

**TRAJECTORIES OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN
NAGALAND: INSIGHTS FROM 1964 - 2018
ELECTIONS**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD IN
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**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
POLITICAL SCIENCE**

BY

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ABBREVIATIONS

AITC	: All India Trinamool Congress
AAP	: Aam Aadmi Party
APP	: Adarsh Political Party
BJP	: Bharatiya Janata Party
DAN	: Democratic Alliance of Nagaland
DLP	: Democratic Labour Party
DPN	: Democratic Party of Nagaland
ENPO	: Eastern Naga People's Organisation
EU	: Elected Uncontested
FGN	: Federal Government of Nagaland
GPRN	: Government of People's Republic of Nagaland
INC	: Indian National Congress
IND	: Independent
JD (S)	: Janata Dal (Secular)
JD (U)	: Janata Dal (United)
JLP	: Joint Legislature Party
KIM	: Kuki Inpi Manipur
LJP	: Lok Jan Shakti Party
MLA	: Member of Legislative Assembly
MP	: Member of Parliament
NCN	: Nationalist Convention of Nagaland
NCP	: Nationalist Congress Party
NDM	: Nationalist Democratic Movement
NDP	: Nagaland Democratic Party

NDPP	: Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party
NEFA	: North-East Frontier Agency
NHTA	: Naga Hills Tuengsang Area
NGO's	: Non Governmental Organisations
NMA	: Naga Mother's Association
NNC	: Naga National Council
NNDP	: Naga National Democratic Party
NNO	: Naga Nationalist Organisation
NNP	: Naga National Party
NPC	: Naga People's Convention
NPC	: Nagaland People's Council
NPCC	: Nagaland Pradesh Congress Committee
NPF	: Nagaland People's Front
NPMHR	: Naga People's Movement for Human Rights
NPP	: Naga People's Party
NSCN-IM	: National Socialist Council of Nagaland- Isaac Muivah
NSCN-K	: National Socialist Council of Nagaland- Khaplang
NSF	: Naga Students Federation
RJD	: Rashtriya Janata Dal
RLD	: Rashtriya Lok Dal
SP	: Samata Party
SRP	: State Regional Party (This abbreviation is given for the convenience of data analysis. It includes DPN, UFN, UDF, NNDP, NPC and NPF).
UDA	: United Democratic Alliance
UDF	: United Democratic Front

UFN : United Front of Nagaland
ULP : United Legislative Party
UNC : United Naga Council
UNDP : United Naga Democratic Party

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The present chapter aims to state the research problem along with research questions, objectives, methodology and conceptual framework. Besides, the chapter also presents literature review covering origin, meaning, scope, characteristics and various types of political parties under a dedicated section. The section intended for giving a broad understanding about political parties rather than finding or listing the universally acceptable meanings and definitions of the political terminology. Further, the chapter briefly describe the organization of the thesis and limitations, towards the end.

The chapter is divided into three main sections i.e., the Section-I deals with introduction in which an overview of the political parties, review of literature and key takeaways from the review of literature and conceptual framework are described. The Section-II deals with the statement of the research problem, objectives and methodology, while the Section-III deals with the organization of the thesis and limitations.

Section-I

Political Parties: Origin, Meaning, Characteristics, Functions and Types

Scholars considered “political party” as a concept rather than just a word, and they have described various aspects to keep in focus when studying or understanding it. For example, A.D. Xenopol highlighted that “group interests are fundamental for the formation of the party.”¹ Similarly, Maurice Duverger² highlighted that essential elements in the definition of the political party should be those of the specific institutional organization. Gusti³ suggested to focus on how a particular party created or associated with the idea of “general interest” which make people want to associate with a particular party.

Origin and Meaning

Political parties, according to American political scientists Joseph LaPalombara and Myron Weiner, appear when the political system achieves a certain level of complexity. However, the definition of the word “political party” never seemed to be

¹ Xenopol, Alexandru Dimitrie, *History of political parties in Romania, 1910*, Preface, pp. I-VI

² Maurice Duverger, *Les Parties Politiques*, Paris, A. Colin, 1951, pp. IX-X

³ D. Gusti, *Sociology of the Nation and of the War*, Floare Albastra Press, 1999

settled due to its complex nature ranging from the most subtle one to visibly crude one. Due to the same reason, plausibly, neither the word of “political party” was formally defined nor was a formal definition of it used in order to address it. In fact, the idea and concept of political party rather evolved over a period of time. The presence and functioning of political institutions and the growth of democratic systems eventually led to the development of political parties around the world. The term “party”, then, gradually came to known to indicate all groups which seeking political power either through the method of democratic elections or through the phenomenon of revolution. In other word, political party can be called as a group of persons agreed to work together in order to, ultimately, obtain and exercise political power. Schattschneide⁴ believed that though the origin of political parties can be traced backed to “Roman Republic”, political factions which came to know as “parties”, it is believed that Political parties in their modern form emerged in the nineteenth century in Europe and the United States.

Characteristics

Ideology: A political party often organised around ideas, principles, and policies that promote collective goals and guide its political stance and perspectives on certain issues. For example, the Republican Party in the United States believes in limited government, free market economy, and congressional rather than executive action. In opposite to this the Democratic Party believes in social programmes, labour market, costumer and work place safety and protection regulations, equality in opportunity and recognition, environment protection etc. Similarly, a Right-wing Party or Conservative Party like Bharatiya Janatha Praty (BJP) in India considers the issue of development differently from a Liberalist like Indian National Congress (INC) or Left-wing Party like Communist Party of India (CPI) as they promote different set of ideas, ideologies and perspectives. Many scholars studied the phenomenon of political parties confining and promoting to a particular ideology, and suggested that the ideology of a party plays a critical role in its crucial policy decisions. For example, Giovanni Satori⁵, an Italian political scientist, through his studies he believed that ideology is a central element of

⁴ Schattschneider EE., *Party Government*, New York: Rinehart, 1942

⁵ Giovanni, Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976.

political parties. Therefore, in order to understand a political system, one needs to analyse the ideological positions of the parties and how they influence the decision-making process. William Riker⁶, who studied the role of ideology in shaping political parties, argued that political parties with more extreme ideas had a harder time winning election, while those with more moderate ideas were more likely to do well. Similarly, David Easton⁷ and Herbert Kitschelt⁸, American political scientist and academicians, have also developed framework for analysing the role ideology in shaping the political parties. Further, Richard Katz and Peter Mair⁹ were two of the most influential critics of what they called "party cartelization" - the process by which political parties form cartels to minimize the competition and reserve their own power, this is possible because when two or more parties get into alliances their ideas were also seem to be getting closer together, which made it hard for voters to tell them apart.

Structure: A sizable body of research has been done on party structure in comparative politics, which looks at how parties' function in various political systems and nations. We now have a better grasp of how parties are organised and function in various settings, as well as the variables that affect whether they are successful or unsuccessful.

Generally, a political party maintains certain level of structure that accommodates the core functions of the party. The structure varies from party to party. However, most parties maintain hierarchical structure with strong chain of command. Parties with hierarchical structures generally headed by a leader, who sets the overall direction of the party and make important decisions. The head or chief of the party assisted or advised by multiple first order officials including deputy-chief, chairman/women, treasurer etc. The first order officials take up specific responsibilities of the party. The first order officials over see the local offices which are responsible for planning and managing the party local political activities. These local offices may have their own leaders and teams, and sometimes take the responsibility of enrolling and recruiting

6 John, Aldrich, William H. Riker, *The Encyclopedia of Public Choice*, in Rowley, Charles K.; Schneider, Friedrich (eds.), Springer US, pp. 321–324, doi: 10.1007/978-0-306-47828-4_28, ISBN 978-0-306-47828-4, retrieved 2020-05-09.

7 David, Easton, *A Framework for Political Analysis*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1965

8 Herbert, Kitschelt, *The Transformation of European Social Democracy*: Cambridge University Press, 1994,

9 Richard S Katz and Peter Mair, "Changing Models of Party Organization and Party Democracy: The Emergence of the Cartel Party", *Party Politics*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1995, pp. 5-31

new members in the party. Besides they also play an important role by organizing campaign activities and mobilizing local followers at the time of elections. Often parties maintain affiliations with likeminded organizations, such as think tanks, sponsorship groups etc., in order to spread the awareness about the party's goals and objectives among the potential support groups.

Besides formal structure, as mentioned the above, parties maintain large informal networks. By doing so these informal networks function as invisible and deep impact roles including bringing the interest groups into the party or support the party. In addition, these informal networks sometimes influence the party stand on certain policy decisions.

Further, parties can have variety of structures i.e., centralized, decentralized, hierarchical or horizontal. These structures support different ways of decision-making processes. The hierarchical parties like the most national political parties in India including Indian National Congress (INC) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) maintain with a strong line of command from top to bottom, while the decentralized parties usually accommodate for local control on the decision-making processes. E.E. Schattschneider in his "The Semi-sovereign People" is a classic text in the field and discusses the ways in which parties and other political actors influence the policy-making process.

Platform: Besides the ideology and structure, political parties can also have platform of certain preferences. Usually, these platforms are nothing but the promised agendas to the citizens / voters by the parties. For example, in India or in the United States or elsewhere, different parties promise to have certain positions on an array of issues, such as the reviving the economy, better implementation of healthcare system, refining the foreign policy, and certain social issues. This platform serves as a blueprint for the party's policies if it is elected to power.

Leader: A political party should have a leader who looks after the important decision making in the party and give orders or commands to the working members of that particular party on certain important issues.

