that is certainly warranted by another study.

East meets west: A syncretic product / Hybridization of Traditionality and Modernity

Korean television shows portraying the uneasy tension between traditional values, on the one hand, and the uncertainty brought on by modernity, on the other, find resonance with Naga youth who increasingly find themselves at the crossroads of tradition and modernity (Paquet, 2010). Modern societies are marked by a nostalgia for the past, for a less-capitalist society where communities were close-knit and shared a collective life, but at the same time by the desire for a more materialist and consumerist future. This aspect of modernity has been adopted by Korean popular culture very effectively. In the case of the Naga youth, the

Korean dramas are used to confirm their conflicting subjectivities which are products of their constant negotiations between tradition and modernity. Audience responses to Korean shows have been marked by strong overtones of nostalgia. Studies by Iwabuchi (2008) conducted on Korean residents in Japan on the popularity of Korean dramas have also found 'nostalgia' of the past as one of the leading reasons for its popularity. The subordination of the personal for the greater good which was a recurring theme in most films also struck a chord among the audience. Personal relationships are woven around grand narratives of the collective taking on local issues, and where respect for tradition are highlighted in extremely sombre and reverential light. While constructing their identity around tradition which takes them to the past and in this nostalgia for the past and negotiating the present, the youth find recourse in cultural products that they can identify with and it is this element that the next section deals with.

Constructing cultural dichotomies/ Uneven flows and exchanges

The response of the youth while explaining the popularity of Korean media and cultural products was often laced with a disdain for similar Indian products. Memories of India as a "colonizer" influence their engagement with cultural products and expressions and explain their antagonistic ideas and thoughts. In Manipur, it is a prohibitive order issued by the separatist outfit, Revolutionary Peoples Front (RPF)[23] against Hindi movies that led to the proliferation of Korean media in the state (Kshetrimayum & Chanu, 2008; Kuotsu, 2013). Mizoram, another Northeastern state, had also banned a Hindi teleserials, *Kasauti Zindagi ki* that was dubbed in Mizo in early 2000s. It became so popular that social organizations like Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP), Young Mizo Association (YMA), and the Church reasoned that it

[23] The RPF is an armed militant outfit that challenges the accession of Manipur to India in 1949.

promotes an alien culture and offends their religious sensibilities, and thus enforced the ban. (Kuotsu, 2013).

Most of the pirated DVDs that make their way into Nagaland are from Moreh in Manipur. There is no official record although there is a constant flow of such pirated DVDs in the region.

In India, there is a very unequal and uneven flow when it comes to media distribution. Nagaland does not have any national platform to put up their media products. The only option is Doordarshan's regional Kendra but even that is not available as a satellite channel. There is an unceasing national and international flow streaming into Naga homes but the exchange is one-sided since they don't have their own platform to transmit the locally produced programmes. In such a scenario, engagement with media products that are 'closer home' becomes easier and those cultural products that bridge the rift, such as the Korean Wave, gain vitality. And for those who cannot afford satellite TV and are not connected by cable TV, they find a cheaper recourse to good quality entertainment. Adding to the entertainment, they also feel a sense of belonging. It is interesting to find that the Korean dramas that reach places like Nagaland are mostly of the trendy, contemporary urban romance genre and not the historical period costume dramas which are produced on a huge scale in Korea.

Although the route of distribution of the DVDs cannot be traced to the place of origin because of its pirated nature, it is assumed that the careful export does not include those cultural products which make historical and cultural knowledge of Korea a prerequisite. Korea produces a substantial number of historical drama series but these don't make it into Nagaland.

Riding on certain universal affinities like love, family ties etc., Korean cultural products have secured an audience in many parts of the world, first in Asia and then in other regions that included Europe and North America. Dan Yong Jin (2012: 5-6) describes these Korean cultural flows as 'Hallyu 1.0' and 'Hallyu 2.0', the former referring to the original Hallyu across Asia and the latter to the spread outside Asia.

Hallyu is ubiquitous both to the urban and rural landscape of Nagaland and symbolic of youth subcultural rebellion. While the older people see it as emblematic of loss of culture and at the extreme end, moral decay, it may be reframed as cultural resistance and not necessarily leading to breakdown of society and 'extinction' of Naga culture and traditions. The Korean Wave appears to be more pronounced in the teenagers and early 20s and it wears off as they grow older. It has not resulted in any kind of political impact and this could be because of the fragmented and transitory nature of the wave. Murdock sums up the role of subcultures in identity construction thus,

> …sub-cultures represent the accumulated meanings and means of expression through which groups in subordinate structural positions have attempted to negotiate or oppose the dominant meaning system. They therefore provide a pool of available symbolic resources which particular individuals or groups can draw on in their attempt to make sense of their own specific situation and construct a viable identity. (1973:13-14)

Hallyu presents itself as an apolitical resistance in terms of outcomes but it is not pointless altogether. Performing and rewriting cultural discourse is a political act (Duncombe, 2002) and while "the infrapolitical acts of aesthetic sabotage[24]" (Barnard, 2011: 116) not have had any political outcomes, the Hallyu's guerrilla tactics (Certeau, 1984) have become a much

[24] Eben Barnard (2011) borrows the concept of "aesthetic sabotage" from Ferrell's (1996). Ferrell describes "aesthetic sabotage "as acts that break "the hegemonic hold of corporate/ governmental style over the urban environment and the situations of daily life" (1996: 11).

sought-after resource for the small markets in Nagaland. This cultural resistance has been appropriated by the commercial sector to package it and feed back to the youth market. The youth's brand-consciousness has boosted the production of imitation goods. Clothing, gadgets and accessories with top American, European or Japanese brands at very low prices line the markets in Nagaland. These products are mostly imported from China or Burma. To explain this kind of cultural resistance, James Scott's concept of "hidden transcripts" is instructive. Building on Gramscian concepts of hegemony, Scott (1990: 4) uses this concept to mean the internal resistance of the subordinates in safe cultural spaces to avoid reprisals from the dominant power. An overt manifestation of resistance is likely to be clamped down by the state machinery and so 'the official story' is challenged covertly. This unidentified declaration of the 'hidden transcript' described by Scott (1990: 140) has become the strategy of different youth sub-cultures across countries. This kind of resistant cultures is important in the sense that it provides an avenue not only for rewriting cultural discourse but also provides satisfaction to the marginal groups and in subtle ways frustrates the dominator (ibid.). They are characterised less by open acts of rebellion than the grouping of insignificant acts of 'foot-dragging, false compliance, flight, feigned ignorance, sabotage, theft' (Scott, 1985/2002: 93) The quote below speaks of the extensiveness of the easy identification of Nagas with Korean popular culture rather than with mainland Indian culture:

> That's closer to whom we can relate like the kind of looks they have, what their hairstyle is; and if you have that then you can easily connect to that popular culture. So maybe that's from a racial point of view, that you connect more easily than to mainland…. Secondly, they're bombarding us with a lot of videos, music videos and lot of movies and, young people are growing up and they're beginning to understand what love is, what is a relationship, and they touch on these soft corners; what I've noticed, many of these movies, they're emotional stuff. So I think that tends to be very appealing to the younger generation because there is a vacuum, we have not filled that vacuum, so others are taking advantage of that vacuum. (FGD, YouthNet, Kohima)

> I will definitely say that other channels and not Indians have caught the imagination of the Naga youth more because we had that conflict in the past and because of that we have this mental make-up to generally dislike the Indians. We have been handed down this attitude. (FGD, Alder College, Kohima)

The attempt by large media houses to colonise the identities of their viewers with an engineered monolithic culture is met with a form of resistance from those viewers who don't unquestioningly absorb that they get but approach the producer/ audience positions critically. They question the way in which the hidden set of rules, codes and conventions of a specific social groups, especially those in power, are rendered universal for the entire society (Barthes, 1972). The rhetoric of common sense which is hidden in anonymity and from general consciousness is identified and becomes intelligible and meaningful in a dialectic engagement of the audience and the text (Althusser, 1971). As Stuart Hall writes:

> It is precisely its "spontaneous" quality, its transparency, its "naturalness", its refusal to be made to examine the premises on which it is founded, its resistance to change or to correction, its effect of instant recognition, and the closed circle in which it moves which makes common sense, at one and the same time, "spontaneous", ideological and *unconscious*. You cannot learn, through common sense, how *things are*: you can only discover *where they fit* into the existing scheme of things. In this way, its very taken-for-grantedness is what establishes it as a medium in which its own premises and presuppositions are being rendered *invisible* by its apparent transparency. (Hall, 1977:325-26)

By watching Korean films instead of Hindi serials, the youth try to resist the overtly Hindu culture that marginalizes them. The context of politics in the real world matters in the context of overseas cultural consumption. The act of watching assumes a wider political significance. It manifests culture in a broad sense, as systems of communication, forms of expression and representation. These expressive forms take on a symbolic dimension and the symbolism is that of a deeper resistance to mainstream values and addresses bigger issues

such as economy, discrimination, and public welfare. The tensions between those in power and subordinate groups can be found reflected in these actions transforming into reactions, taking on the status and meaning of refusal. These refusals may be considered oblique and not a direct challenge to hegemony. Oppositional values take a subtle form in a place like Nagaland among the youth. Very rarely do the youth engage in subversive acts and openly take to the streets and question these issues to avoid official retribution. The revolt is found in the neglected domains/sites of everyday life thus questioning the neat articulations of common sense in the national media. Drawing on Canclini's understanding of metaphorical struggles, Kuotsu (2013) suggests that the rampant circulation and consumption of Korean cultural products in Northeast India "although not necessarily a conscious political project, nevertheless stages a metaphorical struggle for negotiating identity, infrastructural deficiencies and restrictions imposed by social and political agents on local film production and consumption practices" (p. 4). An acute sense of the 'other' appears to be quite clear in the Naga consciousness although the media tries to gloss over this hegemony. In "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses", Althusser (1971) describes how various parts of the social formation- the church, the family, education, trade unions, the mass media, and cultural and political institutions- together serve to perpetuate submission to the ruling ideology. However, these institutions do not perform this function through coercion and is not straightforward. The deceptive meanings carefully inscribed in the codes meant to enclose the people of the nation excludes the minorities and further alienates at the same time. The taken-for-granted finds resistance in popular culture among the youth. Like Hebdige asserts, "the tensions between dominant and subordinate groups can be found reflected in the surfaces of subculture – in the styles made up of mundane objects which have a double meaning" (Hebdige, 1979: 2-3).

In an interesting study conducted among resident Koreans in Japan, Iwabuchi (2008) points out how intra-political issues are dismissed and ignored while focussing on inter-national ties and co-operation between South Korea and Japan in the wake of the popularity of Korean cultural products in Japan. In the process of talks about strengthening ties between these two countries by renewing friendship and letting go of the past colonial history, the plight of the resident Koreans get side-lined and how South Koreans and resident Koreans[25] gets conflated in the dialogues. Resident Korean continues to be discriminated and treated as second class citizens in Japan. Albeit a different context, this kind of study informs issues pertaining to India as well in that in the run for becoming a power to reckon with in the international scenario, intra-national issues surrounding media access are not taken up seriously both academically and politically.

Entertainment vacuum

Cultural flows within the nation are one-directional with a clear lack of cultural and technological infrastructures in the margins. The sources of entertainment in a place like Nagaland are few. The marginalized identities within India's seemingly hybrid and plural national identity are erased, suppressed, and/or vilified in order to market Indian national identity both within the country and to the world via media displays of affect. There are no entertainment industries like movie theatres in Nagaland and so people find in Korean media an avenue to fill that gap. A local entrepreneur and cultural promoter mentions in an interview that there are very few leisure opportunities like parks, lounges, bars or

[25] Resident Koreans are those who migrated to japan during Japan's colonial rule and are their descents. (Iwabuchi 2008: 252)

discotheques for the young people, and thus a virtual group becomes a way for them to connect in the real world.[26]

In the absence of entertainment sources, the youth find recourse in these films and it has been able to cater to that vacuum for engagement with media that is closer home.

> In Arirang TV, they showed the Nagaland Hornbill Festival. (FGD, Ao Group, Kohima)

> We were excited to watch our own Nagaland on TV and that too in international channels. I also watched the interview of Muivah on BBC. To some extent, it was good, to some extent it was exaggeration because we have our views regarding that but to see own people and our own place on TV, it is something good. We really feel good, that too not in local channels but in international channels, reputed channels. (FGD, Dreamz Unlimited, Dimapur)

This sense of satisfaction to see one's own people and culture belies every people and community's desire are for the Nagas it was particularly exciting because it is a rarity to find programmes about them on television. It is very common for the youth to inform friends and relatives if any programme on the Nagas are going to be broadcast.

Many people in Nagaland consider going to cinema theatres as immoral[27] and a couple of theatres that were existing in the seventies and eighties were all closed down. One of the interviewees who is now the proprietor of a cable channel cites "bad situation"[28] during

[26]http://scroll.in/article/753751/i-dream-of-japan-a-documentary-explores-the-craze-forjapanese-anime-in-Nagaland.

[27] The researcher remembers an incident in the late 1980s when a neighbour was scolded by parents for watching a film with friends in the Assam Rifles movie theatre. It was quite common and it is still thought by many especially the older generation that movie watching especially in the theatres is indecent.

[28] He was reluctant to explain but it could have meant the intense military presence during those decades because of the 'insurgency' problems.

those decades as the reason for the closing down of the theatres[29]. Most people and middle-class viewers keep away from such theatres for reasons of respectability. The theatres are associated with the screening of 'bad' films. A respondent from Dimapur puts it this way,

> There is a stigma attached to 'cinema halls' and so we should encourage out youth to take up cinematography and also explain to elders and dispel whatever negative meanings are attached to cinemas. (FGD, SETM, Nagaland University, Dimapur)

With poor aesthetic quality and no commercial marketability of the few productions, it becomes easier for the audience to turn to easily available and good quality production of foreign films. Subcultures allow youth to express opposition to society and challenge hegemony and films provide an avenue to the youth to create subcultures and it is this subject that the next section focusses on.

Political in the popular: A youth subculture

Youth culture in Nagaland is a recent phenomenon. Earlier, there was no clear distinction between the younger and the older generations in terms of their media consumption. Both generations watched the same movies and listened to the same music. But with the coming of the Korean wave, the youth culture has become more overt and 'youth' as a category in terms of media consumption has become more pronounced. "The people here could never identify with the soaps shown in Hindi entertainment channels," says Theja Meru, cultural promoter and president of the Arirang TV Club.[30]

Instead of writing off this kind of subculture as temporary fads, it is important to examine the dynamics of such subcultures to get a nuanced understanding of the social, cultural and

[29] Two movie halls, one in Dimapur and another in Mokokchung had been inaugurated at the time of writing this thesis.
[30] https://njagoi.wordpress.com

political markers that underlie such expressions. It matters because it is an arena for resistance, consent and negotiation. Resistance is fluid and not fixed. It is constantly negotiated and contested. It is important in the sense that it questions hegemony and denaturalizes the dominant.

The Indo-Naga history has an ideological bearing on the selection of cultural products by Naga audiences. The informants often quoted Indian serials in comparison with Korean dramas. They feel that Korean dramas have more depth than Indian serials in portraying characters and emotions. They feel that the Korean actors/ actresses express their emotions more realistically. This is attested in the responses of some respondents:

> People don't recognize us and we have no option but to watch foreign channels. We don't like watching Indian channels because most of the programmes are in Hindi. (FGD, Purple hearts, Tuensang)

> I will definitely say that other channels and not Indian's have caught the imagination of the Naga youth more because we had that conflict in the past and because of that we have this mental make-up to generally dislike the Indians. We have been handed down this attitude. Nowadays compared to few years back, I think we are conforming more to the Indian way of life but few years back it was not at all like that. (FGD, Ao group, Kohima)

Hallyu may be a fluid form of subculture, but the resistance it represents cannot be undermined. It reflects a political resistance and subcultures are the means by which many young people initially begin to voice out. Like previously mentioned, it is transient and despite its ephemeral nature, long after the euphoria of the experience has passed, they leave their traces as agents of political change. It is not simply a symbolic act of youth engaging in signifying behaviours to detach themselves momentarily from the dominant culture. In today's world with ever-expanding neoliberal institutions and free-market systems,

subcultures provide an important political critique and alternative social and political vision ignored in mainstream society.