Membership / Active Followers: There is no political party without an active members and followers. This is very crucial for the entire success of the party in the elections. Therefore, parties tend to choose those issues which can have major impact in gaining larger public attention. Also, parties often create issues and popularise / propagate them in order to gain public support and eventually to gain larger vote share in the elections. Besides, parties often also run membership drives for joining large number of public in to it. Membership drives are organised with a hope to develop an emotional attachment among the public to their party over the time. However, regardless of how important the membership is to a party, they sometimes exclude certain sections based on the ideology and social status from entering into the party.

Funding: A political party should have funding system to meet the expenses of various activities of the party. The funding can be based on donations from businesses, corporates or individual contributions. However, it should be noted that funding and the ideology and policy decisions of the party go hand-in-hand as the source of the funding usually shape the policy decisions of the party.

Functions

A political party has many functions ranging from shaping and gaining wider public opinion to wielding political power and influencing public policy decisions. However, scholars identified and suggested that political parties usually and essentially perform few important functions, which otherwise cannot be in existence. The following description presents the same.

Representing group interest: Political parties speak for the ideals and interests of the constituencies they are trying to represent. Parties may have distinct policy platforms or stances on a variety of subjects, and they attempt to advance these positions among voters and decision-makers.

Organizing and mobilizing voters: Voter mobilisation and organisation are key functions of political parties. In order to promote the candidates of their party, parties frequently have grassroots networks of activists and volunteers.

Promoting candidates to be elected to public office: Parties put up candidates for office and give them the tools and encouragement they require to run successful

campaigns. Parties also frequently provide candidates a party name or affiliation to run under, which can be a significant deciding factor for voters.

Influencing public opinion and policy: Political parties are not policy-making bodies themselves. They do, however, take positions on critical policy issues, particularly to advance the position of the ruling party. A party attempts to use legislation when it is in power to carry out its principles. The winning of a party candidate largely has an underlying principle that the voters have elected the candidate to carry out the promised programme /scheme. Therefore, by promoting particular policy viewpoints and campaigning to elect people who support those positions, parties can have an impact on public policy.

Facilitating communication and cooperation among elected officials: Parties, especially those within legislative bodies, can aid in facilitating communication and cooperation among elected politicians. Parties frequently have caucuses or other gatherings where members can talk about and organise their work on certain problems.

Types Political Parties

Max Weber drawn the line between personal or cadre parties and mass parties¹⁰. By drawing the line, he means that the cadre parties usually only have a small number of people who join. On the other hand, mass-based parties bring together tens of thousands or even millions of people. But the size of the party isn't the only thing that makes it a mass-based one. The most important thing is that this kind of party tries to appeal to the majority. It tries to bring together not only powerful or well-known people or people who speak for special interest groups, but also any citizen who wants to join the party. If this kind of party can only get a few people to join, it is only mass-based in theory. It is still different from parties with a set of leaders.

Further, D. Lepadatu who agrees with Seiler briefly describes that political cleavages were produced by three major revolutions that have happened in the political universe i.e., the national revolution, the industrial revolution and the international revolution.

¹⁰ Adrian, Gorun, *Stasiology and Electoral Systems*, Peter Lang AG; New edition, 2012
<https://www.perlego.com/book/2002469/stasiology-and-electoral-systems-pdf>.

The following Table shows the political cleavages and sub-cleavages (political parties) created as a product of each revolution.

Revolution	Cleavage	Sub-cleavage
The national revolution	Church / state cleavage	Clerical parties
		Anti-clerical parties
	Centre / periphery cleavage	Integrated, national or nationalist parties
		Regionalist, autonomist, federalist parties
The industrial revolution	Primary / Secondary / tertiary sector cleavage	Parties of social privilege holders
		Worker's parties
		Agrarian parties
		Land aristocracy parties (in earlier ages) and ecologist "green" parties (in modern times)
	Cleavage between rich and workers	Classical right side (parties from the worlds of business, industry, trade, banking etc.)
		Left-wing parties. Socialist and worker's parties
International revolution	Cleavage inside working class	Reformist parties and communist parties

Source: (Gorun, 2012 page 34-35)

Besides the above, a comparison between the attributes of mass political parties and electoral parties are given as in the following.

Parallel between Mass Parties and Electoral Parties	
Bureaucratic mass party	Professional electoral party
Bureaucracy has the central position (political-administrative competence)	Professionals have the central position (specialized competence)
Membership parties	Electoral parties
Strong vertical organizational relations Appeal to preponderance of internal leaders	Weak vertical organizational relations
Collegial leadership	Appeal to opinion electorate preponderance of public representatives Personal leadership
Contributions and collateral funding	Funding from interest groups and public
Accent on ideology	Accent on problems and leadership
Central position in the organization of those believing in the message of the party	Central position in the organization of those interested in their career and the representatives of interests groups

Source: Panebianco, Apud G. Pasquino (Gorun, 2012 page 38)

Review of Literature

The review of the literature in this section is mostly about parties and party politics, including electoral politics, since the thesis mainly focuses on parties and party electoral politics in general and Nagaland in particular. Several scholars have studied various aspects related to "political parties" and "party and politics." The earlier represents the emergence and existence of political parties, i.e., how and why a party comes into existence, builds into an organisation, and survives in its day-to-day activities, whereas the later represents its role in the political processes. The present section of the review of literature falls primarily under the later one, i.e., party and politics.

Before going further, it is appropriate here to state why studying and understanding a political party is important. The following description presents the same.

Why Study Political Parties?

One of the main theories for the origin of political parties is that they develop from pre-existing social divisions: society is split into particular groups, and a party is created to unite those groups into the electoral battle. Studying political parties accommodate understanding these aspects.

Besides, there are other important reasons why one should study and understand political party. For example, political parties are essential to how modern democratic systems work because they provide people the opportunity to gather together and have a larger influence on the political process. Political parties also give people a way to participate in politics because party members frequently have access to opportunities to take part in elections, go to meetings, and assume leadership roles within the party.

Further, political parties make their views and platforms known to the public during election campaign, through which they play a significant part in influencing public policy. People can support the advancement of policies that go along with their own values and ideas by becoming a member of a political party. As party members can promote their party's beliefs and programmes in their communities and in the government, political parties also give people a chance to hold their elected politicians responsible.

Studying political parties can also help people gain a deeper understanding of how democratic systems function and how political parties affect the decisions that governments make, in addition to these more practical duties. People can better grasp the diverse perspectives and attitudes that influence public policy and political debate by studying about the history and ideologies of various political parties.

Studies on Political Parties

When studying political parties, many factors can be taken into account. Some possible areas of concentration are: ideology, structure and organisation and election techniques. Further, examining the party's positions on various areas, such as economic, social, and foreign policy issues. In addition to the above, relationships with other parties, influence on the political system, etc. can also be considered, as they provide a deeper insight about it. Scholars have made considerable attempts to study various aspects of party and party politics.

Political Party: Growth and Evolution

James Manor¹¹ in his “Parties and the Party System in India” explores the political party evolution, the factors that have shaped their development, the role in the democracy, electoral process, the formation and functioning of government, and the policy-making process in India. He examined the history, organization, and behaviour of India's major political parties, including the Indian National Congress, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and regional parties.

Giovanni Sartori¹² argued in his work that party polarisation refers to the process by which political parties become increasingly distinct from one another in terms of ideologies, values, and policies. This can lead to a situation in which parties are more likely to engage in confrontational and divisive behaviour rather than seeking compromise and consensus. Sartori also argued that party polarisation has a negative impact on democratic societies because it makes it more difficult for politicians to collaborate and can lead to political gridlock. He did, however, acknowledge that party

¹¹ James, Manor, “Parties and the Party System” in *Parties and Party Politics in India*, ed Zoya Hasan. New Delhi, India. Oxford University Press. pp. 431-474.

¹² Giovanni, Sartori, “5. European Political Parties: The Case of Polarized Pluralism”, in *Political Parties and Political Development* (SPD-6), 137-176. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400875337-006>

polarisation can be used to represent different points of view and interests within a democratic system.

LaPalombara¹³, in this book, discusses the role of political parties in the development of democratic societies, with a particular focus on their role in the process of democratization. He examines the various functions that political parties serve in different political systems, including their role in the organization of political competition, the representation of interests and opinions, and the formation of government. LaPalombara also discusses the challenges that political parties face in different contexts, including the challenges of party polarization and the difficulty of maintaining broad-based support in a rapidly changing political environment. The book is based on a collection of essays that LaPalombara wrote over the course of his career, and it offers a comprehensive overview of his thoughts and insights on the topic of political parties and political development.

Sadhana Chaturvedi¹⁴ in a voluminous work "India 50 Years of Independence (1947-97) Status Growth and Development: Political Parties," expresses doubt about the existence of a genuine party system in India. One significant point made in the study was that in India ideology is only a trick used by them to dupe the masses and that they owe their existence to specific leaders. He goes on to say that political parties' ideology is their leader, that their goal is to install their leaders at the top, and that their organisation is what their leader decides for them. Another notable feature he noticed about India's political parties is that they are all based on caste. As a result of this, the caste has evolved.

K.C. Suri¹⁵ in his South Asia Regional Report has presented the findings of his comparative research. This report compares how political parties are set up, what their roles are, and how they work in five South Asian countries: Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan. It is based on real-world data from 49 parties and talks about

¹³ Joseph LaPalombara, "Reflections on Political Parties and Political Development, Four Decades Later". *Party Politics*, 13(2), 141–154. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068807073851>

¹⁴ Sadhana Chaturvedi, "Indian 50 Years of Independence: 1947-97 Status, Growth and Development (Volume- 23)," B. R Publishing Corporation, *Exotic India Art*, 1999 <https://www.exoticindiaart.com/book/details/indian-50-years-of-independence-1947-97-status-growth-and-development-volume-23-azh156/>.