> It was just our parents who have been so oppressed by the Indians and it's just one generation down and for them Indians signify oppression and then the hatred is just there and so we've been handed down that feeling. Anything to do with the Indian way, we dislike it and we do not want any part of it. And that's why mentally we're more open to others than Indians. (FGD, Alder College, Kohima)

Gandy (1998) argues that not everyone who accepts their classification as a member of a racial group shares the same level of comfort or ease with that assignment. Individuals will differ in the extent of their attachment or identification with the group.

The findings of the present study suggest that the participants differed in their identification with the nation to which they belong. Some of the participants feel that they belong to two cultures, and identify with both, Naga culture as well as Indian culture. When looking at their media consumption, the negotiation between the two cultures is obvious as well. Some subjects usually resist singular belonging, and take new alternative positions of identification (Echchaibi, 2002).

> I think we have started to imbibe some of the Indian culture and I think it is supported by some of us who have no qualms and problems about wearing these Kurtas, food-wise also we are experimenting all these mainland Indian cuisines. We may have been once antagonistic towards the mainland India but today we are moving towards that point of realization where we can't really dissociate ourselves from them. (FGD, Chang Working Professionals, Tuensang)

Here we see openness to a peaceful coexistence. There are common cultural spaces emerging, reducing the gulf between the two. The audience treat different textual components differently and the intended meaning are either appropriated, modified or resisted.

Although identity of an individual is complex, dynamic and is open to changes with exposure to other cultures and new knowledge inputs, it cannot be denied that the culture acquired in the early formative years of one's life serves as the main framework to identify with or to distance oneself from other cultures. The responses of the youth reflect a strong Naga nationalistic sentiment and deeply entrenched memories of Indian military actions of the past and the narratives passed down from an earlier generation. Oral tradition is still a very important feature of Naga Society and its presence keeps alive the Nagas' memories of the violent and painful insurgency. Easy acceptance and identification with media products other than Indian expresses a form of collective cultural dissent and lends it a political and a subversive role. This is also partly a failure of the nation-state to take insufficient account of the specific socio-political, cultural and economic conditions in these societies. These consumption patterns signify a distinct sub-culture developing from the gaps and vacuum left by the inaction of the state to attend to cultural and entertainment needs of minority populations.

Bricolage

The re-appropriation of Korean style can be construed as an act of *bricolage*. It becomes a symbol of group solidarity and also serves as 'semiotic guerrilla warfare' (Eco, 1972). The fashion signifier in Korean films which is mostly for commercialization purposes is detached from the concept it conventionally signifies (commodification) and is given a new meaning and often the signs are empty, but it is an emptiness filled with signs (Lefebvre, 1971). It becomes difficult to arrive at a final set of meanings to these practices because of their inherent polysemy (each text is seen to generate an infinite range of meanings). The meaning-construction is a process not fixity which is termed 'signifiance' in contrary to

signification. (Barthes, 1977). Subculture moves thorough a 'cycle of resistance and diffusion' (Hebdige, 1979: 130) and situates itself within the larger cultural and commercial matrices.

Post-textuality

The Nagas' engagement with Korean visual cultural products does not stop at the viewing level. It diversifies into a general engagement with Korean culture. Although physically residing in Nagaland, the fans of Korean dramas have created a transnational imaginary space through their consumption of the visual media products. The audience appropriate the original text and produce their own cultural texts thus forming a cultural power of their own. The consumption is extended to other cultural products like cuisines, song contests, clothing, hairstyles and other paraphernalia. In the process, they negotiate their cultural identities.

Korean language tutorials are established and there are Korean fan clubs. The fan club gatherings let the members know and interact with others who share similar interests. One of the fan clubs was started in Kohima in 2007 and it has been a part of the Hallyu wave in Nagaland.

In a newspaper article (Karmakar, 2009), Theja Meru, 'Cultural promoter,' is quoted as saying:

> Last year, we conducted Korean language classes here for six months. It had to be discontinued after Kolkota-trained teachers, all from Nagaland, got jobs in Korean firms. I am under pressure from many youngsters who want to learn the language. Even otherwise, youngsters are picking up bits of the Korean language to communicate among themselves.

Besides learning Korean language, the members of the club screen Korean films and conduct events like singing competitions and learn Korean cuisines. They also discuss Korean

politics, culture and history and sometimes invite Korean celebrities to visit the club. The fan club of Kohima also took initiative to organize the India-Korea Music Festival in 2008 at Kohima where over 7,000 people attended from different walks of life. They also opened a separate Korean Pavilion during Hornbill festival. These fanclubs are not just about lifestyle. They also aim big and seek to create business partnerships with the Koreans.

The Korean fever in Nagaland can also be attested by the presence of K-pop wannabes, mostly among teenagers. Distribution of DVD copies of Korean movies is found in small shops in many places. And these are all pirated versions. There is no official data available on the distribution of these pirated products since 'this is a phenomenon operating by its very nature in the shadows, away from the prying eyes of national and international accountants' (Mattelart, 2009). Similar markets which sells pirated media and other products like computer software and hardware are found in all the big and small cities all over India. A joint report published in March 2008 by the US-India Business Council (USIBC) and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) Bollywood-Hollywood Initiative claims that out of the USD 11 billion media and entertainments market in India, USD 4 billion is lost to piracy resulting in the loss of 820, 000 jobs. (Shedde cited in Thomas, 2010). Although Indian Copyright Act (1957) has been amended to protect access, distribution and use of digital content, piracy couldn't be curbed. The mere existence of pirated products across Nagaland in the midst of flourishing cable and satellite TV scenario indicates the demand for Korean movies and dramas. The shopkeepers who sold those DVDs also had a very good understanding of the hits and stacked the DVDs accordingly. Most of the dramas run for many episodes, and some viewers spend the whole day watching one after the other. The decline in the presence of DVDs over the years does not indicate the decline of the Korean wave as some studies suggest, but points to the growing online viewing by young people.

The huge interest the youth have shown in learning Korean language led to the state government starting Korean language tutorial centres. What started off as a black market in the entertainment sector was to some extent officially recognised with the state government and Nagaland University stepping in to start such initiatives. The Korean presence in the annual Hornbill Festival, a festival organised by the state government to showcase the culture of all the tribes of Nagaland, can be seen through the conspicuous presence of the Korean contingent and with events like Korean-Naga wrestling bouts, and Korean pavilions selling Korean food. The festival also witnessed many Naga youth singing Korean songs. In a newspaper article on Korean Wave in Nagaland (Verma, 2010), Al Ngullie, a youth commentator and a senior editor at the Morung Express, an English daily in Nagaland, explains the reasons for the Korean Wave in Nagaland in this manner:

> States like Nagaland has been experiencing a shift in cultural assimilation- this time away from the generally Americanised ethos and ways of living. The boom took place when Korean entertainment was at its peak and the media was singing paeans to hallyu. There were even MoUs being signed by Northeastern states with South Korea for creating employment opportunities.

Nagaland government has also been instrumental in promoting musical exchanges with Korea. The enthusiastic engagement with Korean cultural products saw the government bring in Lee Sung-wan, the Vice President of Arirang TV, VJ Isak of Arirang's popular show, "Pops in Seoul", and singer Illack to the Hornbill festival in 2008. The team covered the Hornbill festival for Arirang TV. In the same year, the first ever India-Korea Music festival was held in Kohima under the joint partnership of the Nagaland and South Korean governments. In 2009, a group of Naga musicians toured Korea. Korean cultural products and Naga cultural forums have synergised to further the Hallyu craze. The Naga audiences

have not been passive consumers of the Korean cultural products but it has resulted in some two-way collaboration.

In 2008, the Government of Nagaland signed a MoU with CONA International, a Seoul-based company, for setting up Agro and Food Processing Unit and a Polytechnic Institute in Nagaland for training Naga youth, with a commitment to place them in Korean companies later. [31] In May 2013, another MoU was signed between the Government of Nagaland and Jeonju Vision University, South Korea to improve mutual cooperative relationship through exchange of students.

Despite the immense success of Korean Wave in Nagaland, there were sections of people who were wary about the spread of this wave in the farthest corner of the state and this is picked up in the section below.

Negative reactions

Korean cultural products have not found much resistance among the Nagas. Although a lot of concern was expressed about the Nagas being 'Indianized', similar concerns were not expressed about Korean media being a cultural threat. But along with the identification at both the personal and societal levels, there was some distancing as well, but to a lesser degree. A few older Naga respondents in my study expressed concerns about the negative aspects of Korean media products and that Naga society is losing its cultural moorings because of all the proliferation of such overseas cultural products. The responses suggest an assumption that the popularity holds true mostly among teenagers and that the young people

[31] Reported in Nagaland Post, an English daily in Nagaland. Retrieved from http://www.nagalandpost.com/ShowStory.aspx?npoststoryiden=UzEwMTE1NjE%3D-7Ig2NMga2K4%3D

are becoming morally and sexually immoral because of these products. A respondent captures the fear of the impact of these films among the youth:

> One thing I dislike about Korean movies is that majority of the movies project high school and secondary kids and the level of infidelity they maintain among themselves and the parents responding to it by saying it's ok is very un-Christian because we are Nagas and we belong to a Christian community. For a Christian community, such values are very unacceptable and that is very negatively affecting the Nagas and very sadly the youth are more prone to be affected by the negative culture and in positive areas where they should be competitive, there is very less and where negative, the competition is very high (FGD, YouthNet, Kohima).

If Korean cultural products afford a sense of visual pleasure, it is also a source of disdain as attested by the respondent in his comment above. This is in stark contrast with the research findings conducted in other East Asian countries like Japan and Taiwan. In these studies, the reason why older women loved these Korean dramas was because of the absence of explicit sexual scenes. They said that unlike Japanese and western movies which have very explicit sexual scenes, they found Korean dramas to centre on 'pure' love.

Korean wave is also talked about as cultural imperialism in a video report that was filed by one Naga citizen journalist for Video Volunteers where the Korean phenomenon was seen as an invasion. One of the interviewees remarked that 'if the Nagas keep imitating Korean way of clothing, very soon the traditional culture will vanish'. But the comments on YouTube were mixed. Some agreed to what the reporter had to say about the cultural threat and some thought of it as 'stupid' to fear the disappearance of Naga culture just because the Nagas like watching Korean films.

When it comes to being defensive about Naga culture against cultural influences from foreign countries, the stand is the same be it American programmes or Korean. The belief that the local being vulnerable to 'cultural imperialism' by imported global media is not yet

outmoded as many believe it to be. The oft-commented fear of Naga culture being taken over and swamped by foreign culture continues to be expressed by the people. The audiences are implicated in identity battles of nationalism where any affinity to another culture is seen as anti-nationalism and with talks of revivalism of Naga tradition taking centre-stage in many parts of Nagaland, the audiences are again questioned about their allegiance to the nation's cause.

A new phenomenon arising

There appears to be a decline in the Korean wave in terms of sale of DVDs in the market but many people access it online. The widespread usage of internet has expanded the consumption space of Korean products.

Korean media products now face competition from other East Asian cultural products and now share the same audiences. Japanese animation or anime is becoming so popular in Nagaland that an annual Cosfest[32] is held every year. A documentary exploring the popularity of Japanese anime titled "Japan in Kohima"[33] was produced in 2015. As with any cultural products, the life-cycle of media products tends to be short. This also shows the increasing competition among regional players on the Asian platform. Most of these players are targeting a wider audience and harping on the common values, histories, and borrow formats and design content for multiple markets systematically. Sub-culture among the youth are ephemeral as observed by Himato Zhimomi, Secretary for Tourism, Art and Culture, Government of Nagaland (Verma, 2013):

[32] It is an anime-themed costume-playing festival in the state capital of Kohima. The participants dress as their favourite anime character.

[33] This was one of the films produced by the Public Service Broadcasting Trust (PSBT) that was screened at the Open Frame festival in Delhi from September 15-22, 2015. The producer is Hemant Gaba.

> It's just another fad. I think minor cultures such as ours will always be swayed by waves of influences from other cultures. It's a normal phenomenon.

Sub-cultures are dynamic and transient but this point to a youth grappling with issues of identity. These pan-Asian experiments find easy reception among the Nagas, be it Hong Kong martial arts films in the 1980s, Korean films, and tele-serials starting mid-2000s and now the craze for Japanese anime.

Figure 4: A group of Naga youth dressed for Cosfest 2016 (Image courtesy: Facebook)

Figure 5: A Naga boy dressed as his favourite anime character (Image courtesy: Facebook)

Conclusion

Hallyu reception is a complex process that has been tackled by simple and normative analyses like cultural affinity, Confucianism, Asian solidarity, and transnationalism. Most of them do not explain concrete reality. Korean media has found a very receptive place in Nagaland. It forges a sense of Asian and specifically a Mongoloid identity to some degree, which is not to consolidate a pan-Asian identity but informed more by the specific historical and political context in which people find themselves. They identify with the food, scenic environment, culture etc., although these may not be grounded in reality. Also, the Korean dramas' emphasis on strong social and family ties which holds precedence over individual glory and achievement finds resonance among the Naga audiences who are also encouraged to give more importance to the collective rather than the individual. Excluded from the cultural mainstream, Korean popular culture serves as a performative space for the Nagas. Selective appropriation, incorporation, and re-articulation of Korean culture led to

heightened expressions like hairstyles, make-ups, food, and language. The popularity of Korean media cannot be underestimated and it has resulted in a growing interest in learning the Korean language and culture, aspirations to travel to South Korea, and also eating Korean dishes like *kimchi*.

The responses of the youth point to two contradictory tendencies which Hall (1990) describes as "a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'". In the absence of a formal media production market, Nagas have always relied on Western cultural products like movies, songs and now, an alternative is found in Korean cultural products, not necessarily replacing the West but rather a meeting of the East and West. It is also a continuation of what was already there (western influence), because Korean culture has adopted and adapted aspects of American culture through cultural exchanges (Anderson, 2014). The Koreans have had a long tradition of engagement with America dating back to the Korean War. The entry of American films by way of the first Korea-US Film Agreement of 1985 also gave Koreans the opportunity to push for the modernisation of the Korean system from the inside (Paquet, 2009). Releasing American films in Korea had a big influence in the film-making industry of Korea. Because of the steep competition with American films, the young filmmakers did a complete overhaul of their genres and started making a new kind of film toeing the lines of American films.

The engagement of the Nagas with American missionaries which had left an indelible mark on the Nagas; its present engagement with another foreign culture from the East that has imbibed many elements of the West, particularly, American culture seems to be a cultural continuity of sorts. Korean cultural products which are a syncretised version of its own tradition and Western modernity finds resonance among the Nagas because of the ethos of

the people who have one foot in the traditional past and another in Western modernity, constantly negotiating between the two. A respondent's remark captures this reality:

> I think prior to Indian influence, rock music and Hollywod influenced more than Bollywood and Indian ragas and Quawallis. We can associate ourselves more with these people and when we also have the influence of Christianity. When we claim to be a people who speak English, we tend to follow a religion that is pre-dominantly western and that's why we tend to associate more with the western influence and like she said with the history of struggles compounded to us being more bent towards the western culture and so far as I can remember even as a small kid, I used to see my uncles imitating the rock stars. So we have just moved on from being Indians to Neo-Naga western people. (FGD, NSF, Kohima)

The 'Western' lifestyle and the 'Mongoloid' features to which Nagas can relate create an imagined community that transcends boundaries. In such a setting, the 'other' need not necessarily be the one that is physically distant but the one who belongs to another symbolic space. Many scholars have looked at the Korean Wave in Asia from a cultural proximity frame, but it is not a sufficient frame of analysis because of the growing popularity of Korean cultural products in the West as well. Also, to see it as rejection and reaction to the US- and Western-Europe-oriented cultural imperialism is riddled with problems because Korean cultural products are mostly hybridized ones.