¹⁵ K. C. Suri, "Political Parties in South Asia: The Challenge of Change," 2007, IDEA <https://www.idea.int/publications/catalogue/political-parties-south-asia-challenge-change>.

the challenges of politics in the opinion of the most important political actors: political parties. It also has suggestions for how parties could change in the real world. The report aimed to motivate debate on the challenges faced by political parties in general and South Asia region in particular.

Party and Ideology

Bhambhri¹⁶ in his article, explores the manner in which these ideas have affected the policies and actions of political parties in India. He focuses specifically on the main political parties in India. In addition to this, he investigates the influence that different beliefs have had on the political structure and growth of the nation.

Joly, Hofmans, and Loewen in their article¹⁷ examined personality and political party ideology among the elected representatives in Canada. They found that Openness to Experience of the elected politicians has consistently correlated with party political ideology. The elected politicians who are high on Openness to Experience are also high on Extraversion and agreeableness¹⁸ which means they are more tolerant towards people with other ways of living or with different value sets. They observed that such elected politicians are largely found in progressive parties like left-wing political parties.

In another study on political parties, Reiter¹⁹ investigated the ways in which the study of political parties has developed over the course of time and the ways in which it has been influenced by a variety of elements including political events, academic trends, and technological advancements. In addition to this, it examines the basic questions

¹⁶ C. P. Bhambhri, "Ideology and Political Parties in India." *Economic and Political Weekly* Vol. 3, no. 16 (1968): 643–46. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4358522>.

¹⁷ Jeroen K. Joly, Joeri Hofmans, and Peter Loewen, "Personality and Party Ideology Among Politicians. A Closer Look at Political Elites From Canada and Belgium." *Frontiers in Psychology*, 2018. 9. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00552>.

¹⁸ Extraversion and agreeableness are two personality traits that are often measured in psychological research and are part of the "Big Five" personality traits, which are widely used to describe personality. Extraversion is characterized by traits such as sociability, assertiveness, and the tendency to seek out social interactions. People who score higher on extraversion are generally outgoing and energetic, and may enjoy being the center of attention.

Agreeableness is characterized by traits such as cooperativeness, kindness, and a tendency to get along well with others. People who score higher on agreeableness are generally more inclined to put the needs of others before their own and may be more likely to compromise in order to maintain harmony in their relationships.

¹⁹ Howard L. Reiter, "The Study of Political Parties, 1906-2005: The View from the Journals." *The American Political Science Review*, 100 (4), 2006., 613–18.

and arguments that have been central to the development of the field of study of political parties and provides an overview of the primary theories and methods that have been used to research political parties.

Katharine Dommett²⁰, in her Ph.D. thesis, investigated political party ideology, ideological development, and modernization in the Labour Party between 1982 and 1997 and the Conservatives between 1996 and 2010. She investigated the relationship between political parties and philosophy. The ideology was examined through rhetoric, looking at how parties' communicative utterances convey ideology, how ideology changes, and how ideology links to other party aims. She noted that the relationship between a party and its ideology is not always evident, ranging from storylines emphasising ideology's collapse to specialists praising ideas. As a result, she stated that ideological research is critical to understanding parties, but that existing methods of analysis should be tailored to the specific circumstances of political parties. She employed ideology to schematize the topic, arguing that parties have and project ideologies. She concentrated on ideology as projected in order to understand the parties' contemporary connection with ideology, and she felt that public perception is instructive.

Further, several scholars have studied political parties and ideology in different parts of the world. For example, Gerring²¹ studied the party and ideology in the US. He mainly focussed on how parties and ideology played the role in shaping the policy-making process and influencing the voter behavior. Similarly, Kitschelt and Anthony²² in their “The Radical Right in Western Europe: A Comparative” Analysis examined the relationship between political parties and ideology in Western European countries, including the ways in which parties have adapted to changing social and economic conditions. It is probably the first research to use a wide range of comparative survey data to describe why right-wing parties are electorally influential in certain countries compared to others. In the book it is claimed that economic and societal developments

²⁰ Katharine Dommett, “Conceptualising Party Political Ideology: An Exploration of Party Modernisation in Britain” PhD thesis, University of Sheffield, 2012.

²¹ John Gerring, “Party Ideologies in America, 1828–1996” Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998 <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139174992>.

²² Herbert Kitschelt, and Anthony J McGann, “The Radical Right in Western Europe”, Michigan University Press, 1977 <https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.14501>.

alone cannot explain extremist parties' rise. Instead, we must examine party competition, internal organisational structures, and long-term ideologies to understand their success.

The authors further explained that when moderate parties converge near the median voter, radical right authoritarian parties started to develop. Right-wing politicians' strategy determines these parties' success. Herbert Kitschelt's in-depth examination of right-wing parties in several countries including Austria, UK, Denmark, France, Germany, Norway and Italy shows that parties that combine a firm dedication to free-markets with autocratic, fanatical patriotism, and prejudiced rhetoric have the widest plea. The author also explains how a country's political electorate or rational and structural legacies might allow right-wing parties to break these rules and win elections.

Bray²³ in his "Latin-American Political Parties and Ideologies: An Overview" explained that in the major part of the Latin American countries, the ballot is not yet the formalised process for the transfer of political power; rather, the coup d'etat is. Certain nations, such as Haiti and Paraguay, can be considered to be in the "prehistory" of modern political parties. Nonetheless, in the twentieth century, the political party with a developed ideology became a significant feature of Latin American political life.

Giovanni M Carbone²⁴, in his article focused on few important issues elevated by the arrival of party pluralism in Africa and on the usefulness of prevailing models, theories and methods. It is certain that latest investigation on the political parties in Africa have progressed our knowledge of the changing politics of the continent. However, neither the explanation of theoretical frameworks nor the element of empirical knowledge has attained suitable levels of development as yet.

²³ Donald W Bray, 1967. "Latin-American Political Parties and Ideologies: An Overview." *The Review of Politics* -29 (1), 1967, pp. 76–86.

²⁴ Giovanni M Carbone, "Political Parties and Party Systems in Africa: Themes and Research Perspectives." *World Political Science* 3 (3), 2007 <https://doi.org/10.2202/1935-6226.1023>.

Role of Party in Democracy: Agenda Setting and Policy Making

Scholars have studied political parties by analysing their role in democracy. The following description gives the glimpse of the same.

E. E. Schattschneider²⁵ in his "The Semi-Sovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America (1960)" analysed about the functioning of US democracy. In the book he focused on the scuffle between the "privatisation" and "socialisation" of matters in addition to the competition for space on a jam-packed political outline. The most significant contribution in the book was the formulation of the idea of preparing the election agenda, sometimes known as the "conflict of conflicts," as a vital element in the policy-making process. Schattschneider's book was a part of the elitist-pluralist debate at the time, as well as a catalyst for a variety of later, more scientific research on various aspects of the policy process. It was conceived as a manifesto in "defend of parties" in opposition to the prevailing cluster theories of politics. Many following studies on setting agendas, both in the United States and elsewhere, have cited Schattschneider's ideas as a source of inspiration.

In the book, Schattschneider makes the case that democracy in the United States is "semi-sovereign," which means that it is subject to the influence of both the government and the citizens. He maintains that the people do not possess complete sovereignty due to the fact that they are swayed by a variety of interest groups, including political parties, the media, and other organisations that influence public opinion and choices about public policy.

E. E. Schattschneider²⁶: through his "responsible party model," believed and argued that political parties should be held accountable for their acts and policies, and that they should be responsive to the interests and concerns of the people through his "responsible party model." According to the responsible party model, parties ought to adopt a proactive approach to the process of policy-making and ought to be willing to

²⁵ Donley Studlar, "E. E. Schattschneider, The Semi-Sovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America." In *The Oxford Handbook of Classics in Public Policy and Administration*, Edit by Martin Lodge, Edward C. Page, and Steven J. Balla, O. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199646135.013.39>.

²⁶ John Kenneth White, "E. E. Schattschneider and the Responsible Party Model." *Political Science and Politics* 25 (2), 1992, 167–71. <https://doi.org/10.2307/419701>.

participate in communication and debate with other parties as well as stakeholders. This model is based on the idea that political parties are an important element of representative democracy, and that they are obligated to both represent the general public's interests and function in the best interests of the society. The responsible party model has had a significant impact on the way political parties function in a variety of democratic systems all around the world.

Robert Michels²⁷, German sociologist and political scientist, was best recognised for his research on political parties in democratic systems. Michels claimed that political parties are vital for democracy but can damage it by becoming too powerful and inflexible. In his book *Political Organizations*, Michels maintained that political parties inevitably become oligarchies, with a small group of leaders possessing disproportionate influence and decision-making authority inside the party. He stated that political parties' organisational processes naturally concentrate power, which can lead to a lack of accountability and responsiveness to the public's requirements. Michels' ideas about political parties have had a significant impact on the study of political science and have influenced the development of various theories about the role of parties in democratic systems.

Larry Bartels²⁸ In his book "Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age," explores the role that public opinion and political representation play in shaping the outcomes of policy, and he argues that the opinions of the wealthy have a disproportionate influence on the decisions that are made regarding policy. He contends that the political system is skewed in favour of the wealthy, and that this skewedness is one of the contributing factors to the widening income gap that exists between the wealthiest and the rest of society.