What political meanings can be elicited from the Korean Wave among Naga youth? The identity negotiations go on and as Stuart Hall argues, it is never an already accomplished but a "'production' which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation" (pp. 222-223). This engagement with Korean cultural products has an underlying force – to rediscover the past which has been 'distorted' and 'disfigured' (Fanon, 1994) by the perverted logic of colonisation, while at the same time adapting and appropriating the past symbols to changing times. It is also to bring to light the hidden continuities suppressed and disrupted during the colonial experience (ibid.). Korean cultural

products and expressions have succeeded in contributing to the re-telling of the past by producing hybridized products of the past and present, creating an imagined community with some common values. Its success also reflects the experiences, nostalgia and aspirations of the people in an Asian context. Complex political issues of the past have been reconciled to some extent through these powerful cultural products. They mediate smoothly nationalism and modernity.

Ironically, Indian mainstream media have failed to create a shared and coherent oneness and thus has somehow failed to capture the imagination of the Naga youth. While constructing a community and identity, it leaves out some important marginal entities in the dominant national narrative. Any process that is disconnected from the past completely is doomed to fail. Memory keeps on resurrecting itself and mediation aids in doing that, a mediation which tries to normalize the disruption yet another time internally.

While Korea in its attempt to consolidate a pan-Asian cultural identity backed by national policy and governmental and corporate support sees a huge potential in cultural products leading the front and has not only made its presence felt in regions far beyond their boundary, India ironically does not seem to understand that the cracks in the media space within the region get sealed by another overseas culture. It is a continuous effort on the part of the governments, corporations and producers to constantly adapt and appropriate, infusing new sensibilities in the products and making them dynamic, notwithstanding the fact that it is all a part of consumer modernity. These responses warrant an urgency to address the cultural rifts between the centre and the peripheries. Or is Bollywood which is recognized worldwide a sufficient reason not to look inwards!

Watching and engaging with Korean cultural/ media/ visual products might not be political in a traditional sense. But new transitional identities are being performed by this

transnational cultural consumption, and it helps us to think in new ways of understanding politics for those who have been marginalized in a nation-state.

The viewers are not just consumers. They are cultural producers, critics, popular culture capitalists, and their fan activities can be seen as cultural practices to resist the social, political, economic and cultural conditions affecting them. This does not mean that they are entirely free and active viewers. The local contexts, social norms and worldviews inform and serve as reference points for understanding this consumption. Hallyu or Hanryu texts -- television dramas, popular music, and film have resulted in very fascinating reception, responses, and re-appropriations across Nagaland. Hallyu was thought by many critics that it would be an ephemeral phenomenon but it has proved to be more than a passing fad.

Chapter 6
Televisual engagement – negotiating the local and the global.

This chapter is concerned with the engagement of Naga youth audiences with television and shows how the local, regional, national and international, mediate and overlap in the audiences' reception. It examines how audiences engage critically with the transnational, national, regional and local programming and how their multiple identities are imagined through that engagement. In this chapter, I seek to analytically understand the complexity of audiences and gauge how unresolved historical, cultural and political questions become visible in their televisual experiences. Alban von Stockhausen (2008) identifies three factors to be at the core of the formation Naga identity – 'colonial construction', 'political calculation', and 'religious instrumentalism' (2008: 57-80).

From the tribal allegiance of local cable TV channels to the 'imagined' Naga identity vis-à-vis the 'mainstream' Indian identity and now mediated by globalisation, Nagas' attachment to that "constructed" or "inherent" identity begins to weaken or strengthen and is constantly being negotiated. The chapter also looks at how Christianity which is deeply woven into the Naga thought and expression has a bearing on what comprises 'good' and 'bad' images and how it informs people's viewing choices and preferences.

Local programming, Local cable TV and tribal issues:

Local programming which is in a very nascent stage in Nagaland is slowly expanding and these programmes are shown on cable TV. The cable TV proprietors harp on local aspects of the society because in the array of channels offered by satellite television, there is a need

for local programming. But local takes on a complex form because of the numerous Naga tribes each with its own distinctness and this 'tribalism' is not lost on the cable proprietors and underlies the structure. A state where tribal allegiance is of utmost importance to every Naga, cable TV channels are not free of this bias. Tribal leanings animate local media production, as one respondent laments:

> I subscribe to cable from Citi cable whose owner is [a] Sema[34] and everything they show on local cable is about the Sumi church, Sumi students union. One thing they should keep in mind is that the audience is cosmopolitan and I also heard about Global Chapter[35] from subscribers that mostly the programs shown are about Ao[36] churches and festivals. It'll be good if they capture audiences of all tribes (FGD, SETM, Nagaland University, Dimapur).

Tribal issues plague Naga society to the point that internecine clashes keep happening. Many people have lost their lives in such violent and retributive fights. The respondent's comment about the cable channels throws light on the issue of tribal allegiances and how this affects even the local media. In Nagaland, tribes are thought of as bounded and defined for all time although tribal identity has always been porous and is renegotiated and contested from time to time. Commenting on the complexity of the territorial nation-state and Naga political space, Jelle Wouters writes:

> …the Naga story is also a story of old tribal loyalties and differences, new alignments, fresh entitlements and a gradual (if not contested) embeddedness into colonial and post-colonial state structures, arbitrary but now long-standing territorial divisions, and development programmes and aspirations, all adding to a current multiverse of claims and counter-claims (Wouters, 2016: 116).

[34] Sema, now changed to Sumi, is one of the 17 official tribes of Nagaland. Although 17 major tribes are officially recognised in Nagaland, Naga scholars identify much larger numbers of tribes. Yonun Asoso (1974) lists 'about fifty', and the National Socialist Council of Nagaland lists 36.

[35] Global Chapter is a cable channel whose owner belongs to the Ao Naga tribe.

[36] Ao is another official tribe in Nagaland.

Although the "rigid demarcations of the 'tribes' as distinct categories were partly the result of classificatory investigations in the nineteenth century for administrative purposes, and an anthropological concern with the articulation of race and racial differences, with the origins and migrations of various people, and the relationships between these different peoples" (Lotha, 2008: 48), tribalism poses a great challenge to the coming together of the Nagas and this fixity is seen by many as an obstacle that might stand in the way of a Naga channel should there be one. This was expressed in the words of a social worker in Tuensang district in a personal interview:

> Yeah, one thing is, see, there're so many biases, so it has to be a very, it has to be very well thought out; so that it's very politically correct, there're so many tribes, there're so many opinions and so many political divisions within ourselves also. So given that divide, and very unfortunately that divide tends to take tribal lines, or pan regional lines, so you know, that would be one of the major hurdles because the moment you snub them in the nose, you'll have a whole lot of people who would not even watch that particular channel. So it has to be very politically correct, well represented and you know; see, even in a place like Tuensang, if there is a gathering, we have a guest and all the four tribes come together and suppose we just give a Chang shawl and it happens that the presentations are always Chang shawl; that in itself says that, okay, why there's no Sangtam shawl? You can't use a Yimchungrü shawl? So those biases are, you know, deeper than we think, or they further, you know, so that is the way one would have to see the challenge from. (Personal interview, Tuensang)

As the younger generation strives to create a pan-Naga identity and aspire for established media to cater to their needs, it has been observed that a Naga's allegiance is first to the family (clan), the village, the tribe, and lastly to the Naga community as being a Naga (Ao, 2005). In Chasie's words, "At the moment, everyone talks 'Naga' but thinks and acts according to their individual tribes" (Chasie, 2005:127). This disposition of the Nagas to identify with social groups like the immediate family, the village or the clan often supersedes the supra-tribal ethnonym 'Naga'. This broader identity consciousness is of a very recent

phenomenon and was to a great extent thought up and designed for the Nagas both by the British and the Baptist missionaries. And to this day, the disparities between the old and the new concepts of identities are being debated and how traces of the old continue to manifest in the lives of the Nagas culturally, socially and politically. With the older generation withholding most of the information of the past culture and way of living, the youth are frustrated, as is strongly expressed in the words of this young woman:

> …Society says, the elders when they get together, or when they talk to us in meetings, or in church: 'You are losing your culture'. That's what they tell us: 'Regain your culture!' They don't tell us what that culture [is]. And if we ask them to really specify what it is, they define our culture as more or less having Christian values, and almost similar to Christian practices.
>
> …so as a young person, you don't know what to do! You don't know what to do because you are trying to find out about yourself but you can't! Because they won't tell you. Or they tell you lies, or they tell you half-truths…Because we don't have all the knowledge, we can't decide what we want to be!
>
> …'fine, if you don't want to tell us about your old one, at least we'll make up one of our own! 'And even if that involves taking a lot of inspiration from the West, at least it's a culture, it's our own culture. (Interview in Oppitz et al., 2008: 418-421)

Caught in the political expedient about identity among the Nagas, the youth finds itself compelled to come up with a new definition of identity- an identity between the firmly cemented 'Naga' self-image and 'tribal' identities.

Local production

> Our tastes have become so developed that we don't want to watch anything of bad quality (FGD, Alder College, Kohima).
>
> Nothing much happens here (local channel) except when we have festivals, marriages, church programmes, road shows. That was 5-6 years back. Mostly songs and movies (FDG, TTBC, Tuensang, FGD).

In a satellite TV scenario, with a plethora of channels to choose from, the audience expect the same standards of sophisticated production from local programming. Local TV fails to provide good quality TV productions and broadcasting services. People are interested in locally relevant programming, but because of poor quality on cable TV, very few people watch it. Local producers try and adapt international and national formats. The importance of local appeal has been roped in by the local cable networks, but, owing to inadequate infrastructure and lack of appropriate training, they are unable to get anywhere near the quality of satellite television programming. The youth find it difficult to adjust to the visual and aesthetic deficits, although there is a need for local viewing. A few programmes like Naga Idol[37] do very well, but because of Nagaland not having any Satellite channel, the competition is recorded and made into CDs for playing on local cable TV channels and sold to people. Although Naga Idol (now Naga Orpheus Hunt) borrowed from shows like American Idol and Indian Idol (both are spin-offs from the British show Pop Idol), the format is different. Unlike the others which are performed in front of a studio audience and television viewers taking the audience through a ride of emotions, excitement, Naga Idol is recorded for CDs and so those elements of a typical 'reality' show are absent. Also, the voting card system[38] has been criticized by a lot of people in Nagaland and is discussed on The Naga Blog (a Facebook group) often. Although many people have condemned it as 'day-light robbery', 'extortion' etc., with no cellular voting system and no avenues for 'live' shows, the organisers resort to these marketing strategies to earn their profit. These are the common

[37] Initially, the programme was called Naga Idol but was later changed to Naga Orpheus because of the debate that arose on the usage of the word 'idol'. The word 'idol' it was argued was not commensurate in a Christian-dominated land. It is also likely that the organisers didn't want to get into any hassle regarding Intellectual Property Rights.

[38] Voting cards are sold to the contestants in bulk by the organisers who in turn have to sell it to people to make it to the next round depending on who sells more.

modes of distribution of locally produced programmes in Nagaland. In a mediated world of immediacy where an event in a far-away country reaches our screens within seconds, these cable channels are often forced to show delayed recordings.

The inability of the local channels to compete with the aesthetically sophisticated programming of the transnational channels provided by satellite television has resonance in the argument that was made in the cultural imperialism debates regarding television programmes. Unable to match the high production values of Western television, developing countries would take recourse to importing Western television content, mainly soap operas, which are given to them at economical rates. The indigenous television industry in the process would stagnate with no incentive to improve. One of the thorniest broadcasting policy issues in many countries is to what degree does a nation want its airwaves to be filled with programmes produced in a different country with different cultural context (Allen, 1987). In the cultural imperialism debate, the American television was considered as a giant threatening to dominate the airwaves of other countries. For example, in 1989, Dynasty, an American soap, which was at its height of international fame was bought for only $1, 500 per episode by the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (Allen, 1987). And in countries like Zambia and Syria, episodes of popular half-hour popular American programs have been offered for as little as $50 in countries like Zambia and Syria (Gripsrud, 2009). Allen also explains that what makes it even more difficult for local broadcasting systems and independent producers to compete against American programming is the fact that audiences often associate the "look" of American television with high quality (Allen, 1987). This reasoning held true for the Naga audiences who prefer all things Western.

Local films were considered by many respondents to be shallow and aesthetically emasculated. They were criticised for their low production values and lack of craftsmanship.

The failure of Doordarshan and local production to maintain even a minimal level of aesthetically pleasing products was one of the main factors behind the unpopularity of the programmes. A few have done well and received national and international acclaim, but the screenings are mostly small-scale and with no platform to be broadcast.

A cable channel owner in Mokokchung district in a personal interview explained the difficulty of making programmes without support from Government,

> I had started this, number one because of my hobby sort of a thing because I was interested. Secondly, I thought it would have an impact on the society since I've seen television having great impact, so I thought this small work may also have an impact. So right now, this channel is self-financed, no-one is supporting, not the subscribers, not even the cable operators are supporting, and so it's just one-man effort right now. Therefore, the progress of this channel or the development in this channel has not progressed as I had wished because of the constraints, financial constraints and things like that. I cover the church service every Sunday, especially for the elderly people who cannot go to church and all, who are lonely, who don't have company; it's a sort of involving with the public or involving with the mass, having a sense of involvement with the general public. So with better programming, better routine or better equipment, schedules and better productions, I'm sure it'll have an impact. And then however small it may be, this cannot be replaced by the big channels, like national channels.

Films like *Lijaba's Daughter* which are set in very traditional sights and sounds of Naga villages (almost non-existent now) in terms of housing, costumes, food, are produced and aimed at a readership beyond home with specific expectations and a prescribed framework, what Burwell (2007) calls 'particular modes of reading', to appeal to international viewers. The exaggerated experimentation only serves to alienate local audiences. Most of the cultural products in Nagaland are constructed out of the materials of the past, and the youth having no first-hand experience of the cultural past find it difficult to relate to them. Some of these films have earned accolades and success overseas but have failed to find success at home. There is a gap between domestic reception and their critical reputation abroad. Respondents

felt that these productions are exploiting pre-modern traditions and practices and 'exoticising' Naga folktales for the amusement of viewers abroad. Many of the narratives appear to be involved in further self-Orientalisation. In writing about the Postcolonial paradox in the 'self-Orientalisation' of Taiwanese history and its controversial reception of a Taiwanese film, *Warriors of the Rainbow: Seediq Bale*, the author, Che-min Yang (2012) says that the Director, Wei Te-Sheng inevitable puts himself in a dilemma. The dilemma was whether to be true to the archives of the tragic event (the *Wushe* Incident) of the 1930 uprising of the Seediq warriors led by Mona Rudao during the Japanese colonial rule over Taiwanese aborigines or to employ some Hollywood cinematic techniques for the creation of dramatic effects. The latter had to be done at the expense of Taiwanese aboriginal culture and history to appeal to universal audience. Yang concludes that by "representing the exotic scenes Wei is also doing some self-Orientalization of Taiwanese culture and history" (2012:1115). Dakis Pawan (Kuo Ming-Cheng), a descendant of one of the surviving Seediq warriors who participated in the uprising and also a historian does a painstaking work by doing field studies about the tribal history and cultural tradition as well as the Wushe Incident and from his work, the role of Mona Rudao as a Seediq national hero is disputed (Kuo in Yang, 2012). The complex matric of myth, legend and history are all combined according to a Western mode of representation for the audiences.