Pippa Norris²⁹ in her book "Democratic Deficits: Critical Individuals Revisited," examines the role that election systems, the media, and political parties play in

²⁷ Hugo Drochon, "Robert Michels, the Iron Law of Oligarchy and Dynamic Democracy." *Constellations* 27 (2). 2020, pp. 185–98. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8675.12494>.

²⁸ Larry M. Bartels, *Unequal Democracy*, Princeton University Press. Russell Sage Foundation Co-Pub. Princeton University Press, 2016
<https://press.princeton.edu/books/hardcover/9780691172842/unequal-democracy>.

²⁹ Pippa Norris, *Democratic Deficit Critical Citizens Revisited: Comparative Politics*, Cambridge University Press, 2011.

moulding the political attitudes and behaviours of citizens. Norris investigates the manners in which persons participate in and engage with democratic systems, as well as the elements that impact the extent to which they are politically active. She contends that many contemporary democracies suffer from major "democratic deficiencies," which are defined by low levels of citizen engagement and trust in political institutions. She believes this to be the case because modern democracies have become increasingly complex.

Parties in Election: Mobilization, Voters, Voting and Voting Behaviour

V. O. Key Jr in his "The Responsible Electorate"³⁰, suggested that voters are more logical and informed than is commonly believed, and that they take a wide variety of considerations into account when selecting how they will vote. In addition to this, he said that voters are more inclined to hold politicians accountable for their acts and to make educated decisions regarding which candidates they would support. The book written by Key had a significant impact on the way that academics and researchers comprehend the function that voters play in democratic regimes, and it was crucial in the development of the study of voting behaviour as a significant subfield within the discipline of political science. The book "The Responsible Electorate" is still considered a classic in the subject, and it is frequently mentioned and read by academics and students who are interested in electoral politics and democratic regimes.

William Riker and Peter C. Ordeshook³¹ through their research developed a concept of probabilistic voting, gives a mathematical model of voting behaviour as well as its implications for democratic political institutions. The model basically suggests that voters often have limited information about political parties and candidates, and that they rely on cues, such as party labels and issue positions, to make their decisions. The behaviour model was developed based on the premise that voters choose who to support depending on their expectations about the outcomes of various candidates

<https://www.cambridge.org/in/academic/subjects/politics-international-relations/comparative-politics/democratic-deficit-critical-citizens-revisited?format=HB&isbn=9780521197519>

³⁰ V. O. Key Jr., *The Responsible Electorate: Rationality in Presidential Voting, 1936–1960*, Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1966

³¹ William H Riker, and Peter C. Ordeshook, "A Theory of the Calculus of Voting." *The American Political Science Review* 62 (1), 1968, pp. 25–42. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1953324>.

winning the election. The model takes into account individual voter preferences, the number of candidates running for office, and the voting procedures used in the election. The authors employ this model to investigate the effects of various voting rules and electoral systems on election outcomes and voter behaviour. The book is considered a classic in the subject of political science. Voters employ probabilistic voting, according to Riker, to reduce the chance of making a faulty decision because they do not have perfect information about the candidates or parties. For example, if a voter knows they strongly disagree with a particular party's stance on a specific subject, they may choose to vote for another party even if they are unsure about the other party's stance on other matters.

Scholars like John Aldrich³², James Campbell³³, Gary Jacobson³⁴, Lynn Vavreck³⁵, John Ferejohn³⁶ and Morris Fiorina³⁷ examined electoral campaigning, and suggested that electoral campaigning is a powerful method through which candidates and parties seek to influence voter behavior and win elections.

Scholars including John Zaller³⁸, Shanto Iyengar³⁹, Doris A. Graber⁴⁰, made important contributions to our understanding of the role of media in electoral politics and the ways in which media shapes public opinion and political behavior. They emphasized

³² John H. Aldrich, *Before the Convention: Strategies and Choices in Presidential Nomination Campaigns*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2012.

<https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/B/bo5961422.html>

³³ James Campbell, "Explaining Electoral Change in the 2018 U.S. Midterm Elections: The Three Components of Electoral Mandates," *The Forum: A Journal of Applied Research in Contemporary Politics*, v.16, n.4, James, pp.477-93.

³⁴ Gary Jacobson, *Money in Congressional Elections*, Yale University Press, 1980.

³⁵ John Sides, Michael Tesler, and Lynn Vavreck, "Hunting Where the Ducks Are: Activating Support for Donald Trump in the 2016 Republican Primary." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 28(2), 2018, 135- 156.

³⁶ David W Brady, John A. Ferejohn, and Aldo Paparo, "Are We Losing Touch? Mainstream Parties' Failure to Represent Their Voters on Immigration and Its Electoral Consequences." *Italian Political Science Review/Rivista Italiana Di Scienza Politica* 50 (3): 398–421.

<https://doi.org/10.1017/ipo.2019.42>.

³⁷ Morris P Fiorina, and E. J. Dionne, "America's Polarized Politics: Causes and Solutions." in *Perspectives on Politics*, ed. Amy Gutmann, Dennis Thompson, Thomas E. Mann, and Norman J. Ornstein (3), 2013, pp. 852–59.

³⁸ John R. Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*, Cambridge University Press, 1992
<https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511818691>.

³⁹ Iyengar, Shanto. 2013. "Impact Factor Stories: Political Communication." *Editors' Bulletin* 9 (1): 10–12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17521742.2014.840447>.

⁴⁰ Graber, Doris Appel. 2012. *On Media: Making Sense of Politics*. Paradigm Publishers.

that the media coverage has the ability to not only shape the political identities of different parties but also the public opinion and policy decisions.

Scholars like Sidney Tarrow⁴¹, Nancy Burns⁴² have studied mass mobilization in elections. They have emphasized that social movements, grassroots mobilization, collective action can shape the political as well as electoral outcomes. Further, scholars like Vaishnav⁴³ have studied the role of money and muscle in Indian elections.

Key Takeaways from the Review of Literature

The following points can be considered as key takeaways from the above review of literature.

1. It is important to have political parties in a democracy as a powerful means of public expression
2. The emergence of political parties can have various reasons. However, in the post-war/ post-conflict world the emergence of political parties is often for peace.
3. Electoral campaigning is a power tool to woo voters
4. Mobilization of the voters is a dynamic activity. Campaigns, media, money and muscle-power are some of the methods besides election manifesto

Section II: Statement of the Research Problem, Objectives and Methodology

Based on the literature review a statement of research problem has been drawn and presented in the following.

Statement of Research Problem

Nagaland politics have been undergoing several changes and the party system has also taken different forms. Political parties in Nagaland developed as a result of the Naga

⁴¹ Tarrow, Sidney 2011. *Power in Movement*, Third Edition, Cambridge University Press

⁴² Burns, Nancy. 2011 "Categorical Politics: Gender, Race, and Public Opinion." Nancy Burns and Donald Kinder. In Adam Berinsky, ed., *New Directions in Public Opinion*. Routledge.

⁴³ Vaishnav, Milan. 2011. "The Market for Criminality: Money, Muscle and Elections in India." SSRN Electronic Journal. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1928011>.

nationalist movement. In the process, both regional and national political parties assumed their space in the state's democratic process.

Based on the observations made in the literature reviews, an attempt is made to examine the political phenomenon on how political parties emerged and operates in the changing political context of Nagaland notwithstanding the sentiments of the people still attached to Naga sovereignty.

Research Questions

1. What led to the formation and development of political parties in Nagaland despite a strong resentment from the Naga nationalist movement?
2. How did the Congress party enter the electoral politics of the state and established its prominence despite the presence of strong regional political parties?
3. What are the main factors that facilitated the regional party back to prominence?

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the historical antecedents and the growth of political parties in Nagaland.
2. To examine the factors that led to the entry and rise of the national party Congress in the state.
3. To explore and investigate the re-emergence of the regional party (NPF) and the consequent decline of the Congress party.
4. To analyse the performance of political parties in the state electoral politics.

Methodology

This research employed both qualitative and quantitative methods, also known as combined designs to draw data for this study. Historical (This method deals with the past and attempts to analyse the past events in order to understand the present one. Historical approach allows to look at the events that happened in different time periods with the help of written records, newspapers, diaries, letters, travel accounts, etc), political historical analytical methods based on both primary and secondary data were engaged.

Primary Sources

The primary data were drawn from the field using qualitative methods including observation, participation, and personal informal interactions. This was to analyse elections, mobilization and manipulations of voters. Personal informal interactions were drawn from voters, party members, and community to understand the dynamics of present democratic politics in the state.

Secondary Sources

Quantitative methods were used to draw secondary data. These data were drawn from books, journals, websites, government records, state Assembly election reports: records obtained from various political parties' offices (e.g. pamphlets, and party manifestos, etc.). Informal documents include written records, newspaper articles, and archival sources. This method was used to bring out the political events that had taken place since the inception of statehood in 1963.

Data collected through both primary and secondary sources have been cross-checked, quantified, tabulated and analysed using political historical analysis.

This study employed Political historical analysis to understand and interpret the past political events, trends, and patterns. This was employed to understand the context and significance of events in the background of political systems, ideologies, political parties, elections, and political movements. This has provided insights into the forces that have shaped the changing political trends and trajectories of political parties in the state.

Section III: Organization of the Thesis and Limitations

Organization of the Thesis

The thesis is organised into 5 consecutive chapters, summary and conclusion.

The chapter 1 which is the present chapter aimed to state the research problem along with research questions, objectives, methodology and conceptual framework. Besides, the chapter also presents literature review covering origin, meaning, scope, characteristics and various types of political parties under a dedicated section. The

section intended for giving a broad understanding about political parties rather than finding or listing the universally acceptable meanings and definitions of the political terminology. Further, the chapter briefly describes the organization of the thesis and limitations.

The chapter 2 focuses on Nagaland's history and the political changes that have taken place. It aims to accomplish by examining the historical and contemporary contexts of Nagaland's shift from political institutions based on traditional system to a more open and democratic system of government. It examines how the beginning of a Naga identity and the maturation of political consciousness under British rule paved the way for the establishment of various socio-political groups and, finally, the growth of political parties. A detailed and chronological analysis of these changes, together with a reflection on the evolution of political parties in the state has been undertaken.

The chapter 3 examines the development of Naga politics in the context of the state's quest for independence and the establishment of the first two political parties. In this section, we analyse the first three State Assembly Elections and try to make sense of the political contestation between the two regional political parties that envisioned competitive party politics. This chapter outlined the growth of regional political parties in the state and how, in the absence of a national party, the two regional parties were able to effectively represent the people they served. The beginning of tribalism, defection politics, and the rise of factionalism, all hallmarks of this era, were dissected and examined.

The chapter 4 looks at the political climate that helped the Congress party gain traction in the state and eventually became one of the dominant political forces. This section covers the years from 1977–2003 in order to shed light on the development of the national party and the political climate during that time. This section also covered the evolution of betrayal politics, the forging of new alliances and transformed parties, and the ascent to power of a select few political heavy hitters. It also shows how the Congress party progressively and effectively dominated the regional party and maintained a stable rule for ten years, depicting the state politics of the day, which were rife with avarice for power, wealth, and status.

The chapter 5 will delineate the political events that took place pre and post-election of 2003 that eventually propelled the condition for the re-gaining of the regional parties in the state. The important factors that culminated in the political development aftermath of the signing of Ceasefire Agreement with the NSCN- IM faction in 1997, had created new opportunities for the political parties to take shape and initiated new power blocs. The stability and the continuity of the coalition of parties under the two-alliance formation, the Democratic Alliance of Nagaland (DAN) and the current United Democratic Alliance (UDA) till the present context under the strong political leadership of Neiphiu Rio has been highlighted. This chapter also discusses the shift of political leadership and how the issue of Naga political solution resulted in changing the political prospects of the different parties that are at play in the state electoral politics in the 21st century.

The final section of the thesis summarises the entire thesis and gives the concluding remarks.

Limitations of the Study

- There are limitations on the method of data collecting and the dependability of the sources utilized to illustrate certain historical events.
- Old newspaper clippings from multiple daily newspapers may represent the ideas of one party more clearly than those of the other.
- In order to avoid taking a biased viewpoint, the political beliefs of party leaders cannot always be included.
- The difficulty of scheduling interviews with political leaders is another disadvantage.
- Different perspectives can alter the interpretation of sources and occurrences.
- Because the scope of the study is confined to the state of Nagaland, its conclusions are likewise regionally unique, limiting its generalizability.

Despite these disadvantages, attention has been taken to analyse the field sources objectively and rationally.

CHAPTER - II

**HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS OF POLITICAL
PARTIES IN NAGALAND**

This chapter attempts to highlight the various political developments and historical contingencies by analyzing the various socio-political factors that have propelled and conditioned the transition from traditional base political institutions to an era of modern competitive democratic politics in Nagaland.

It is essential to understand the political history of the Nagas in order to comprehend the creation and development of political parties in the state, both of which are intrinsically linked to the Naga national movement. This chapter will focus on the development of political consciousness and the emergence of the Naga identity as a result of the British rule that eventually led to the formation of various socio-political organizations and consequently the development of political parties. The different organizations that came into existence, evolved first as a form of political expression of the collective will of the Nagas. In the process this formed the base for the Naga national movement against the Indian government. The movement finally graduated in course of time, to full-fledged political parties with changes in the political demands and aspirations of the Nagas. These shifts will be closely and chronologically analyzed in this chapter. Thus, this chapter will reconstruct an analytical history of the development of political parties in the state.

In this context, it is crucial to investigate the effects of British administration on the growth of Naga nationalism, as evidenced by the establishment of the first ever social organization, the Naga Club and the formation of the Naga National Council. Events leading up to the founding of the Naga People's Convention and the subsequent creation of the state of Nagaland, including the split between the Naga extremists and the moderates in the NNC house and the famous 'Hydari Agreement' regarding the future political position of the Nagas, will be discussed at length. The primary goal of this chapter is to investigate how the creation of political parties in Nagaland was facilitated by the efforts of various groups that are involved in the project of shaping the Naga identity and Naga nationalism.

The Nagas' political history has been characterized by persistent strife and clashes, due in large part to the aspirations of Naga nationalists for a fully independent state and the

efforts of the Naga ‘moderates’ who advocated increased autonomy through constitutional methods. For more than seven decades, the politics of conflict between different political groups and the Indian government has greatly influenced the development of state politics in Nagaland.

Naga Society in the Pre-British Period: The Traditional Naga Polity

Nagas had been mostly hidden from the rest of the world prior to the arrival of the British, managing to keep their culture mostly untouched by the outside world. The Naga people have been known to be politically engaged throughout history and to have run an effective village government ever since the beginning of time.¹ Each Naga settlement operates as a village-state; independent, sovereign and self-sufficient. The Naga society's long-standing political structures have been the autonomous village-states that operates on the lines which can best be called monarchical and republican systems of governments.

Hereditary monarchy was practiced by the Semas, Konyaks, Maos, Tangkhuls, Zeliangrongs, etc., having variations in some form or the other. Among these tribes, the Angs (kings) of the Konyaks had greater powers whose words act as laws, which are final and binding. The position of king in each of these hereditary village governments was held by a direct male lineal descendant. Among the Aos, Lothas, Sangtams, and other tribes, there was a republican system of administration, in which a council of chosen village elders elect the head of the village. Members of the Ao community were represented by Tatars (councilors), and leadership positions in the Ao villages were awarded based on talent and political or economic clout. Among the Lotha tribe, the village chief was selected from among the strongest warriors.² The Angami community was famed among the Naga tribes for their love and practice of a form of democracy wherein the administration of the village was collectively undertaken by the public.³ All Naga communities, with the exception of the Semas and Konyaks, were governed by

¹ V. K. Nuh, *My native country; The land of the Nagas*, Spectrum Publications, Guwahati, 2002, p. 17.

² R. Vashum, *Nagas' Right to Self Determination*, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 2005, pp. 58-59.

³ Ibid.

councilors/elders elected by the local populace, who in turn were accountable to the clans or groups of families they represented. Decisions of significance were reached by all-inclusive agreement, exemplifying the true democratic spirit, with the advice of the clan representatives/elderly people playing a significant role. The existence of this indigenous model of pure democracy since time immemorial made Prof. A. Lanunungsang state that “the Nagas could maintain real democratic principle through consensus even without a political party and an alien system of election like that of the Indian system”.⁴

Each citizen of the village benefitted equally from the political stability and social fairness provided by the village administration. The Naga family, clan, village, and tribe were all united by their adherence to customary law.⁵ Verrier Elwin described the Naga society as showing varied patterns from ‘near dictatorship’ to ‘extreme democracy’.⁶ Each Naga tribe had its own clearly marked sovereign village, where they exercised local autonomy in accordance with their own set of customary rules, usages, conventions and natural laws.⁷ Thus it is believed that, though the Nagas did not have sophisticated government machinery, there existed a very democratic way of life. Similar to the ancient Greek city-states, the Nagas maintained a well-developed political, administrative, and social structure.⁸ To the Nagas, their customary rules were the foundation upon which their social and political institutions could stand and function. Tribal customs served as a means of maintaining harmony within the group and regulating behavior within the society.⁹ In the words of the eminent Naga historian Gangmumei Kabui (1993), “all types of political systems are found among the Nagas, ranging from the pure democracy of the Angamis to the autocratic rule of the Angs of the Konyaks, from the gerontocracy (Tatars) of the Aos to the Semi Republics of the Zeliangrongs.”¹⁰ A lack of a standardized written

⁴ Temjenkaba, L. B. Namo and Pangerzulu, *Uniqueness of Naga history*, Mokokchung: Concerned Senior Citizens’s Forum, Mokokchung, 2005, p. 24.

⁵ Asoso Yonuo, *The Rising Nagas, A historical and political study*, Manas Publications, Delhi, 1984, p. 17.

⁶ Quoted in R. Vashum’s *Nagas’ Right to Self-Determination*, p. 59.

⁷ Kuhoi K. Zhimomi, *Politics and Militancy in Nagaland*, Deep and Deep Publication, New Delhi, 2004, p. 6.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁹ Chandrika Singh, *Naga Politics: A Critical Account*, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 2004, p. 7.

¹⁰ R. Vashum, *Nagas’ Right to Self-Determination*, op. cit. p. 22.

constitution meant that each village political structure was distinct and that customary law served as the basis for all legal proceedings. One can argue after having an understanding of the village political system of the different tribes, that the Naga village provided for its own needs and exercised its independence in accordance with the socialist and democratic ideals that stood the test of time.