Exaggerated scenes that sometimes trivialize the traditions reaffirm and reinforce the already existing Orientalist literature as well as representations in mainstream media. In these constructions, Nagaland emerges as a place shrouded in mystery, and as Edward Said memorably stated, 'the modern Orient…participates in its own Orientalizing' (1978:325). Nagaland remains an enigma in many of these documentaries and films. A self-Orientalising tendency seems to be at play with certain kinds of production in Nagaland, especially those targeted at international audiences. The stereotyping of the Nagas by European writers gets

reinforced in the process and continues to feed the curiosity of others. And this is expressed by one respondent when he says:

> I remember a program on the Konyaks[39] in Discovery and they portrayed Nagaland as an exotic place, they have the presumption that we are different from them and so they should come and investigate what we are doing. We shouldn't expect others to come and expose; we should do it ourselves like this morning there was an article of Ronsenkala winning an award for the documentary, 'The distant rumblings'. The blame lies on us too. We need good infrastructure and maybe they are scared because of a wrong perception about the place (FGD, Science College Alumni Group, Dimapur).

In Nagaland where a capitalist mindset is fast catching on and making inroads into every sphere of the society, identity 'construction' based on creating a nostalgia for the past is done with a view to attract "hypermobile capital" (Morley & Robins, 1995:75). To attract capital investment, the productions emphasize their unique features and touristic attractions. The usage of the adjective "unique" is always present to showcase Nagaland and is bandied around by politicians in their speeches. At a time when old identities are loosening, the first generation of filmmakers in Nagaland combine the cultural and technological capital to launch their films that would receive critical accolades beyond its borders. In a globalised world, there is an important connection between enterprise and heritage, and the particularities tend to become enhanced (Morley and Robins, 1995). Claims to the uniqueness of ethnic identity bring together the semantics of primordial and historical claims like blood, descent, and race with the pragmatics of calculated choice and opportunism in contexts of political and economic competition (Tambiah, 1997). These fluid boundaries of identity get consolidated by such 'articulations' blending the past onto the contours of the present, as Hall explains:

> An articulation is…the form of the connection that can make a unity of two different elements, under certain conditions. It is a linkage

[39] Konyaks are one of the 17 official tribes in Nagaland. They belong to Mon district.

> which is not necessary, determined, absolute and essential for all time. You have to ask under what circumstances can a connection be forged or made? So the so-called 'unity' of a discourse is really the articulation of different ways because they have no necessary 'belongingness'. The 'unity 'which matters is a linkage between that articulated discourse and the social forces with which it can, under certain historical conditions, but need not necessarily, be connected. Thus, a theory of articulation is both a way of understanding how ideological elements come, under certain conditions, to cohere together within a discourse, and a way of asking how they do or do not become articulated, at specific conjunctures, to certain political subjects…(Hall, 1996:141-142).

In combining 'uniqueness' and 'marginality', a collective Naga identity gets articulated, however fragmented it maybe from within, and finds reception elsewhere.

There are other films that have been screened at various film festivals abroad. Just to name a few: '*The story of a house*- Sophy Lasuh and Sesino Yhoshu; *Last of the Tattooed Head Hunters* – Vikeyeno Zao. Screened at Cannes Film Festival in the short film category; *And down to the river they went* – Yapangnaro Longkumer.

Although these films were screened abroad and some of them have earned international acclaim, most of the Naga audiences were not familiar with them. This is because there are no movie theatres in Nagaland and there are no public venues to screen a film. Also, the culture of watching movies in theatres is not there and theatre-going has been associated with immorality.

> There is a stigma attached to 'cinema halls' and so we should encourage our youth to take up cinematography and also explain to elders and dispel whatever negative meanings are attached to cinemas (FGD, SETM, Nagaland University, Dimapur).

This is not to say that all Naga filmmakers in Nagaland are into self-Orientalisation. A few have started to venture into terrains which are considered 'taboo' in the society. A

documentary titled, "*Oh my soul*" (Kivini Shohe, 2015) explores the Naga transgender community.

> This is the first time such a screening has ever happened in Nagaland (Morung Express, 2015)[40]

Until recently, to explore such topics would have been unthinkable. Naga society is slowly opening up to issues which were not acknowledged and were kept in denial, mainly because of Christian doctrines and a strong patriarchal order. These rigid structures are being challenged now. On the other hand, there are Nagamese[41] movies that are being produced in Nagaland, some of which are screened on cable TV, that become objects of ridicule and derision despite the social relevance of the themes they explore.

> …you look at Nagamese movies, they're very funny but then it's becoming very popular! In fact you should do a study on, you know, how many people have watched Nagamese movies you know; everyone would laugh at it and then make jokes about it, but why are they making Nagamese movies? The fact that people are buying those CDs and so they're making it. (Personal interview, Tuensang)

This comment is very telling of the fact that local cinema is mostly held in low regard by most of the populace. Most of the local programmes on Doordarshan are documentaries but local producers are slowly foraying into other genres like fiction and drama and these are making their way into Doordarshan and also cable television channels. The mindset of the younger generation seems to be gearing up towards change as one post in The Naga Blog reads:

[40] To read the full article, see the link morungexpress.com/transgender-struggle-in-nagaland/

[41] Nagamese is a pidgin of Assamese, Bengali, Nepali which is used to communicate with each other. Except for some old people in remote villages, it is understood and spoken by most Nagas and non-Nagas residing in Nagaland.

> I became a fan of @dreamz unlimited the time I saw them enact a powerful play at the ACAUT[42] Rally in front of 20, 000 people! These guys are truly blessed with unlimited talent and creativity!!
>
> Although unlike other states, we don't have a proper local entertainment industry or the culture of going to theatres & watching plays! We have no opportunity but guys like these go out the way to create our own opportunities!!
>
> Humour fused with very strong social message is the need of the hour! Watch, Like their Page & they will share their Youtube channel through which I hope they can monetize it gradually…pioneering a new field, cheers to Dreamz Unlimited!

With a very communal press and absence of electronic media to report issues and publicize them, a group like Dreamz Unlimited[43] have taken to dramatize social issues and create awareness among the public. With the advent of 'mass communication' like television, there was a fear that theatres were pushed to the margins but in Nagaland, theatre has just started and is in some ways taking centre-stage going by the popularity that a group like DU is attaining. Recent years have seen it performing in the Hornbill festival and in many other settings. This minority art is slowly gaining a foothold in Nagaland. The post above captures the essence and pulse of the youth in Nagaland. With the absence of an indigenous entertainment industry, a recurring theme in my thesis, the youth instead of relying on the state to fix the problem, seek to fill the gap through small-scale productions that are disseminated widely on the Internet. With no access to centralized production facilities, the youth are actively exploring alternative forms of communication and expression by making use of the new communication technologies. But it also underlines the difficulty of sustaining such local initiatives without proper resources.

[42] Action Committee Against Unabated Taxation is a committee that was formed in 2013 to look into the unabated and illegal taxations by "underground" Naga Political Groups and Government agencies. Answering to the many questions if they are against Naga National Movement, they answered in their Homepage on the internet that "ACAUT Nagaland is in support of the Naga National Movement (NNM) fighting for sovereignty which is the Historical and Political Rights of the Nagas…ACAUT Nagaland's stand on "One Govt One Tax "adopted on 31st October clearly states that the "Naga people"will pay once the NPGs come together under a common platform and form "One Government." Retrieved from acaut.org/about.html

[43] Dreamz Unlimited is a Theatre Society of Nagaland.

The National broadcaster (DD) and Regional "Northeast" satellite channels

Doordarshan, the national public broadcaster, with its emphasis on "unity in diversity" has failed to live up to the slogan. In many ways, it has failed to cater to the diversity of people and culture. It reinforces the centre-periphery problematic. In the initial phases of television in India, the main focus was the state's attempt to forge a pan-Indian national identity and later with the introduction of commercial sponsorship of Doordarshan and its 'privatization', the state mediates the efforts of the market forces to construct a global consumer-subject out of television audiences (Pavarala, 1996). In the first phase, it was about sovereignty and in the phase since the economic liberalization of early 1090s, it still is about sovereignty but with a reworking of the concept (Asthana, 2013). But even this reworking could not successful achieve to strike a chord within Naga youth audience, the reason being both technical and infrastructural, political and cultural.

None of the respondents in my study, except for one or two, watches Doordarshan. One reason is because many have switched from cable connection to Satellite TV and a few have retained both just to watch local cable programming, however poor the quality. Doordarshan's programmes are described as outdated and boring.

> The youth hardly watch DD Kohima where local programs are shown because they mostly show the reality in the form of documentaries whereas in other channels there is a wide variety of programs to choose from and DD doesn't gauge the interest of the youth. (FGD, NSF, Kohima)

Satellite TV is giving a tough competition to terrestrial broadcasting and very few houses have antennas required for receiving terrestrial signals. Besides the regional Kendras of DD,

DD NE (Doordarshan Northeast) which is supposed to cater to the Northeast audience is fraught with regional bias with its focus mainly on Assam and it becomes all the more complicated because of NE region being regarded as one homogenous entity.

India's Northeast which is put together as one single entity is a geographical area of 2.55 lakh square kilometres that comprises of eight different states, namely Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura. There are vast cultural, linguistic, ethnic or religious differences among the eight states and this diversity made B.G. Verghese to describe the region as "another India, the most diverse part of a most diverse country, very different, relatively little known and certainly not too well understand, once a coy but now turbulent and in transition with the Indian transition" (2004:280). If 'Northeast' is a physical entity that exists in the minds of people to signify the divide between the centre and the periphery (Sen, 2006), it also means an uncomfortable bringing together of people with different needs. In the process of seeing the region as one homogeneous entity, the peripheries within the periphery lose out and is deprived of the critical attention it deserves. Udayon Misra (2000) observes that the use of the illusive construct , the Northeast, has not only led to discrimination in matters of financial allocation to resource rich and larger states like Assam, but more importantly, to serious administrative mishandling by the centre of the complexities of the region. Paradoxically, the Northeast region is exalted for its diversity of ethnicity, cultures and religion and yet it is conceived of as a monolithic region. As Misra cautions, the similarities that exist between different states of the region should not overshadow the different stages of socio-cultural and politico-economic development (Misra, 2000).

All the satellite channels of Northeast region are stationed in Assam and many a times, these channels have been accused of giving a communal colour to issues prevailing in the region.

> Assam-based news channels had allegedly reported mass exodus of Assam speaking people including students and labourers from Meghalaya giving it a complete communal colours that led to concerns in neighbouring Assam. (Meghalaya Times, September 2, 2012)[44]

While it is true that Assam also had intense secessionist movements in the past, it had centuries-old interaction with the rest of the Indian sub-continent and has much in common with other parts of the country in matters of language, culture and history (Misra, 2000). One channel which is dedicated to Northeast, DD NE also has its headquarters in Guwahati, Assam. The inability of DD NE to cater to the different cultural sensibilities has been observed by a government official who says:

> For long, there has been a feeling that the aspirations and the needs of the vast and culturally diverse Northeast region have not been met by the existing DD North-East channel. Since the eight states in the Northeast region follow multiple languages and dialects and have distinct cultural identities, the idea is to have TV channels in these states that talk to them in their own language and cater to their respective cultural sensibilities (Rao, 2015).

This statement echoes the goals of Doordarshan's "Unity in diversity" slogan and the proposal of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) in 2015 to trifurcate the existing DD North-East into three 24x7 Doordarshan channels - *DD ArunPrabha* for Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim; DD *Ma-Mi-Na* for Manipur, Mizoram and Nagaland; and DD *As-Me,* a third channel for Assam and Meghalaya (Assam Tribune, August 31, 2015). The MIB in an Action Taken Note (ATN) said that "As soon as the three channels go on air, we will be able to telecast more and more local programmes, including films and local tribal content keeping in view the border area". As the note suggests, any developmental initiative of the centre in the Northeast revolves around the rhetoric of the region as a buffer zone.

[44] http://meghalayatimes.info/index.php/front-page/26788-meghalaya-govt-student-bodies-dispel-rumours-of-eviction-of-assamese-from-shillong.

Although it was recommended that the project be implemented on a priority basis within a specific time-frame, the non-implementation of the proposed trifurcation till the time of writing this thesis makes the statement merely rhetoric.

DD is one of the largest public broadcasters in the world in terms of the studios and transmitters. In the early 2000s, Doordarshan with a huge network of 1200 transmitters had an estimated audience of 362 million (Rani, 2006). In 2015, Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARD) released the all-India viewership data which included the rural areas for the first time. According to the data, DD National, the flagship channel of the network, emerged as the most-watched Hindi channel in terms of time spent per viewer with a gross viewership of 4040.5 lakh (The Hindu, October 24, 2015). Out of the 23 DD Satellite channels, there is only one that is dedicated to the entire Northeast region and the slot for regional transmission is only for half an hour in the evening. There are many places in Nagaland where the signal is not received. Even in Dimapur, the district closest to the capital, Kohima, from where the signal is uplinked, people cannot receive the signal. The proprietor of Global Chapters, a local cable channel said,

> We don't receive DD Kohima in Dimapur. We tried a lot to receive the signal but it's not happening. The deputy Commissioner has also passed an order to show DD Kohima as part of the cable bouquet but we don't receive the signal here in Dimapur. So, how can we provide when we don't receive the signal in the first place otherwise there's no problem in giving an additional channel? (Personal Interview)

While there are technological advancements in the field of communication, in Nagaland, even receiving terrestrial signals to receive local programming is a big challenge. The mere half-hour slot dedicated to local programming gets lost in technological inefficiency. Those places which do receive the signals express dissatisfaction regarding the programming quality. A respondent from Tuensang remarks,

> The programs are quite repetitive, rendering them monotonous. The picture quality is very bad compared to other channels. (FGD, Gabriel Ministry, Tuensang)

Some remember watching DD when cable had not come to Nagaland but with the coming of cable TV and then satellite TV, many have switched to other channels. The need for a separate channel for Nagaland was also expressed by many respondents such as the owner of Aries Music and Sports Foundation.

> Television, as I mentioned before, when I started the music (music contest recording), there was only audio but after sometime, I thought it has to be visual. Because visual is very important. So, when I launched the summer jam, I even invited the Director of Music Task Force, then advisor to MTF, Dr. Kire. I also wrote a small speech where I requested the department as well as the Government of Nagaland if they can bring up one entertainment channel for Nagaland because unless you have that, exposure wise, here any artist can record this that and door to door sale, so it's reaching only upto, say 2-3 persons in Nagaland but when you have visual, like TV, then especially for music or sports, in Nagaland if you have a separate channel, then everyone has the chance to see and that's how even this upcoming musicians or sportsmen, they get much exposure if we have a TV channel. That's what I think and so I requested. I don't know when the Government will take action. I really want that there should be a channel. (Personal interview)

This desire for a channel exclusively for the State of Nagaland was expressed by most of the respondents. They feel that without any platform to showcase the many talents in Nagaland, be it music, sports, and talent shows like 'Naga Orpheus Hunt' contest will amount to nothing. Lumping the entire Northeast region as one single entity with similar culture, religion and socio-political context makes it even more difficult for the people in the fringes of this region to carve out a niche for themselves.

The region known today as "Northeast India" was historically a much larger region whose borders with Southeast Asia were not clearly drawn for much of its pre-colonial history. In 1826, the region was incorporated into the British Empire and became 'frontier' area,

marking off Indian territory from the rest of the continent in the south east. The region, now called Assam (Manipur was not part of this region) became the site for an important colonial venture – the production of tea. This would transform the economy of the region as well as its social and cultural identity. In the reckoning of British administrators, Assam extended from Sylhet in the South to the Himalayas in the North. It thus included the Brahmaputra valley and its surrounding hills. The Naga Hills (Eastern Nagaland was not part of it), which were a part of these hilly tracts, came into prominence as a district of Assam when Assam was restricted as a new Chief Commissioner's province in 1874. (For good historical accounts, see Horam, 1990; Baruah, 1999, 2005)

British administrators, anthropologists and missionaries saw the region as exhibiting "ethnographic chaos" (Jacobs, 1990). They set out to organize hill peoples into ideologically devised categories such as 'primitives' who were to be incorporated into an emerging list of 'tribes' in India. 'Tribes' were relegated to the very bottom of the emerging social hierarchy and distinguished from their more 'civilized' neighbours in the plains. A "hard boundary" in the form of an inner Line was imposed between the hills and plains (Baruah 1999). Over time, the Inner Line Permit helped to crystallize the identity of hill tribes as distinct from those of the plains people and from the rest of India. The pre-colonial possibility of a more syncretic cultural identity emerging through the continual movement of people and goods across high and low lands was now closed. Western modernity reached the hills through Christian missions. These missions played an active role in establishing schools and hospitals and reforming the society by abolishing what they saw as decadent social practices like "head-hunting". A lasting legacy of the Christian missionaries in the hills was the conversion of oral languages into Roman scripts and standardised print forms in the late nineteenth century. Print culture especially the Bible played an important role in creating community

consciousness in some states. Christianity became a marker of difference between themselves and 'Indians'.