British Rule and the Rise of Political Consciousness

In the year 1832, the British launched an invasion of the Naga land as part of their ongoing colonial expansion along the Indo-Burma (Myanmar) boundary. This was the first time the Naga people had any kind of interaction with the outside world. On their march to the Assam plain, Captain Jenkins and Lieutenant Pemberton, accompanied by 700 Manipuri troops and 800 coolies, forced a path through Angami land. Their goal was to determine a route that would connect Manipur and Assam. In addition to this, the march was ‘driven by a policy to resist the invasion of the Nagas’ into the territory that was controlled by the East India Company in the plains.¹¹

The desire of the British to have a secure and risk-free frontier along India's northeastern border was one of the primary motivating elements for their conquest of the Naga Hills. First of all, they desired to exercise power and authority over all of the Himalayan regions, spanning from Tibet to Burma. Second, the British were obligated to consolidate their dominance over the Naga Hills because of the numerous Naga invasions that took place on the plains of Assam. Thirdly, the British arrived in India with the intention of establishing a flourishing trade in India, and as a result, they desired to spread their economic interest to all regions of the vast country. It became abundantly clear when the British opened up new markets and constructed salt warehouses in the Naga regions that were under British occupation. Fourthly, in order for the British to cultivate trade links with the people of Manipur and to safeguard their economic interests in Upper Cachar, North Assam, and Burma, they required a direct route that connected Assam and Manipur. Finally, the desire of the Manipuri King to extend his influence to the Naga Hills also

¹¹ *Gazetteer of India*, Nagaland, Kohima, pp. 24-25.

forced the British to adopt this new policy. Initially the British were hesitant to penetrate the Naga Hills due to the dense forest and the lack of proper communication in the area.¹²

In the beginning, the British tried to enter the Naga territory with the help of Manipur, which was thwarted by fierce counterattacks from the Angami warriors. The British, then, assigned the Manipur king and the ruler of Cachar to subdue the Nagas and stop their raids into British territories. As a result, in 1835 Manipur attacked and occupied Semkhor Naga village and ravaged other adjacent villages.¹³ These attempts by the Manipuri king failed to subdue the Nagas.¹⁴ Therefore the burden was ultimately left on the British to counter the Naga raids on its territory. Thereafter till 1851, the British carried out several punitive expeditions in the Naga Hills.¹⁵ However, the British realized the futility of military involvement in the Naga Hills. In 1850 the British decided to stop expeditions, withdrew its troops from the Naga Hills, and adopted a policy of non-interference.¹⁶ On the other hand, the approach led to a decline in British reputation and emboldened the Nagas, who then became more belligerent and began to raid and pillage British subjects. This was a direct consequence of the policy of non-interference. After failing to subdue the Nagas, the British government had to rethink their strategy. This was followed by a brief period of hesitation on the part of the British. Finally, in 1862, it was decided to bring the Naga Hills under British control.

In the year 1866, a new administrative zone was established at Samaguting (also known as Chumukedima). This zone included the entirety of the Angami Naga Hills as well as the region that is located west of the Dhansiri (a river in present day Golaghat District of Assam and the Chümoukedima District and Dimapur District of Nagaland). The British had the intention of subjugating the entire of Naga territory and in the process dispatched

¹² Ashikho Daili Mao, *Nagas: Problems and Politics*, Ashish Publishing House, New Delhi, pp. 16-18.

¹³ Rob Vermeulen *The Naga History – An Overview*, In www.nscnonline.com accessed November 2006

¹⁴ In 1839 Manipur was also given the power (by the British) to subdue Angami Nagas south of the water bent i.e. rivers Doyang and Dhansiri, see *Ibid.*

¹⁵ From 1931 to 1950 as many as ten expeditions were carried out. See U. Mishra, *The Periphery Strikes Back: Challenges to the Nation-state in Assam and Nagaland*, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, 2000, p. 19.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*,

a number of survey parties. These survey parties were met with fierce resistance by the Nagas, but the British were able to suppress the retaliatory efforts. Effective control was hindered since Chumukedima was too far from the core of the Angami Naga territory; as a result, on March 19, 1879, the British occupied Kohima and established their new headquarters.¹⁷ The Naga people put up their final and unsuccessful struggle to the British in the year 1880, when thirteen Angami 'village-states' besieged the British headquarters in Kohima for eleven days. Despite their efforts, the Nagas were ultimately defeated by the British. The conquest of Kohima by the British is a significant turning point in the history of Anglo-Naga relations.

During the intervening of time from 1881 to 1947, the colonial administration in the Naga Hills district underwent a gradual but steady process of expansion. The territories that are now part of Mokokchung, Zunheboto, and Phek districts were gradually annexed by the British and merged into the Naga Hills district over the course of several years. At least half the territory of what is now known as Nagaland was not controlled by the British because they followed a policy that prioritized expediency and ease. Even after the transfer of authority to the Indian state in 1947, a significant portion of what is now the Tuensang and Mon districts as well as the Kiphire subdivision were still part of the un-administered area.¹⁸ From the above narration, it is evident that the British established commercial and political interests in the territory of the Nagas about the middle of the nineteenth century and expanded their hold during the early part of the twentieth century.

British Administrative Policy and its Impact

After the British had successfully cemented their control over the Naga Hills, they made a number of changes to the governmental structure of the Naga people. However, despite significant shifts in the administration, the Nagas were given the autonomy to administer their own villages in accordance with the norms and traditions that had been passed down

¹⁷ Ashikho Daili Mao, *Nagas: Problems and Politics*, pp. 26-27.

¹⁸ Piketo Sema, *British Policy and Administration in Nagaland*, Scholar Publishing House, New Delhi, 1992, pp. 22- 23.

from generation to generation. The government's role at the supervisory level in the overall administration of the district was that of a guiding force; however, the 'Gaonburas'¹⁹ were the actual political units which were responsible for the day-to-day administration of the district. This method of administration served the dual purpose of allowing the Naga people to continue to govern themselves in accordance with their customs while at the same time relieving the government of a significant portion of its responsibility for the intricate and time-consuming aspects of administrative work.²⁰ Through this arrangement, it was possible to accomplish both the acknowledgment of the traditional leaders and elders as well as the incorporation of the existing governance mechanisms within the political framework of the colonial government. The Naga Hills, which were governed by colonial authorities, were divided into three levels: (1) Village Chiefs or Elders (Gaonburas), (2) Dobashis (Interpreters), and (3) District Administration (Deputy Commissioner and Sub-Divisional Officer).²¹ Having knowledge of the status and position of the village chiefs or elders, the political agents of the British befriended and communicated directly with the chiefs or headmen in dealing with the tribes. This strategy boosted the chief's or headman's standing among the locals and made him more affable to the British occupiers. As a result, the village headmen or the chief, who remained the mandated leaders of their people, ultimately played a crucial role in mediating communication between the British administration and the common people.

The British government's aim may have been to stay out of the Nagas' internal issues, but that did not stop it from making inroads into the social fabric of the village. The villagers were therefore no longer left to handle their own affairs without any kind of oversight. In this regard, Piketo Sema states: "...notwithstanding the official position granting a great deal of autonomy to the Nagas on their villages, the Government meddled in petty issues

¹⁹ Here, Gaonburas means 'village headman', village chief or elders of the clan or khel and where the British readily recognize them as their representative for carrying out the orders of the government in their respective villages.

²⁰ Rustomji. N., *The Imperial Frontier, India's North Eastern Borderlands*, Delhi, 1983, p. 26.

²¹ Neivetso Venuh, *British Colonisation and Restructuring of the Naga Polity*, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 2005, p. 49

of all types.”²² Although different influences operated to undermine the social structure of the village community, to a certain extent the native system retained vitality at the village level. For instance, the village council still acted as a tribunal for the adjudication of petty cases, and the district officers intervened only in cases which the village authorities could not settle at their level of administration.²³

The British also established an important institution called the 'Dobashi',²⁴ which served as a native team of mediators between the rulers and the governed, as a means of pacification and control over the Nagas. Though appointed to interpret the tribal dialects, the Dobashis were also commissioned with the power to decide cases according to the customary laws of the tribes. They acted as a liaison between the Naga community and the British administration and hence, held a high status within the community.

One of the important contributions of the British administrative control was the virtual elimination of inter-village and tribal warfare within the Nagas. The arrival of colonial government ushered in the early days of peaceful co - existence among the tribes of Naga Hills. The colonial government had a major role in the merging of the different tribes into a single ethnic group known today as the Nagas. The colonial rulers made good use of the abilities of native administrative agents to ensure their dominance over Naga Hills. Thus, native agents were key in contributing significantly to the success of the colonial administration.²⁵ It is to be noted that when the warring Naga tribes were put under one administrative unit and not subject to the regulations that applied elsewhere in India, the Nagas began to develop a sense of belonging to one another.

Acts dividing the hill people from the plains

The British had a different approach to the Nagas than they did to other groups in British India. To protect the Nagas from being exploited by the outside people, the British

²² Piketo Sema, *British Policy and Administration in Nagaland*, 53.

²³ Ibid., p. 54

²⁴ The word *Dobashi* means 'interpreter'. See Neivetso Venuh, *British Colonization and Restructuring of Naga Polity*, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 2005, p. 50.

²⁵ Piketo Sema, *British Policy and Administration in Nagaland*, 36.

government implemented the "Inner Line Regulation" in 1873, making it illegal for outsiders to enter the Naga Hills region. This served to effectively cut off the Naga Hills District from the rest of the country. This separated the hill tracts of North East India from the district administration of Assam awarding the hill peoples special status. Again, the Government of India Act, 1919, further categorized the Naga areas within the Naga Hill district as 'Backward Tract',²⁶ authorizing the Governor of Assam to rule the hill people by keeping them from legislative acts. The Government of India Act, 1935 made provisions to declare the Naga Hills Districts including other hill districts of Assam as 'Excluded Area',²⁷ which is the lineal descendant of the older phrase "Backward Tracts" and kept these districts out from general administration.²⁸ The aforementioned Act does not apply in the territories that are specified as "Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas" in the Government of India (Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas) Order of 1936. They are under the Governor's direct administration, and the elected ministers have no authority or responsibility with regard to them.