Even after the formation of individual states in the Northeast, the centrality of Assam still remains. It is known as the business and commercial hub of the Northeast. And this includes the media as well. This centrality of Assam has been a bone of contention in the Northeast where diversity is sidestepped and the entire region is lumped together as one homogenous entity and many a times, Assam becomes synonymous with Northeast. Albeit a different context, this tale of woe that Assam gets all the attention in the name of Northeast goes back to 1929 when a memorandum[45] of the NNC was presented by Mayangnokcha, the sole Naga member of the Constituent Assembly. He had presented the memorandum with high expectations that something fruitful would emerge out of the discussion but it was not to be. As he recounts his experience, "I tried to reason with them, but they were all sour. They do not argue straight. They twist your words. There is no love in them. Not one of them desired the Nagas' good. They only think of Assam."

International channels as a window to the outside world

Different respondents watched different channels but the most popular ones were news channels like BBC, CNN, Al Jazeera and infotainment channels like National Geographic and Animal Planet. Television offers the audience knowledge about different species of animals and birds and their importance in the overall ecosystem. It provides a vicarious experience of the outside world; staying in one place, they could travel virtually. They were exposed to the outside world and aspired to visit those places at some point of time. These

[45] The memorandum stated that for a period of 10 years, an interim government could be formed, after which, 'the Naga people will be left to choose any form of government under which they themselves choose to live' (Memorandum of the Case of the Naga People for Self-determination)

responses echoed Lerner's "psychic mobility", the ability and desire to project oneself into unfamiliar situations and places—such as the modern world that the West represented—and the aspiration to experience those conditions (Lerner cited in Melkote, 2001). In a sense, this allowed them to participate in other cultures as is seen in this response:

> Mostly I watch news channels, NDTV and BBC and I want to keep myself updated with the latest happenings and why I want to watch BBC news is specially for certain pronunciations which is really important for us and I mostly watch because of that also and I like watching sports channels, specially football, English Premier League (FGD, Alder College, Kohima).

> I don't get much time to watch TV and whenever I do, I watch sports, general knowledge to widen my knowledge and news, mostly BBC (FGD, Alder College, Kohima).
>
> I watch Discovery, news channels and also Star Movies. Discovery because it's very interesting, news channels to keep myself updated and since I am in theatre and movies, I like watching Star Movies. I learn a lot about film-making. (FGD, Dreamz Umlimited, Dimapur)
>
> I also watch Nat Geo, Discovery. I see these channels because the things which we don't see in our culture, we see from there; the things which we cannot experience, we experience through TV and in terms of plants and animals which we don't have in our state we see through TV, places. So, that's how we know what's going on around the world apart from our country or state because we are not the only living one here, there are many many people, different cultures and that's how we grow ourselves as well and that's how I think through TV, we interact with other cultures and other people (FGD, CCYE, Tuensang).

In many of these responses, empathy is implicit and they find a relationship between television and the jobs that they hold. Television helped them to widen their knowledge about the subject matter of their own professions. Television was a learning tool for them. The belief that television created in people an appetite for change was correct to some extent with respect to the Naga youth who expressed the requirements for modernisation: cosmopolitan, aspirational and innovative (Rogers, 1976; Schramm, 1964). It was a serious engagement for them. In a study by Butcher (2003) conducted among young people in

North and South India to examine the mechanisms of change and restraint with the coming of Star in India, it was found that young people resisted the idea that foreign television had a direct impact on their behaviour or way of thinking. In contrast, in this study, the youth acknowledge that television has an impact on them, but most think that it is a positive impact. Although many people watched television to gain knowledge, learn new things, it was also a source of entertainment and has a 'play' (Stephenson, 1964) aspect to it as well for other respondents. It provided solace to them from the real 'bad' world out there.

They used television to get pleasure out of its usage than as the medium of information and education, thus distinguishing play from work (ibid.). What some respondents thought about television was that it does not require skills in the operation and consumption and so it was purely for entertainment and pleasure.

Television seems to be caught between two kinds of thought among audiences: one that thinks that transnational television causes identity crises and the other that is optimistic that it provides them avenues to participate in the global culture without being restrained by boundaries.

Music and Naga youth

Music is officially recognized as an industry in Nagaland and recognising the role of music in society, the government stepped in to promote music by taking up various measures, including setting up the MTF (Music Task Force). Started in 2004 as the Special Task Force to come up with recommendations in the field of music, the MTF in its present form was set up in 2006. It focuses on the talent pool in the state and works to make them employable in the sector. A Centre of Excellence for Music and Performing Arts was also inaugurated in

Kohima, the capital of Nagaland, in 2014. That Nagas love music especially Western music was evident in the responses of many respondents:

> I like VH1, Discovery, Discovery Turbo, National Geographic, and sometime AXN. I like VH1 because MTV and Channel V give mostly Hindi songs of Bollywood and not English songs and as a musician, I like VH1 because they show English songs and they show songs of our choices sometimes. (FGD, Purple Hearts band, Tuensang)

In Nagaland, many grow up singing because as children, one is part of the church Sunday school and it becomes a continuing hobby for many and now, with the setting up of MTF, many youth are taking up music as a profession. There are two genres that are particularly popular in Nagaland, gospel music and Western music. With bands like 'Abiogenesis', 'Alobo Naga' and 'Tetso Sisters' going places and earning international acclaim, Naga folk songs are being deterritorialized. Old forms of Naga folk songs are perceived as monotonous and don't attract the young population, with whom fusion seems to be the norm.

What Connell and Gibson talks about world music and its deterritorializing place and identity is applicable to 'Naga' music. Traditional Naga folk music is quite contextual and territorial. The fusion and hybridity of Naga music 'emphasized both the impossibility of tracing authenticity in musical styles and the simultaneous exoticism and accessibility of distant musics' (Connell & Gibson, 2004:342). Commerce and culture are so intertwined in present Nagaland and setting up of a task force romanticizes and fetishizes marginality for Western, cosmopolitan audiences.

The bands mentioned above have done particularly well abroad because of its 'exotic' nature and they create an aura of some 'discernible connection to the timeless, the ancient, the primal, the pure' (Taylor quoted in Connell and Gibson, 2004:344). Taylor contrasts this with the western world which is 'often conceived as ephemeral, new, artificial and corrupt' and

leading them to buy the 'exotic' to experience the 'pure'. The creation and now the diffusion of this kind of music centre on 'uniqueness' of culture and 'virgin' lands. In the process of reviving traditions which is a much discussed topic in Nagaland, music has been capitalized by musicians to stir a feeling of loss of the past and how to revive 'authentic' Naga identity. Abiogenesis band describe their sound as a form of world music called 'Howey music'.[46] Their album 'Aeon Spell', 'Rustic Relish' and 'Slice of Heaven' were nominated to the Grammys. Adjectives like 'exotic', 'otherworldly' often accompany descriptions about their music in writings.[47] By introducing their band as a form of world music, they had from the outset targeted an overseas market by capitalizing on the traditional and 'exotic' folk music, a term which is detested and at the same time embraced. While it has gained a lot of popularity overseas, the local people found it outlandish as a respondent points out:

> They do it just for fame, for outsiders. It is such an artificial representation. (FGD, Purple Hearts band, Tuensang)

These ethnic and local fusions lent authenticity in the eyes of the 'outside' audience but in Nagaland, it was put to severe criticism. In contrast to music produced in places like Kohima and Tuensang where efforts are on to 'revive' old Naga traditional music, a different appropriation of programmes like American Idol happens in very remote places in Nagaland. In a village, Hakchang, in Tuensang district, the villagers have a local variant called Hakchang Idol and here it is transformed into a totally new expression. It is a territorialized event and the competition happens in the church – in that small enclosed space, the villagers live out their local and communal experience. This is a complicated and at the same time a creative and innovative instance of new technologies informing traditional modes of communication. It can also be looked at as a reversal of technology. While press, radio and television

[46] Indianbandshub.blogspot.in/2011/09/abiogenesis.html
[47] The full interview can be read at www.youthkiawaz.com/2013/11/meaning-says-reactivate-dead-cells-interview-abiogenesis-youth-drug-abuse/

employed and adapted a lot of personal communication aspects into their form, content and flow, in the case of Hakchang village, we see the reverse of it. There is an adaptation of newer forms of technology to the traditional form of communication. Although studies (Bertrand, 1987; Nederveen Pieterse, 2004; Curtin, 2003; Shim, 2006) are contesting that flows of culture and commodities are not unidirectional and that there are contra-flows (Thussu, 2007), in the case of Hakchang Idol, this is not the case. Appropriating American Idol and reinventing it into Hakchang Idol does not mean that it is bi-directional because it stays within the confined space, within the village for the consumption of only people in that village. The production and the consumption takes place in the same geographical space. While it breaks the barrier between the producer and the consumer in such community media, in relation to the corporate global and national media, it remains a one-way traffic. Many homes have satellite TV and they receive various channels, but nothing comes out of that place because of lack of technology. And even the platform in which the performance takes place is a physical space, the church.

Figure 6: A view of Hakchang Church with horn loudspeakers near the cross (Photograph by researcher)

Figure 7: A picture capturing the confluence of tradition and modernity in Hakchang village, Tuensang district (Photograph by researcher)

This also points to the traditional institutions like the Church playing a role in the transmission of messages within that village. The loudspeaker which is hung near the cross on the spire of the church is used to relay important messages to the villagers. There is a mass use of the church and the loudspeaker in the villages where I conducted my fieldwork. This in fact is a 'mass' use of the medium because it becomes 'compulsory' listening for all the villagers. And so, 'cultural imperialism' still holds ground in many places in Nagaland where the flow of culture and commodities is still purely uni-directional 'and the social and physical distances between these homes and the decisive political and productive centres of the society had become much greater' (Williams, 1990:23). The argument that 'cultural imperialism 'is a thing of the past' is a claim that is often employed by people who do not

live on the business-and-receiving-end of ideology and tend to overstate the two-way traffic of culture which is not true in many parts of the world.

Multiple identities in a multi-channel environment

Nagas have multiple identities: Indian identity, Naga identity, tribe identity, village identity, clan identity etc. as Kaka Iralu[48] puts it:

> I am from the Khonoma village from the Angami tribe. My political status and identity as a Naga starts from that village level…every Naga village is a sovereign democratic republic with its own sets of laws governing the village. The Iralu clan belongs in turn to the Meyasetsu clan. The Meyasestsu clan in turn belongs to the still wider and larger group called the Merhuma Khel. The Merhuma Khel in turn is one of the major Khels that make up the Khonoma village. The Khonoma village in turn belongs to the Angami tribe and the Angami tribe belongs in turn to the Naga nation. My sense of political identity, therefore, starts from the Iralu level to the Meyasestu to the Merhuma to the Khonoma to the Angami and ultimately to the Naga national level…
>
> At every level of my political identity, I have hundreds of clansmen, khelmen, village men, tribesmen and fellow Nagas who have the obligation to protect me as a Naga. I in turn have the same obligation and allegiance to all these levels of my political identity. This is how Nagas…have defied the mighty British empire for over century and India for half a century. In actual political reality, no Naga stands alone (Business Standard, 2011).

Along with these multiple identities, in a globalised world, identity as a marker has become even more complex. Audiences take on multiple identities which enable them to engage with television from different cultural contexts without giving up on their local identity. And this local identity is rigid among the Nagas. Studies have tried to explore the origin of the Nagas but haven't made much headway (Glancey, 2011; Oppitz et al, 2008).

[48]Retrieved from http://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/v-v-nagaland-s-tribal-complexities-111091702001_1.html

Schendel's concept of "Zomia"[49] elaborated by Scott (2009) provides a tentative but compelling explanation about the state-resisting strategies of the Zomias. Scott provides a framework with which to challenge the hegemonic nation-state discourse that presents the region and its people mostly in negative terms. These hilly regions were integrated into the nation states by the colonial powers each with their ideas of territorial integrity but they couldn't be assimilated and remained "ethnic minorities" within the nation state. This could be seen by their distinctive traits- cultivation and cropping patterns, livelihood choices, social and kinship structures, oral culture, flexible ethnic identities and the high altitude location in a rugged and inaccessible terrain can be read as a tactical positioning vis-à-vis the state (Karlsson, 2013). This bears resemblance to most Naga villages that were built on the top of hills with steep access paths and palisades of dense brier thickets and had just a few well-guarded entrances that would be closed at night by heavy wooden gates. What Scott argues is that it would be a mistake to think of Zomia societies as isolated, prehistoric, or primordial communities. Rather, these are people who have taken flight to the hills to evade the oppressive states and their incumbent taxation[50], enslavement, wars, and epidemics. These are not culturally or politically determined, but rather the entire societal design are "political choices", acts of resistance to evade incorporation into the state structures. And this explains the fluid ethnic that can be easily remoulded to serve political purposes.

Scott's book was received with much enthusiasm among scholars around the world and books (Karlsson, 2013) have been written about Northeast India with reshuffling of

[49] The term "Zomia" was coined by Dutch historian Willem van Schendel and it means "remote highlanders". It is a fictitious name given to a region, a vast hilly landmass comprising about one hundred million minority people, spread across the peripheries of nine nation-states. These region are hilly areas above the altitude of three hundred meters.

[50] Interestingly, commensurate to Scott's argument, house tax was levied on all the houses in the hills where the Nagas lived in Manipur. Along with this, there was demand for free and forced labour made on the villagers. This house tax and the levy imposed on villages to meet the costs of government officials touring the hill villages was known as *pottang senkhai* (Kamei, 2004). Similarly, the Manipur kingdom practised a system called *lallup*, wherin forced labour was imposed on the hill people. The similarities between the taxation imposed on the 'Zomias' by the valleys administrators and *pottang senkhai* and *lallup* are striking.

geography and thinking about the Northeast periphery in a new way. It was received with equal, if not more, enthusiasm among Northeast scholars too. Scholars like Sanjib Baruah have utilized the concept of "non-state spaces" in a compelling way to make sense of the political turmoil in the region. Scott's (2009) sympathies lie with the "self-governing" people in the hills, which is contrasted with the "state-governed" subjects in the valleys. Scott's study is particularly important to understanding the Naga society to lend it a pre-colonial historicity since very little is known about the pre-colonial history of the various Naga groups.

Scott's analysis of the lifestyles of people in the mountainous regions of Southeast Asia, of which Nagaland is an integral part, opens up a new way of thinking about Nagaland. It best explains why it remains aloof and ignores the commonalities of southern Asia's myriad borderland people. It also explains why nationalism matters so much to the Nagas.

The reason why I mention Scott's idea of "Zomia" as a people evading the state is because of the unanimously (except for a few alternative voices) strong stance on feelings of Naga nationalism and their reluctance to be named anything else but 'Naga'. Although all identities are socially constructed, the "radical" stance on Naga identity and the "radical constructionist" stance of Scott on ethnic identity formation bear similarities and so the concept is worth exploring. This "radical constructionist" argument of Scott has also received severe criticism from many scholars.

Problematizing the issue of identity by the respondents and how it afflicts the youth more than any other age group, a medical doctor from Tuensang district comments.

> Nagas have multiple identities. Eastern and forward Nagas, tribal level, village level, clan level. We may call Indians as being individualistic but they have a very strong individual identity based on their profession or what

> they do in a society but individualistic identity has not yet set in Naga society. Part of your identity comes from you being a researcher and me from being a doctor and so the political identity becomes a bit insignificant, but for teenagers, they have an identity crisis and so they need something to identify themselves and so Emo and all the Korean stuff appeal to them more. (FGD, CWP, Tuensang)
>
> I identify myself as Changsang, I identify with my family, my clan, my village, my community. Now when we come to Naga, the term 'Naga'[51] is not coined by Nagas themselves and maybe because of this, people have found a loophole …Every tattoo has got symphony and rhythm and it has a voice/sound too and so it's one form of our script. (Civil servant, FGD, CWP, Tuensang)

Although the social structures of the Nagas have undergone tremendous change from what it used to be before the coming of the British and the American missionaries, a Naga still identifies oneself right down to the smallest unit of his identity, the clan and then the village. 'Which village are you from?' is a very common query on meeting someone. The collective identity remains important today as it was in the past. According to Charles Chasie,

> But worse was to follow in the post-Independence period when, in the name of fighting insurgency, all traditional institutions and symbols of authority were mindlessly destroyed. Nevertheless, despite all these, the community spirit, or social capital, is still very strong among the Nagas who are yet to get used to a central administration! The pre-eminent position of the village in the not too distant past, and the Naga sense of identification and belonging to it, still exercise influences too powerful for Nagas to give in to an unclear higher authority over the village (Chasie, 2005:255)

The "anarchist" sensibilities in the formation of identity is prominent among the Naga youth and in their responses lies a "hidden transcript" (Scott, 1990). The hidden transcript is the sign and language with which the marginal communities speak among themselves. These transcripts or oppositions are not overt and not found in the public transcripts.

[51] The term "Naga"was adopted as an ethonym that provided a sense of identity when the idea of politically uniting the various Naga tribes was conceived in the early 20th century. Some scholars have traced the usage of the term "Naga" to the Greek philosopher Claudius Ptolemy's Geographia, who reported as early as 150 AD on the so-called land of the 'Nangalothae', north of Cirradia (Eastern Nepal) (Mills, 1926).

The responses gleaned from the study point to a hidden transcript that is not debated or contested in the mainstream Indian media. With no such platform available for debate about reshaping of identity, the Naga youth resort to strong opinionated 'hidden transcripts'. The hidden transcripts strengthen the sense of belonging among the community and the Naga identity gets further consolidated and concretized. Charles Chasie clearly explains:

> As a result of all these sudden changes and difficulties in coping with them, the Nagas emerged from the colonial period confused and unsure of themselves—only to find themselves engulfed in another violent conflict with the new Government of India. Their sense of insecurity may only have heightened their traditional determination to prove themselves over a bigger and more powerful adversary. Their cause for a common Naga identity was the most important thing left to them that they could call their own. Any insulting labels such as 'rebel', 'hostile', 'secessionist', etc. were met with silent determination to prove themselves even more. Similarly, any questions regarding their cause were not tolerated, and met with more strident calls. (2005: 257)

Naga identity is a product of multiple referents -- the ancient ethnic and traditional heritage, Christianity, Naga nationalism vis-à-vis the Indian state, modernity and now globalization.

With the passage of time, Naga youth seem to straddle between a kind of longing for a megastate (incorporation into a functional state) and at the same time a rejection of it. A sense of inner conflict is felt by the young Nagas today and there are multiple reasons contributing to it which Oppitz et al., explains below:

> …its traditional culture has by and large been consigned to oblivion, while any number of obstacles stand in the way of a new, all-encompassing identity: an underdeveloped economy and infrastructure, tribalism, the religious fundamentalism of the parent generation, the smouldering 'Indo-Naga Conflict' and a concept of culture coloured strongly by the new media, i.e. as a second-hand experience fed to them by any number of foreign programmes on satellite stations and via the internet.(Oppitz et al., 2008:12).

Television viewing, Christian morality and negotiation

Nagaland is a self-declared Christian state and a Naga identity is intrinsically bound to a Christian identity. The 20th century has seen several nationality movements in Northeast India and the oldest one which is still continuing is that of the Nagas. The Nagas inhabit the hill tracts between the Brahmaputra river in India and the Chindwin river in Myanmar. As John Thomas puts it, "Rallying behind the slogan 'Nagaland for Christ', this movement has been the site on an ambiguous relationship between a particular understanding of Christianity and nation-making" (2016: Abstract) and the present Nagas are termed as "Christian soldiers" by Bertil Lintner (2015:3). Naga nationalists thus have both an ecclesiastical and a secular fervour in their understanding of nationalism which is described by Lintner as 'a curious blend of revolutionary socialism and evangelical Christianity' (Lintner, 2015:45). Lintner goes on to write that when 132 Naga rebels reached China in 1967 and a training camp was established for them at Tengchong , near to the Burmese border in western Yunnan, Nagas stuck to their Bibles. A part of the NSCN manifesto (later to become NSCN I-M) reads explicitly about its Christian ideal and its worship of God as "the Christian God, the Eternal God of the Universe…to us the sovereign existence of our country, the salvation of our people in socialism with their spiritual salvation in Christ are eternal and unquestionable…we stand for socialism…we stand for the faith in God and the salvation of mankind in Jesus, the Christ, that is Nagaland for Christ." (excerpt of NSCN manifesto in Lintner, 2015:45)

Naga religion, before the advent of Christianity, is often described as animism. According to Verrier Elwin, it is of "a type common throughout tribal India" with a vaguely imagined supreme being and many minor deities, ghosts and spirits, and with a belief in an after-life

(Elwin, 1961). The exposure of the Naga to the outside world changed the entire worldview and ushered in changes that the old belief system is now beyond recognition and a thing of the past where only memories, passed down orally from one generation to the next remain. But this also built up a sense of belonging among diverse tribes and sowed the seeds of a common Naga identity.

When the Ao Nagas invited American missionaries to teach their children to read and write to aid in trading with the plains as they realized the practical utility and advantage of reading and writing, the missionaries who by then had already established schools in the foothills saw an opportunity. John Thomas succinctly puts it this way of the missionaries:

> …rooted in an expansionist and ethnocentric theological, cultural and political outlook, saw in the invitation of the Nagas an opportunity not only to teach reading and writing, but also to impress upon the Nagas, who he never considered as equals, of their 'uncivilized', 'degraded' and 'sinful' state of affairs and therein remould them into a new self according to his understanding of Christianity and civilisation (2016:20).

That was 1876 when Edward Clark, the American missionary at Sibsagar, stepped into the Naga Hills. Schools were set up in villages and the curriculum was aimed at inculcating the 'Christian truth'. And before long, the existing system of values and mores of Naga society had changed. A new consciousness was born and the Naga cosmology was altered. The first constitution of the NNC[52], adopted in 1958, stated that 'Nagaland shall be a kingdom for Christ' (Thomas, 2016) attests to the fact that Christian identity had become one of the important markers for Naga nationalism. Christian proselytization became an important part of the political campaign of the FGN[53] and the Naga Home Guards. The two went hand in hand. There is no clear demarcation between the state and the church and the two are

[52] Owing to the conflicts arising out of this Christian identity in Naga nationalism and conflicts with the movement started by Jadonang who didn't profess Christianity, the NNC later amended its constitution in 1968, and stated that 'Protestant Christianity and Naga Religion are recognised Religions in Nagaland' (Haksar and Luithui, 1984).

[53] Federal Government of Nagaland.

mostly coalesced. Although very little in the missionary outreach among the Nagas had prepared the latter to tackle political issues (focus was on personal salvation), over the decades, it can be said that Naga identity and Christian identity co-exist and Christianity informs almost every aspect of a Naga's worldview.

Christianity becomes a 'frame of reference' for the audience and this section deals with the relationship between audience and televisual engagement seen through the lens of Christianity. Although this theme was not part of the objectives that the researcher set out to explore, it was a recurrent theme that emerged in many of the responses and so I thought it worthwhile to include this theme. This would inform the role of religion in the formation of social and political identities and percolating down to the audiences' choices and engagement with popular media. I have not explored at length this vast topic but it would be an important area for future research. In Nagaland, Christian rhetoric is easily invoked in the public sphere and a research finding on print media in Nagaland published in The Hoot (Ninan & Sapriina, 2010) shows that expressions like "Praise the Lord", "God" are part and parcel of daily reportage.

There are many markers that define a 'good' Christian and among many things, consumption of obscene and indecent images come under the umbrella of 'sin'. The Bible verses that are often quoted in relation to what constitutes 'bad' viewing and hence to be avoided are:

> *Matthew 5: 28: "But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart".*
>
> *Matthew 6: 22-23: "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!"*

Verse like the ones quoted above are invoked by many to suggest that since there is a thin line between good entertainment and bad entertainment these days, one should exercise wisdom while engaging with television. And especially for a Christian, watching profanity is forbidden by the Bible and considered "un-Christian" to indulge in such. One respondent explains certain 'un-Christian' programming in these words:

> One thing I dislike about most movies is that majority of the movies project obscenity and watching all these is very unchristian because we are Nagas and we belong to a Christian community. For a Christian community, such values are very unacceptable and that is very negatively affecting the Nagas and very sadly the youth are more prone to be affected by the negative culture (FGD, YouthNet, Kohima)

Television becomes a space in which Christian morality is contested and along with the consumption of the televisual images, the audience becomes critics of the images and adopt Christianity as a frame of reference invoking Christian morality and doctrines. Agency on the part of Naga youth is evident in the way they articulate various aspects of their Christian identity and how they negotiate between these aspects. Sometimes the conflicts becomes evident as expressed by a respondent,

> Christianity has really played a very important role in the society. And it was them who brought education and we are reaping its fruit today. That is one of the greatest assets that they have brought to Nagaland. One of the causes which has affected society negatively to a large extent is television. It's all about sex. Almost everything has something to do with sexuality. The word 'sexy' which was once thought of as derogatory is now used to compliment one another. We just imitate the Western culture whereas we are nowhere near them in many aspects. On the positive side, we get a lot of ideas from TV channels like God TV, National Geographic. Ideas like social services and how to live in bio-diversity are gained from TV. With the positive always comes the negative and stakeholders like you and me should exercise the choice responsibly (FGD, Gabriel Ministry, Tuensang).

> Actually, I watch many channels but mostly VH1 and God Channel. In Tuensang, we don't get God channel but in other places, it's available. I like to watch that God channel because most of the time, I want to hear the word of God. I want to get more knowledge actually and then by watching God channel, I feel blessed and then I want to know how people, like in God channel, there are many people, youth like us, how God works in their lives and their lives have been changed. So, I want to know how their lives are changing and how God is working in different places all over the world (FGD, YCYE, Tuensang).

Here we see a concern for faith that lays emphasis on personal conversion, negotiating with personal sin, aspiring for personal redemption and maintaining purity in one's personal life so that one is not "wordly" and may ultimately gain eternal life after death. The above quotes suggest the presence of both 'good' and 'evil' on television. Although there are a lot of 'un-Christian' elements present on television which are seen as detrimental to the life of a practising Christian, television also provides a window to be part of the larger Christian community. Staying far away in a district like Tuensang, the youth are interested in knowing the lives of other young Christian youth in other parts of the world. The Christianity of American Baptist missionaries, which had a strong influence in shaping the Christian self of the early young converts, many of whom went on to become Naga national leaders, lasted long enough to connect the present youth to Christians beyond their immediate lifeworld. The 'other' is seen as part of the family and Christian identity overshadows all other identities. This gives one a sense of belonging to a larger family that transcends space. But this also means constructing the Christian identity keeping in mind the otherness of Indians as one respondent puts it,

> We cannot find any connection and relate to the Indians in any aspect. I think it dates back to our forefathers because when we were exposed to other people, we were exposed to the white people and we have set our eyes on them since it was them who actually opened

> our eyes with the coming of Christianity. (FGD, SETM, Nagaland University, Dimapur)

Christian teachings that call for a reorganisation of one's personal life and to keep away from the 'profanity' of the secular world and spend more time in prayer and reading of the Bible finds its continuity while engaging with television where a believer should not indulge in 'obscenity' and should withdraw from it.

The meanings represented by televisual texts and the ones prescribed by the Bible have been constructed as binary opposites. And total abandonment of watching these images seems to be the solution for those who take Christian teachings as the main guiding principles behind their everyday life. Christian identity superseded all other identities and had to be expressed or lived through, mediated and monitored by Christianity.

This discourse on Naga identity vis-à-vis Christian identity extends to the public sphere during the season of Hornbill festival[54]. The newspapers are replete with editorials and articles contesting and negotiating Naga ethnic identity and Christian identity. One of the best examples is the debate whether sale of rice beer should be allowed in the festival. People who were in favour of this argued that rice beer-drinking was a part of Naga tradition and so it should be allowed. People who were against it led by the church (there were many in the church that were anti-prohibitionists as well) reasoned that Christian identity is part of Naga identity since the notion of a Naga identity was born with the coming of missionaries and the spread of education by these missionaries. After years of intense debate, the church prevailed and thus drinking and sale of alcohol/ beer was banned. As observed by Stockhausen, the

[54] This is an annual festival held in Kisama, a heritage village, to showcase Naga culture. Started in 2000, it has become a very popular festival which attracts tourists from all over the nation as well as abroad. It has become a commercial success.

Government of Nagaland through Hornbill Festival offers the Nagas a re-enactment of a shared Naga culture culled from their old culture that never existed in this form, 'but only those elements that harmonise with Christian precepts of morality and religion' (2008:71). She goes on to say that 'much of what is shown at the festival serves a highly commercialised, superficial understanding of culture: only carefully selected, innocuous elements of the old cultures are presented as a kind of symbolic gesture.' (ibid.)

The viewing of 'indecent' visuals is associated with and viewed as a sign of a 'sinful' character. Television becomes a site of dilemma just as the earlier converts faced between meeting their obligations towards their village community which involved ceremonies and rituals and of following the strict directives of the missionary (Thomas, 2016). Although there are no directives and imposition on television watching, Christian morality which is deeply ingrained in the Naga clashes with the self and television becomes a site of tension and Christian worldview is negotiated. In this negotiation, the text is, in Stuart Hall's terms, 'preferred', 'opposed' or 'negotiated'.

Naga nationalism which had its genesis in the formation of Naga Club in 1918 hinged on three factors: the emergence of a middle class who were products of mission school education (Christianity), the experiences of the First World War and of a wider world beyond their land (transnationality) and the growing urge to define one's identity in contrast to their neighbours in the plains (Naganess Vs Indian).

Although Nagaland had been integrated territorially in the Indian Union, the rhetoric of "us" and "them" persists. Nehru envisioned a nation where there would be not just territorial integration but also culturally oneness when he said that "this Naga territory must form part of India and of Assam with which it has developed such close association…I think it would be desirable to encourage Hindustani as this will bring them in touch with the various

changes and developments taking place in India" (Nehru cited in Thomas, 2016: 105). This oneness could not be brought about in terms of religion since Nagaland records a Christian percentage of 87.93 (Census 2011) thus making it the Indian state with the highest percentage of Christians.[55] This is a dramatic rise since 1941 when the percentage of Christians in the Naga Hills was only 17.9.

> …if we are not careful, Indian culture will pervade every aspect of Naga life and the propaganda and rumour that Nagas were once Hindus is also being spread around. People may believe all these… (FDG, Ao group, Kohima)

Responses like this are reminiscent of the NSCN manifesto which in one of its sections regarding 'the process of Indianization of the Naga people on a massive scale' (Thomas, 2016: 172) states:

> Although as a doctrine Hinduism is not a recruiting force, it is not to be easily dismissed, since it is backed by a Hindu government. The forces of Hinduism viz, the numberless Indian troops, the retail and wholesale dealers, the teachers and the instructors, the intelligent, the prophets of non-violence, the gamblers and the snake-charmers, Hindi songs and Hindi films, the rosogula makers and the Gita are all arrayed for the mission of supplanting the Christian God, the Eternal God of the universe. (NSCN Free Nagaland Manifesto in Shimray, 2005)

The manifesto further perceives the threat with the 'introduction of decadent Hindu culture and literature…in the social and individual life of the Naga people through public institutions and mass media…'

Nagaland had always witnessed the reconciling of the nationalist struggle with the defence of Christianity and both the church and the NSCN continued to reproduce the existing

[55] Census 2011. Also see http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/religious-communities-census-2011-what-the-numbers-say/article7582284.ece

theological and cultural narratives that were handed down to them by the American missionaries.