Because of all of these acts and provisions, the Naga people were shielded from having direct interaction with the people who lived in India's plains. The outcome of this was the development of a separatist mentality among the Naga people, which was further fueled by the British officials who were assigned to govern and administer the Naga territory at the time.

Impact of British Rule and the Development of Political Awareness

The spread of Christianity and the availability of Western education were two of the greatest benefits the British colonial government brought to the Naga people. Along with the British rule, came the American Baptist missionaries who brought the seeds of modern education and Christianity. In addition to fostering a more nuanced understanding of the

²⁶ Chandrika Singh, *Naga Politics: A Critical Account*, 36.

²⁷ Kuhoi K. Zhimomi, *Politics and Militancy in Nagaland*, 18.

²⁸ The British government tried to keep the Naga people isolated and away from the Indian nationalist movement launched by the people living in the plains. And so when the Government of India Act 1935 was enacted, the Naga Hills district was declared an 'Excluded Area'. See Ashikho Daili Mao, *Nagas: Problems and Politics*, 30-31.

world around them, formal education also provided them with access to jobs in the public sector, at mission schools, and in churches.²⁹ Because of their long and close relationship with the British, the Naga people were able to adopt Western values, practices, and institutions, as well as adapt to new political systems and arrangements.

The British policy of isolation of the Naga Hills from the rest of the plains people also prevented the involvement of the Nagas in the Indian freedom struggle which was dominating the sub-continent during the first half of the 20th century. The colonial administration feared domination of the Nagas by the advanced communities and accordingly took measures for their protection as well as procedures to deal with violations through constitutional provisions. This, in a way resulted in the artificial separation of the people of the plains and the Hills.³⁰

The Nagas' dedication to their social norms and customs started to wane as they shifted their focus from the thrill of headhunting and fighting to more practical concerns. The Nagas' lives were more structured, Westernized, pleasant, and cultured as a result of the establishment of educational institutions, medical facilities, and places of worships that consequently widened their horizons. The Christian Missionaries who brought a new system of education and way of life to the Naga people were crucial in reshaping their society and creating an environment conducive to the development of modernity. According to Terhuja “If one responsible dynamic factor was to be singled out for an overall changer in the life of the Nagas, it would undoubtedly be the introduction of Christianity among them”.³¹

The introduction of western culture into the region, mostly in the form of Christianity and western education, helped speed up the establishment of social classes, which in turn opened up new levels of awareness among the local population. This led to the emergence of a new class of so-called "intellectuals," who started thinking about the challenges facing

²⁹ Piketo Sema, *British Policy and Administration in Nagaland*, op. cit. p.140.

³⁰ Rustomji. N., *The Imperial Frontier*, 27.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p.18.

Naga society and their potential political standing in the future. After they had gained more knowledge about the world, their awareness finally led to the conception of Naga nationalism. As a result, the rise of Naga elites was first discernible around the turn of the 20th century.³² In addition, the growth of educated elites corresponded with the beginning of the development of political awareness among the Naga people. In a similar manner, the First World War was also a factor that had an indirect impact. During the war, several Nagas were sent to work in France as part of the Labor Corps. There, they were exposed to the culture of Western and European countries. Upon their return, they were armed with fresh insights and a feeling that they belonged somewhere. As a consequence of this, the close association that the Naga intellectuals had with the British officials, as well as the integration of the various Naga tribes, resulted in the expression of the spirit of solidarity and belongingness among the Nagas. They also became more aware of their potential political status and aspirations.

The Naga Club: A Historical Landmark in Naga Politics

The first part of the twentieth century was a significant period in the political history of the Nagas marked by a significant socio-political upsurge amongst the Naga tribes. The Nagas who had returned from France, after the First World War consisting of Semas, Aos, Lothas, Rengmas, and a large number of smaller groups, felt the need to form a Naga association.³³ An awakening had begun to emerge among the Nagas to form an association to express their aspirations. Thus, in the year 1918, a social organization, with a view of embracing the Nagas as a whole spearheaded by some more advanced tribes was formed, called the “Naga Club” (hereafter The Club).³⁴ The Club was formed by the Naga ‘intellectuals’³⁵ having two branches, one at Kohima and the other at Mokokchung, the two premier administrative centers in the Naga Hills.

³² Piketo Sema, *British Policy and Administration in Nagaland*, op. cit. p.141.

³³ Hokishe Sema, *Emergence of Nagaland: Socio-Economic and Political Transformation and the Future*, (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1986), 80.

³⁴ Zapra Chakesang, *A Brief Biography of Vamuzo*, Higher Education Infotech, Kohima, 2002, p. 15.

³⁵ Gaonburas, dobashis, teachers, government servants, pastors and educated people, are taken together as ‘intellectuals’ in the context of the 1st half of the 20th century Naga Society. See Piketo Sema, *British Policy and Administration in Nagaland*, 141.

The problems and affairs of the Naga people were discussed at the Club's meetings. This served as a common platform for all the sections of Naga society to present their views and opinions and debate the question of their identity, which in the process made them more conscious about their rights. The fundamental objective of the Club was to look after the welfare of the Nagas by the "promotion of understanding, development of fraternal feeling and unity among the Nagas".³⁶ It was under the aegis of the Club that the scattered tribes were brought together and different strands congealed into a common goal and common political identity, generating a sense of fraternity. Initially, the Club functioned as a social hub; but, in later years, it assumed responsibility for the socio-economic and political issues of the Nagas, which helped to streamline and hone its political perspective. The subsequent growth of the Club provided evidence that this institution was established with the forethought to preserve a unique Naga identity. Its establishment thus aided the Naga tribes in gaining and drafting the requisite social and political base.³⁷ Therefore, it became apparent that the Club's functioning gradually shifted to become more political in the latter part of its history.

It is interesting to note that, consequent to these developments, the Lothas and Aos formed their own tribal organizations in the years 1923 and 1928 at Wokha and Mokokchung respectively. The aims and objectives of these sub-tribal organizations were the same as the Naga Club, but at the tribal level, in their respective areas.³⁸ In 1925, the Zeliangrong Movement was formed which was led by Haipou Jaduanang and later by Rani Gaidinliu. The unification of the three component Naga Tribes—namely Zemi, Liangmei, and Rongmei—was one of the most significant goals of this movement, in addition to the other goals it had.

One of the most noteworthy achievements that was accomplished under the direction of the Naga Club was the submission of a memorandum to the 'Simon Commission'³⁹ in

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

³⁷ *Ibid.*,

³⁸ V. K. Nuh, *The Naga Chronicle*, Regency Publications, New Delhi, 2002, p. 27.

³⁹ The bad physical communication through bridel paths known as roads, and the non-existence of rail/telegraph/postal services etc., the Governor General and Viceroy requested the Home Government in

1929. The Commission visited the Naga Hills in order to understand the desires of the Naga people in relation to their own political destiny. The panel inquired as to whether or not the Nagas would participate in the 'New Reformed Scheme',⁴⁰ which would subsequently evolve into the Government of India Act of 1935. The Naga Club stated at this time that the Naga people should be excluded from the planned constitutional amendments, that they should not be included in the New Reform Scheme, and that they should remain directly under the direct rule of the British government. The main argument of the memorandum was the withdrawal of the proposed Reform Scheme from the Naga Hill and their claim of right to their historical land, both administered and un-administered areas. The concluding line of the memorandum "...leave us alone to determine ourselves as in the ancient times"⁴¹ gave a clear indication about their collective assertion to safeguard their 'country'.

The Naga Club's insistence on a set of future political arrangements for the Nagas was a demonstration of their cohesion as a group, their willingness to stand together, and their political foresight. Thus, the Naga Club's Memorandum turned out to be a great historical significance since it determined the future political trajectory of the Naga people.

A renowned and retired educator from Kohima Village called Riizhiikhrie authored the statement, according to Ramunny, who emphasised that 'the sentiments of all those who were educated and the leaders of the communities represented by the Dobashis, were expressed in the document.'⁴² Reflecting on the events, Riizhiikhrie described that "they at that time felt as a little infant trying to walk with its father ... that they would not be able to keep pace with the father ... was the fear in their minds".⁴³

London to cut down the then spread of the British Indian empire which was agreed and as a result, Simon commission was set up in 1929 to examine the details on the ground. See H. Bhuban Singh, *Expanding the Independent (?) Naga Nation and the Threat to Integrity of Neighbouring Indian States*, Imphal Free Press, 2011. <http://kanglaonline.com/2011/08/expanding-the-independent-naga-nation-and-the-threat-to-integrity-of-neighbouring-indian-states/> retrieved on 30/07/12.

⁴⁰ Piketo Sema, *British Policy and Administration in Nagaland (1881-1947)*, op. cit. p. 142.

⁴¹ See Appendix,

⁴² Murkot Ramunny, *The World of Nagas*, Northern Book Centre, New Delhi, 1988, p. 25.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

The Club's articulated objections and aspirations, expressing their apprehension of the introduction of foreign laws and customs to supersede their customary laws thus resulted in the exclusion of their 'country' from the Act. Accordingly, on the recommendation of the Simon Commission, the Government of India Act 1935 was passed. This made the Naga Hills district an "Excluded Area" whereby all mainland Indians were required to obtain "Inner Line Permit" to enter the Naga Hills District. It also stated that no Act of the Federal Legislature or Assam Legislature was to apply to the Naga Hills. Naga affairs were assigned to the Governor of the Province and the area was excluded from the mainstream political system.