Conclusion

To talk about the engagement of Naga audience with local, regional, national and international television only from an active vs. passive audience perspective or through a 'uses and gratifications' framework without exploring the historical context of their engagement would be to entirely miss out on the important factors. It would not adequately answer what makes up an audience in a particular context with a particular history. An audience comes with a package and many studies focus a lot on the individual preferences without rooting the investigation in history which leaves an indelible mark on the audience, many a times, not of their choosing. Preferring certain programmes and closing down on some are not done just for the sake of doing it.

It is in the context of forging a national identity in opposition to political control first by the British and then by the Indian nation-state that Christianity as an identity marker becomes relevant for the Nagas and how it informs their engagement with popular culture. Music, Christianity all form part of the Naga worldview and serve as a conduit through which reality is perceived, a worldview that is constantly being negotiated and keeps emerging. Although there are attempts to resuscitate the old traditions, a new concept of identity is beginning to emerge slowly, an identity that goes beyond tribalism and evangelical Christianity by the younger generation.

The young Naga audiences in their engagement with television displays this intense negotiation of their multiple identities. With diffused memories of their ancestors, a strong

Christian upbringing and caught in a highly contested political identity, the young Nagas bring all these facets in their readings and interpretations of television text. The young people also find themselves in a precarious situation where the social lifestyle and culture has leaped far beyond economic progress. With the local television industry hardly developed, and the regional and national television caught up in their own warp of selective representation, the young engage mostly with transnational media. And as they carve out an identity in this complex matrix from the local across the global, it is an expanded identity that is highly mediated with remnants of the memories of past injustices and struggles, an identity that goes beyond the borders of Nagaland.

Chapter 7
Conclusion

The aim of this study has been to understand the complexity, diversity and dynamism of Naga youth audiences by exploring their engagement with television within a larger historical, cultural and political context. The study opened with a discussion of the active audience research paradigm with the argument that there is a need for deep study of specific marginalized audiences. I then moved on to an exploration of the perceptions of media representation on mainstream Indian media by the Naga youth audience and finally examined how Naga youth negotiate with television.

Using qualitative method, I tried to explore Naga youth audiences' perceptions of mainstream television, their preferences, oppositions, and negotiations. Most of the studies on television audiences in India were done in a single-channel setting when satellite television had not yet reached its shores. Also the research was mostly done in 'mainland' India and thus does not address audiences in the peripheries. My study attempted to fill this gap in audience research, which is both empirically and theoretically underdeveloped within communication studies in India. This, I hope, will contribute to revitalize and widen audience studies and throw light on the complex local realities.

Television is not just about viewing, but it is a site where both real and imagined lives are negotiated. Arjun Appadurai (1996) suggests that in any given spatio-temporal location, the study of the *longue duree* with regards to consumption should also involve the simultaneous exploration of the histories and genealogies of particular practices. This double historicizing, he says, will likely reveal multiple processual flows and in studying the consumption practices of distinct societies, a host of different histories and genealogies present at the same moment

might be encountered. The study sought to answer three questions pertaining to Naga youth audience:

- How do Naga youth negotiate national television representation/portrayal of the Nagas and engage with the mainstream television which is dominated by hegemonic national imagery and language?
- Why have Korean audio-visual products captured the imagination of the Naga youth? What explains its popularity seen in the formation of an 'Arirang fan club', learning Korean language and adapting 'Emo'? To what extent can it be seen as questioning a dominant culture or subverting it in the face of the complex "Indo-Naga" political scenario?
- Caught in a tension between tradition and modernity, how do Naga youth come to grips with television images (emphasis on the specificity of local practices within a larger political and cultural framework) and balance the local, regional, national and global television?

In the following section, I summarize my research findings in terms of the theoretical framework which I outlined in the introduction and also the complexity of audiences discussed in Chapter 2, urging the field to move beyond simplified or dichotomised visions of audiences and providing a valuable lens through which to ask questions about, and to understand the phenomena of, particular audiences in a global media rich environment.

Discussion of the key themes

The following findings are based on the responses of the 59 young people and the 6 interviewees engaged in this study. Despite a small sample, their conceptualisations of

identity, representation, resistance and negotiation have been examined in sufficient detail for us to be confident about the validity of these points. Whilst the themes which emerged could be explored further for general audiences in future research, this study was specific to these young people living in a particular time and within certain locations. Therefore, although the study presents suggestive evidence, it does not make generalising claims. This section will synthesize the results of the study to answer the study's three central research questions.

a. **Misrepresentation, under-representation or no-representation:** I found various types of reflexive audience engagement embedded in the context of power structures in contemporary Nagaland. The power structures within which people engaged with media stemmed mostly from the forces of Centre-Periphery dynamics, self-determination ideology, and the Indo-Naga political issue. The social, cultural and political aspects within which the engagement was embedded were Naga sub-nationalism, feeling of a unique and distinct Naga identity, access to the transnational media and the sheer mass of media technology and products. Nearly all respondents feel that the representation of the Nagas is biased. They articulated concerns regarding the representation on mainstream Indian channels. A key finding is that the youth are disappointed at how they are portrayed on television channels. The fact that representation is problematic lends credence to Hall's (1997) argument which he identified as using representation as a "replacement" for reality. He asserts that ideologies become 'naturalized' and ideologically motivated representations mask themselves as 'common sense' (Hall, 1981). Media representations of minorities are constructed in accordance with dominant ideologies which serve to shape and control how individuals understand others and themselves. Thus, we see in media representations, a complex system of hegemonizing and hierarchizing values and practices between the mainstream and the rest. A region like Nagaland does not find

itself within the narrative and memory of the nation and it holds importance only regarding the territorial integrity of India (Kikon, 2005).

b. **Stereotyping:** Discussions with participants in the study revealed the persistence of stereotypes in mainstream Indian television. Institutional practices and socio-political hegemonic ideologies clearly have an impact on the way minorities are represented in the media; these representations are mostly limited, distorted and highly stereotypical. Stereotypes rampant in colonial and anthropological literature get reinforced. Hall (1981) suggests that such representations are grounded in a series of alleged 'essential' characteristics that reinforce the naturalisation of such representations. Stereotypes are harmful because the images park themselves for long in the memory of the audience who are not familiar with the people beyond the screen. Non-recognition or misrecognition, says Taylor (1994), can inflict harm and also can be a form of oppression by imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being.

c. **Ethnicity as a marker in shaping identity:** The role of ethnicity in shaping participants' conceptions of identity surfaced as a prominent theme in the discussions and this revealed intricate and nuanced insights into the youth's understandings of ethnic identities. Ethnicity appeared to be a key structural influence on ethnic minority participants' constructions of their identities. But at the same time, being Naga was not conceptualised as a totalising identity marker. Their articulations also foregrounded that they conceived their identities as complex and diverse.

These key results point to the larger discourse of minorities and the relationship between media power and ethnic minorities. In the age of globalisation and multi-channel television,

mainstream Indian television's responsibility should also be to represent diversity. As evidenced in the findings, depriving ethnic minorities of the right to have a prominent voice in the stories that concern them only furthers their positions as strangers, as 'others' in the national imagination. The youth's disenchantment about lack of contemporary technologies of production and information also points to the continuing micro-identities that have become political projects within the nation-state and which assimilation projects have failed to curb.

Aspects like resistance and appropriation were found in the youth's engagement with television. Many of the participants tend to watch Indian channels in the oppositional manner described by Hall's encoding-decoding model (1980), resisting the hegemonic tendencies of most of the mainstream channels. Many responses pointed to resistance to mainstream ideologies that dominates the channels and programmes. In resisting preferred readings, they create their own alternative meanings. These resistant viewings stemmed from the bigger political issues between the Centre and the Nagas that have been going on for decades as outlined in Chapter 2. It is difficult to talk about the engagement of Naga audiences without focussing on the larger issues of Naga nationalism and its history. The two strongly inflect one another as can be seen in the responses of the participants who frequently invoke Naga identity vis-à-vis Indian identity.

Korean Wave and its sway among the Naga youth

Why have Korean audio-visual products captured the imagination of the Naga youth more than the Indian media and what explains its popularity in the extension of the formation of an 'Arirang fan club', learning Korean language and adapting 'Emo' (a term generally used to signify a particular relationship between fans and artists, and to describe related aspects of

fashion, culture, and behaviour). Also, to what extent can it be seen as questioning a dominant culture or subverting it in the face of the complex "Indo-Naga" political scenario?

In reading Korean movies and serials, although there is a clear sense of self in accordance with traditional notions of masculinity and femininity, on closer reading some comments demonstrated that they did not wholly conform to these gendered positions. For the girls, ideals associated with hegemonic masculinity within Naga society such as toughness were not necessarily what they sought. Consequently, the girls' conceptualisations of male identity gradually become destabilised. And they see in Korean actors an 'escape' from the pressures of conformity to traditional patriarchy norms. For the boys, they saw Korean male actors as not complying with hegemonic masculine ideals. Conventional masculinity is still utilized as a point of reference to negotiate conceptions of masculinity. With Korean films and serials being so popular, it seems likely that traditional gendered identities will eventually become outmoded and less useful in contemporary society.

The youth use Korean media for different reasons as shown empirically in Chapter Five. One of the main reasons is their identification with the Koreans in terms of race and appearance, what Straubhaar (1991) terms as 'cultural proximity'. They appropriate images, ideas and products and connect with the transnational worlds and then incorporate the appropriated aspects in their everyday lives, creating their own worlds. Uses and gratifications studies identified using media in such ways as a form of appropriation insofar as people use it for their own purposes. Utility values take precedence and not the messages. The youth aimed to articulate their own identities through consumption, especially fashion.

Negotiating the local, regional, national and the international media

Caught in a tension between tradition and modernity, how do Naga youth come to grips with television images (emphasis on the specificity of local practices within a larger political and cultural framework) and balance the local, regional, national and global television?

Articulations of individuality were conveyed by the participants expressing originality and uniqueness. Thus, individualism was equated by the participants with an empowering agency, through which they believed a successful self could be achieved through the establishment of a unique identity of their own making and not relying on the previous generations. But this individualism still has elements of collectivism as opposed to Western understanding of individualism. Individualism as a phenomenon is not prevalent in Naga society and explaining it through the lens of Western definition becomes problematic. In these social and technological changes and changes in everyday life, we can see the embeddedness of globalisation in local life. A few Naga movies that are being made are intended for a global audience and in this we see the 'deterritorialisation' of Nagaland. Another dimension of audience engagement with transnational channels is to explore the outside world and utilize it for honing their skills like learning English. The Nagas' penchant for English language was expressed by many and they see in English more opportunities to build their career. Globalisation reorganizes culture as can be seen in the hybridization of culture in Nagaland. Hall (1992:300) wrote of the effects of globalisation on national identity, citing three ways in which national identities are adapting to global phenomena:

1. National identities are being *eroded* as a result of the growth of cultural homogenization and the 'global post-modern'.
2. National and other 'local' or particularistic identities are being *strengthened* by the resistance to globalisation.
3. National identities are declining but *new* identities of hybridity are taking their place.

In my study, I found similar phenomena as the one given by Hall. There is rejection of a larger Indian identity and, to some extent, traditional Naga identity as well, but at the same time, a sense of Naga identity is also being strengthened. With one foot entrenched in traditional mores and claims to self-determination as distinct from Indian identity, the Nagas are also going through a transition, with new identities emerging.

Bereft of adequate representation of Nagas within the media, as these discussions have demonstrated, these individuals identified with values, not celebrities per se; therefore it is feasible that family, cultural and religious values exerted a greater significance on their conceptions of identity as was highlighted by some respondents in chapter 6 which emphasized the centrality of religion in their identities.

By sustaining membership of multiple identities, the youth escape from the confines of tradition and ideology permeating domestic and national structures. The creation and recreation of identity balancing tradition and modernity for these young people involves intra-cultural, inter-cultural and transnational interaction. And audio-visual cultural products create and sustain such multiple identities and validate Lerner's "psychic mobility", the ability and desire to project oneself into unfamiliar situations and places—such as the modern world that the West represented—and the aspiration to experience those conditions (Lerner cited in Melkote, 2001). Important aspects of personal experience and life-history – personality attributes, or physical attributes, relation and experiences with parents and friends – become increasingly more important than social attributes in shaping the lifestyle for a person. With the dissolution of traditional class structure, the youth want to be identified by their cultural tastes and lifestyles. The multiple worldviews that are presented to them (privatization, secularisation, pluralism, liberalism) are incongruent with both the ancestral, traditional communal codes and protestant theological worldview of the Nagas, and the

youth constantly contest these different worldviews and try to construct something meaningful in their engagement.

At the same time, the idea of reversal of technology was revealed in people's engagement with media in certain remote areas of Nagaland. There is an adaptation of newer forms of technology to the traditional form of communication. As discussed at length in Chapter 6, through this process of re-embeddedness, people recreate the traditional means of communication with modern characteristics making it still relevant to the villagers at large, retaining the shared characteristics of communication.

Significance of the study

This study is important in that it provides insights into an audience who are still negotiating issues of national identity and are positioned in a liminal space. This negotiation is peculiar in the sense that the Nagas still are negotiating for a separate state from the Indian Union. This makes the youth highly critical of representations in the mainstream Indian media and they seek alternative platforms. A study of this kind brings a nuanced understanding of audiences in different political and social settings thus enriching the field. And because of the peculiarity of its historical, political, social and cultural context, meanings for Naga audience may be quite different to those in other places.

The theoretical cases for audience research therefore needs to be broadened in order to understand the dynamics of minorities and audiences in the peripheries and issues like sub-nationalism.

If media matters in terms of representation, access, in the peripheries are not addressed, then, the media which is concentrated in the hands of a few conglomerates will continue to

construct the identity of the marginalised leading to further alienation. To help prevent the fracturing identity and to have a different worldview represented, the task of deconstruction will have to result in giving voice to the unreached. There should be genuine attempts to map the stories by the community, and that conceptual production arising out of the people themselves can be shared and re-presented. Only then can issues of apathy, ignorance and a headstrong denial of history be corrected. However, there is scant audience research on ethnic minority communities, especially in the Indian context.

Recommendations for future research

To better understand audiences, the particular cannot be ignored and there is need for more context-sensitive case studies at the local level to allow further assessment of local dimensions of the subject. Concepts like multi-ethnicity and diversity should be explored and investigated keeping in mind the nuances of the place and people and not treated as universals. In particular, research about media policy for cultural diversity in the Indian context, ethnographic studies of ethnic minority engagement with alternative media as examples of resistance to nationalistic discourses, and studies of the diverse audiences within Indian society are well overdue. The present study, although limited, is hopefully a point of entry and contribute to relevant academic and policy debates on the future of Indian television and its democratic commitment to represent people of all cultures and ethnicity.

Limitations of the study

The study has offered an audience perspective of their engagement with television by using grounded theory and ethnography approaches. While I have aimed to achieve some

important insights with this study by means of my findings, I acknowledge several limits to its scope. Due to methodological constraints, the study encountered a number of limitations which need to be considered. One of my findings was that global culture vis-à-vis transnational television are embedded in the youth's local life. However, it has not been part of this project to offer a comprehensive analysis of globalisation. The audience had talked about a lot of programmes on television in their responses, the analysis of which, has been outside the scope of my research. Although I made sure that my sample was diverse in terms of gender, tribes, occupation, education, urban and rural location, the sample was not intended to be representative or to provide grounds for generalizability. There were many expressions or experiences that English terminology or concepts failed to capture and thus were left out because of time constraints. These will be picked up in future projects.

Also, television watching, mobile phones and internet engagements go simultaneously for many people and this was not accounted for in this study. Focussing on multiple engagements with media and ICT which has become common for the Naga youth may elicit different responses and this could not be taken up due to limits on my time and space.

Reflections on the future of Nagaland and Television

Coming through strongly from my informants' stories was disenchantment about the representation of the Nagas on mainstream Indian television, which was a recurring response by almost all the respondents. They also lamented the fact that out of numerous channels, there was not even a single channel that was dedicated to the state of Nagaland. And this dissatisfaction has led to people looking outward for solutions and has also led to an increased awareness of alternative, often transnational, ways of life and values, as these become visible in a world of widely diffused media and now ICTs. With its strong sense of

distinction from mainland India, it appears that the idea of being an Indian is not easily accepted by the Naga youth despite ongoing interactions and reconciliations with the 'other' at a larger scale. Media can play a role in the gap between the strengthening of the traditional conception of Naga national identity stemming from the Indo-Naga political history and the erosion of that identity through active adaptation to the West and now East Asia. On the one hand, while the youth reflexively re-Nagaise themselves as members of an 'imagined' Naga community, they momentarily dis-embed from their locale by means of satellite television and other audio-visual cultural products that transcend boundaries and re-embed themselves in the Western or, more generally, the larger world. It is either a strong local identity or a global identity or a glocal identity, bypassing the national Indian identity. The findings show that the youth find it easier to connect transnationally, free from state control, and in these engagements with overseas cultural products, which they appropriate in their lifestyles, a 'hidden transcript' (Scott, 1990), a symbolic language with which they communicate with each other, can be found . This layer of national identity in the case of the Naga makes it a very complex audience which hardly bears any resemblance to other audience studies.

One question that kept coming to me from the findings of the study was why Naga youth tend to connect with 'distant others' more easily than the 'Indian other' closer home? They effortlessly de-Nagaise themselves into individuals beyond their own culture and ethnicities, an identity otherwise very strong. What role can media and television in particular play in bridging this gap? Media (print) has also played an important role in imagining the nation (Anderson, 1983). If print could create 'imagined communities', television may play an even important role in terms of expanding the social, cultural spaces, and, this in turn, may expand mindsets what Hannah Arendt (1990) calls 'enlarged mentality' which I have explained in Chapter 4. For that, it is important that there is joint partnership and not a one-way

communication as is the case now. A "community of sentiment" (Appadurai, 1990), a group that begins to imagine and feel things together can be made possible by media. An inclusive representation may orient viewers from other different audiences to segments of the population who are marginalized. Media will have to refuse to go along with societal norms and values which seek to erase identities, ignore those with no voice, or silence the powerless.

The strong nationalistic imaginations are slowly being affected by mass-mediated imaginary that transcends national space. The findings are evidence of the fact that audiences are neither passive nor active and that their engagement involves resistance, selectivity and agency. Audiences are mostly ambivalent. The youth by appropriating these televisual products are not just reacting to Indian hegemonic forces but they are reacting to their own local and traditional forces.

ICTs have created new possibilities for transnational forms of communication and give an opportunity to the youth to create a community that bypasses the surveillance of the nation-state and of large media conglomerates. In this environment, it has become easier to communicate rapidly across local, national and international lines. The internet gives a platform to the youth for debate, dialogue and further bonding of the Naga community that are territorially scattered. An example is that of a convention of the Naga-Americans recorded and posted on The Naga Blog[56] thus connecting Nagas and producing a locality in the nation they reside. Naga community overseas can now be directly involved with the

[56] The Naga Blog is a Facebook closed group that was created in 2008. As of July 28, 2016, it had 72,290 members. Its description of the group is "The Naga Blog is a forum on Facebook from around the world to network, share ideas and discuss a wide range of topics from politics and philosophy to music, sports, fashion and current events in Nagaland and beyond. The blog is not owned by any individual, organization, political party, faction or denomination. Get a sneak peek of Nagaland and beyond right here in The Naga Blog." Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/groups/thenagablog/

developments in Nagaland through the mobilization of ICT. This is creating a big change in the media environment that is still to be studied in the Nagaland context.

But new media is also not faring much better than the mainstream media. According to the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, the Northeast II circle which includes the sates of Arunachal, Manipur and Nagaland, has an overall tele-density of 8.71%. There is no community radio in Nagaland and it is mainly because of the Centre's paranoia that new media platforms might get into the wrong hands of various groups and these fears influence and feed into the media policy in the peripheries (Sen, 2011). The media seeks sensationalism to improve its ratings, but since it has a vested interest in ensuring the survival of the state, it is unusual for mainstream organisations to speak on behalf of dissenting voices, especially the voices of so-called 'revolutionary' groups (Cole, 2006).

Some final thoughts

In spite of technological advances and numbers being added to television channels, audience studies are still very limited in India and even more so when it comes to audiences in the peripheries. Micronarratives are important, but often left out in research. The present study has tried to fill that gap by taking up a case study of Nagaland and shown that the audiences are caught in a web of channels but without any say in it. These narratives of the audiences are deeply connected to politics, testimonies that retain their sense of Naganess and at the same time negotiating and evolving constantly. The study hopefully will encourage attention to the worldviews and agency of those who are marginalized or dominated and bring to light the situated differences and comparisons of audiences situated in different space and time.

The notion of identity has been fundamental to this study, but this concept remains abstract, ambiguous and difficult to define. In academic literature, identity is mostly conceptualised in terms of broad categorisations, such as gender, class, caste and ethnicity. This study, however, aimed to explore the issue of identity through identifying how it was understood by young people themselves.

Audiences are complex. Their multiple experiences are not fixed but fragmented and always in flux. These and their diverse backgrounds feed back into their engagement with television. There is a constant shift from the traditional to hybridized cultures and vice-versa as audiences. In this sense, neither the picture painted by media imperialism nor that of active audience theories can accurately account for the experiences of a particular audience situated in a particular place. Homogenization, re-Nagaisation and hybridization all go hand in hand. Analysis of particular audiences can serve as a modest step towards revisiting audiences and broadening the framework by taking into account concepts of resistance, power structures, ideologies, and issues of nationalism/ sub-nationalism which greatly inform an audience's engagement with television. Focussing on the peculiarity of a culture will widen the scope of research in this field and provide fresh insights without having to utilize similar concepts, theories and methodologies over and over again. Without dismissing media imperialism, the dichotomy between active audience and media effects has been problematized. I have tried to show from the findings that media effects people in the sense they appropriate images and ideas on media, but the effect is unpredictable since their power is diffused by various factors.

Under the present historical conditions, with the economic, historical, and cultural meanings of Nagas fluctuating and often times contradictory, research on audiences also need to move beyond the limits of the nation-state boundary, to develop discourses congruent with the new conditions to create a new discursive temper, and to imagine new possibilities.

The trends in consumption are linked to structural and political shifts. The Naga youth's fascination and engagement with all things Western and now East Asian cultural products can also be seen as thinly disguised nationalistic sentiments and antagonism. From the vantage point of the Naga youth audience, unable to relate to the framework of most of the mainstream Indian channels, television engagement becomes a site for suppressed hostility being played out and a complex arena for re-enacting the tensions and confusions that characterizes the relations between the Nagas and the Government of India.

There seems to be a correlation between television consumption patterns and political status. Although media products change over time and cultural products of other countries make their way into Nagaland, the argument remains that in Nagaland, they find easy reception. The central argument is the identity formation, consolidation and negotiation of identity in relation to mainland India and the role of media in it, particularly televisual media. The thesis works around the ideas of media as providing a channel to create an imagined community of identification and media as representing difference with those outside the community.

The research is important because media being a powerful tool can help in fashioning a nation that is just, coherent and maintains a non-hierarchical relationship with different regions without suppressing communities and identities.

In the narratives of the respondents, the Naga identity appears to lean on the war against the Indian state, and this appears to lead to strong anti-India feelings, a reaction to the internal colonialisms of the nation-state (Hechter, 1975). One of the attributes of internal colonialism

is when the metropolitan core dominates an underdeveloped periphery politically and exploits it economically. Although Hechter's work was about the Celtic fringe in the British Isles, it holds true for many of the peripheries in India too where development is still very slow and media is still at a very nascent stage. The periphery exists within an unequal and dependent economic and political relationship with the metropolitan core. Besides political and economic conflicts, there is also a cultural conflict in terms of language and religion between the core and the periphery. This long unresolved historical and political Indo-Naga issue only heightens distinctive ethnic identification. Irrespective of the group that the respondents belonged to, there appears to be a consensus with respect to this feeling even among the politically disinterested Nagas. Indian and Indian-oriented television businesses are becoming more visible in the international broadcasting stage. However, one can ask, what kind of television would that be? In the run for attracting diasporic audience, there is a bias in programming and the themes will lean towards the urban and the affluent. The people at the periphery get further sidelined and rendered invisible. Minorities like the Nagas will not feature at all in the television world. Maybe Indian television has been successful in checking US domination of the airwaves and is evolving into a counter-hegemonic television culture, but within the nation, it has not done enough to break free as a hegemonic force.

The popularity of Korean audio-visual programmes in Nagaland supports the theoretical models in international communication that suggest an asymmetrical interdependence of industries and a trans-border flow based on audience demands for content in close proximity to their own culture. The transnational media products become a space of contestation in which individuals and groups seek to appropriate the global into their own practices of the modern (Appadurai, 1996). The Naga youth affinity for Western and East Asian media products is a rich testimony both of the global culture and at the same time a story of resistance. Commenting on the public lynching of a man in March 2015 for the alleged rape

of a Naga girl, Parvin Sultana argues that 'the entire political discourse of the region is based on the 'insider-outsider' dichotomy" (Sultana, 2015). She attributes development deficit, politics of sub-nationalism, and secessionist movements, as the reasons for the creation of this insider-outsider dichotomy, and concludes that this lynching was not only a failure of administrative machinery but a failure of collective imagination – an imagination that continues to view people through the lens of 'us' and 'them'. Another argument that runs on the same lines of 'us' and 'them' dichotomy regarding the same incident was given by an anonymous author[57] who views this outrage as a culture of impunity that the Northeast had internalised since the enforcement of Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) that came to the Northeast in 1957. The reason that I cite this example at length is the role media plays in reporting such incidents. In light of the lynching in an urban and cosmopolitan district like Dimapur where different communities stay and which is the only plain district and not closed off by the Inner Line Permit, Sanjib Baruah attributes media to be an active contributor to such moral panics (Baruah, 2015). He says that in a new media environment of mobile phones, the Internet and social networks, such mobilisation of these varied media could move crime and punishment from the courts and prisons to the street turning the street into a 'theatre of the absurd, or reality television of a frightening variety'. The few mainstream news media outlets that cover such incidents lose interest at once not to mention their ahistorical analysis of such phenomena leaving the audience further polarised and reinforcing stereotypes of a people and pitting communities against each other.

The experience of discrimination, without a real sense of belonging to the past and confusion, tends to produce feelings of insecurity and a nostalgia for an idealised past. This leads to encouraging cultural revivalism to maintain, strengthen and revive cultural traditions which are seen to be under threat and 'extinction'.

[57] http://scroll.in/article/713518/A-culture-of-impunity:-the-story-ofDimapur-lunching-started-with-AFSPA.

The engagement of Naga youth with television shows that the interaction is dynamic and interpretive and it throws light on how people create, enact, and change meanings and actions. They don't respond mechanically to the portrayals and representations of their imagery on television. While negotiating with televisual aspects, they reconstruct the portrayals and representations.

Forty years ago, the exiled Russian dissident, Alexander Solzhenitsyn wondered in a BBC interview: "Why is that societies …with access to every kind of information suddenly plunge into lethargy, into a kind of mass blindness, a kind of voluntary self-deception?" (Solzhenitsyn quoted in Mody, 1979: 128). With ever-increasing "connectedness" in terms of the sheer volume of media and ICTs, we may well plunge into this sort of complacency, if not for micro-narratives that us stir out of this lethargy and make us aware that the world has a long way to go to be truly connected. Coupled with the history of Naga nationalism, discontent engendered by communication and media inequalities, Naga youth will further seek out alternative media, strengthening Naga national consciousness. While the roots of this national consciousness and the reasons for its persistence are many, media also plays a role in this parochialism. A general lack of interest in things at the periphery needs to be taken by its horn. However small the audience maybe, everyone desires to have some agency and not just be choosers. And this, I believe, to be a human trait which cannot be suppressed easily. Nobody wants to be denied real agency. To mobilize the humanistic sentiments of audiences from across the country, Indian media will have to recalibrate its framework of pitting one community against the other or else audiences in the fringes will reach out to transnational media products that are culturally proximate, making the nation even more of a profoundly contested community on the divisive lines of ethnicity, religion, caste, language and region – contingencies that set the stage for discrimination and, in extreme cases, igniting group violence and communal terror. A framework that is general enough to apply

to the entire nation yet sensitive enough to accommodate local variations is not going to be an easy task, but it cannot be impossible either in this age of technological advancement. With so much legislation in place like the National Security Act, the Armed Forces Powers Act 1958, the Nagaland Security Act 1962, and the Disturbed Areas Act 1955 to address the 'security' issues of the people, the central government could as well add an Act to address the communication needs of the people as K. Sankaranarayana, the then Governor of Nagaland, said in his speech at the inauguration of Highland Dawn Media, a television studio[58], "A free and vibrant media is the oxygen of democracy." A vibrant media, which is considered to be the fourth estate of a democracy, would be in keeping with the Indian Constitution that spells out cultural diversity and a pluralistic political system as the bedrocks of the nation. Responsible media can be a harbinger of understanding and reconciliation.

I started this study by asking the Naga youth what culture means to them and they provided maverick and novel responses, and offered varying and dynamic interpretations of culture. From all the responses gleaned, because of the amorphous nature of culture, it is difficult to give it a single definition. Whatever different routes and sensibilities they took to defining culture and for all their interpretations, some traditional and some quixotic, they seemed to converge or hinge to an overarching definition sociologist, Daniel Bell had provided. This short definition encapsulates the responses provided in the study and I align with his definition when he says:

> *Culture is the effort to provide a coherent set of answers to the existential situations that confront all human beings in the passage of their lives* (1976: xv)

Negotiating television is another joint search for identity by the youth to receive recognition and to create an identity by drawing on the new and the old.

[58] Highland Dawn Media produces programmes mostly with Christian values and ethics for channels like NE TV.

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APPENDIX-I

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name:
2. Age:
3. Gender:
4. Educational qualification:
5. Occupation:
6. Do you have television at home? Yes/No
7. Tick the ones you have at home:

   ☐ Cable ☐ DTH ☐ Doordarshan ☐ None
8. What are the programmes that you mostly watch on Television? Mention the programmes with the channels.

   _____

   _____

   _____
9. Do you subscribe to newspaper/s? Yes/ No
10. What are the newspapers that you subscribe to/read?

    _____

    _____
11. Do you use the internet? Yes/ No
12. How do you use the internet? ☐Broadband ☐ Internet cafe ☐ Mobile Phone ☐ others
13. Do you listen to the radio? Yes/ No

APPENDIX-II

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. What does 'culture' mean to you?

2. How is 'India' represented in the national channels? What is your response to that?

3. Whose culture do you think is represented or projected on national television channels? How do you react to that?

4. How in your opinion is Nagaland and the Nagas represented in the Indian media?

5. Does television bridge or widen the gap between Nagaland and mainland India and how?

6. What does a channel like 'Arirang TV' mean to you?

7. What do you think are the reasons behind the popularity of Korean media among the Nagas ?

8. What effects do you think television has on everyday lives of people in Nagaland?

9. How do you reconcile your own traditions, values and beliefs with those found in the televisual images?

10. How do you identify with the content of the local TV which follows a very different format and content compared to satellite channels?

11. What role has Television played in bringing about an intellectual and cultural transition /revolution among the youth in Nagaland?

12. Do you think it is appropriate to say that, although Nagaland is part of the Indian state, international channels capture the imagination of the Naga youth more than Indian channels? If yes, then why?

13. Where is Nagaland heading in the coming years and how can media play a role in the future of the Nagas?

14. How often do you watch television?

15. What are the channels and programmes you prefer watching? What are the reasons for watching those channels?

APPENDIX-III

LIST OF FIGURES