Naga National Council: The First Political Organization

The 1940s were a watershed decade in Naga political history, marking the beginning of a new era in which the notion of a Naga "national identity" was gradually developed, along with a heightened political awareness and mobilization. The Nagas' political imagination and vision were laid bare in a rigorous and unambiguous proclamation to be left out of the federal and state legislative structures.

In April 1945, Deputy Commissioner C. R. Pawsey made one of the earliest attempts to create a unified Naga group by establishing a new institution known as the "Naga Hills District Tribal Council" (NHTDC).⁴⁴ The NHTDC stated goals included reuniting the Naga people and mending the devastation inflicted on them during World War II. Despite the organization being initiated with much enthusiasm, fueling the idea of a unified Naga nation, it was short-lived since it was determined to be not adequately representative of all the Naga tribes. The council renamed itself the Naga National Council (NNC) at a meeting on February 2, 1946, in Wokha, with Mayang Nokcha serving as its first president.⁴⁵ The NNC eventually shaped into a political party as well as acting as a pressure group to exert influence over the British rulers. It also served as the Nagas'

⁴⁴ Asoso Yonuo, *The Rising Nagas*, 161.

⁴⁵ Piketo Sema, *British Policy and Administration in Nagaland 1881-1947*, op. cit. p. 151.

primary vehicle for expressing their political views.⁴⁶ Talking about C.R. Pawsey, Stracey compared that what A.O Hume achieved with regard to the setting up of the Indian National Congress which eventually wrested freedom for India from the British, then Pawsey can be regarded as the father of the NNC as he took a keen interest about the Nagas, their qualities and eventually uniting them for a political cause.⁴⁷

It was officially supported by the British administration as a uniting and moderating force since its original goal was to further the welfare and social ambitions of the Nagas. Slowly but surely, its focus shifted to politics, and it then strived to promote unity among all Nagas and fulfil their political hopes and dreams.⁴⁸ Since the Nagas were concerned about the presence of Indian political parties, they passed a resolution in October 1946 stating that, with the exception of the provisions of the Inner Line Regulations, no member of any political party (from mainland India) would be allowed to enter into the Naga Hills without the permission of NNC.⁴⁹ This turned out to be one of NNC's major political decisions during the time. There was a significant effect on Naga politics as a result of this declaration, as no national political party was able to create an account in the Naga Hills in order to field a candidate to represent Naga interests in the Assam Assembly. It is to be noted that there was no existence of national political parties in the state even during the first fifteen years of its statehood. In the early years of the state's electoral politics, two powerful regional political parties held sway, and it wasn't until the late 1970s that the Indian National Congress entered the state's electoral politics.

The Naga National Council's (NNC) initial political goal was to secure local self-government in order to preserve Naga unity and to gain a distinct autonomous political position for the Nagas within free India. This gave the push to the many Tribal Councils that had been established by various tribes in order to take charge of their own internal

⁴⁶ Ashikho Daili Mao, *Nagas: Problems and Politics*, op. cit. p. 34.

⁴⁷ P.D. Stracey, *Nagaland Nightmare*, Allied Publishers Private Limited, New Delhi, 1968, p. 40.

⁴⁸ M. Alemchiba, *A Brief Historical Account of Nagaland*, op.cit. p.165.

⁴⁹ Sajal Nag, *India and North-East India: Mind, Politics and the Process of Integration 1946-1950*, Regency Publication, New Delhi, 1998, p.24.

affairs and begin to contemplate change in their political organization.⁵⁰ This was demonstrated by the fact that on June 19, 1946, the NNC issued a four-point statement to the Cabinet Mission that was in India to pave the way for India's independence. It read as follows:

1. This Naga National Council stands for the solidarity of Naga tribes including those in the un-administered areas.
2. This council strongly protests against the grouping of Assam with Bengal.
3. The Naga Hills should be constitutionally included in an autonomous Assam, in a free India, with local autonomy and due safeguards for the interests of the Nagas.
4. The Naga tribes should have a separate electorate.⁵¹

This proclamation made it amply apparent that the demand for the incorporation of the Naga Hills into an autonomous Assam province in a free India represented the NNC's stance on the situation of the Nagas. Their quest for separate voting rights reflected their desire for a distinct political autonomy to protect their cultural, economic, and spiritual interests. One can clearly draw that the NNC's initial primary political goal wasn't the construction of a sovereign independent Naga country, but rather the assertion of Naga unity and identity within a local autonomous administration under free India.

The Naga National Council appealed to the British government and the government of India in a memorandum sent to Lord Mountbatten on February 20th, 1947. The memorandum requested that the Indian government serve as a guardian power for the Naga people for a period of ten years, after which time the Nagas would be free to establish whatever form of government they wished.⁵² This memorandum unequivocally stated that:

⁵⁰ Verrier Elwin, *Nagaland*, Shillong Research Department, Adviser's Secretariat, 1961, p. 51.

⁵¹ Ashikho Daili Mao, *Nagas: Problems and Politics*, op. cit. p.34

⁵² *Ibid.*, p.35.

1. The interim Government of the Naga people will be a Government by the Naga people over all the people of Nagaland, having full powers in respect of legislation, executive and judiciary.
2. Nagaland belongs to the Naga people and will be inalienable.
3. The Interim Government of the Naga people will have full powers in the matter of raising and expenditure of revenue, an annual subvention to cover the deficits being given by the Guardian Power.
4. For defence and for aiding Civil Power in case of emergency a force considered necessary by the NNC will be maintained in Nagaland by the Guardian power. That force will be responsible to the NNC who will in turn be responsible to the Guardian Power.⁵³

It eventually turned out that the Sub-Committee of the Advisory committee on the Aboriginal Tribes did not accept the conditions of the interim government, and the situation turned to a dead-lock.

After that, in June of 1947, the "Hydari Agreement"⁵⁴ was reached between the Government of India and the Nagas. The Indian side was represented by the then Governor of Assam, Sir Akbar Hydari, while the Naga side was represented by the Naga National Council. The 'Nine Point Agreement' recognized NNC's authority over all socio-political issues including Naga customary law, property ownership and collection of taxes. The Preamble of the Agreement provided the Naga people the "right to develop themselves according to their truly expressed wishes."⁵⁵ The most crucial clause stated that the Naga National Council's approval was required for any provincial or federal law to be enforced in the Naga Hills if it would have a significant impact on the provisions of the agreement or the Nagas' religious practices.⁵⁶

⁵³ Murkot Ramunny, *The World of Naga*, op. cit. p. 36.

⁵⁴ See Appendix

⁵⁵ Ashikho Daili Mao, *Nagas: Problems and Politics*, op. cit. p.40.

⁵⁶ Verrier Elwin, *Nagaland*, P. Dutta, Shillong, 1961, op. cit. p.52.

Unfortunately, the last point—the "period of agreement"—became a source of discord between Naga leaders and the Indian government. It stated that “the Governor of Assam as the agent of the government of Indian Union will have a special responsibility for a period of ten years to ensure the due observance of this agreement; at the end of this period the Naga National council will be asked whether they require the above agreement to be extended for a further period, or a new agreement regarding the future of the Naga people arrived at.”⁵⁷ More issues have arisen because of this ninth point of the agreement than any other part of the agreement. After 10 years, the Indian government expected the Nagas to be able to propose adjustments to the administrative pattern that would better reflect their unique culture and guarantee them a higher degree of autonomy inside India. But the NNC leaders saw ‘new agreement’ as a grant of self-determination for total independence.

The disagreement between India and the Naga leaders, not only hardened positions on both the sides, but also divided the NNC into moderates and the extremist group. The former sought an immediate, peaceful resolution even without reserving the possibility of secession, while the latter aimed to establish an unambiguous deadline of 10 years for the Nagas to decide whether they recognized India's sovereignty or rejected it for complete Naga sovereignty. The issue was put to vote within the NNC and the moderate faction won the vote (i.e. whether to approve the Agreement) by a slim majority. The gap between the two opposing parties grew much stronger and more divided than before, leaving the A.Z. Phizo led extremist group disgruntled.

As a result of this, in July 1947, a group of six people led by A.Z. Phizo travelled to Delhi to lobby the Indian government and plead the Naga cause. They met Gandhiji at Bhangi Colony and made their stand that the Nagas should be allowed to have an independent state. Gandhiji proclaimed and told the Naga delegates that “Nagas have every right to be independent. We did not want to live under the British and they are now leaving us. I want you to feel that India is yours. I feel that the Naga Hills are mine just as much as they are yours. But if you say that they are mine, the matter must stop there. I believe in the

⁵⁷ R. Vashum, *Nagas' Right to Self-Determination*, op.cit. p.72.

brotherhood of man, but I do not believe in force or forced unions. If you do not wish to join the union of India, nobody will force you to do that.”⁵⁸ Gandhiji’s political stand on the Naga issue was clear and that the Nagas could not be forced into a union with India. Along with this assurance, the NNC declared Naga Independence on 14th August 1947, a day before India got independence and conveyed the declaration to the Indian Government and United Nations Organization. A.Z. Phizo was elected as the president of the NNC in December 1950. Under his leadership, the movement became more consolidated, well defined, and stronger. Within no time, A.Z. Phizo was recognized as the leader of the Naga national movement by the Naga people.

The NNC also expanded into two more wings, namely the Naga Youth Movement and the Naga Woman’s Society whose members pledged to fight for the liberation of Nagas. The NNC, under Phizo, conducted the famous Naga Plebiscite on 16th May 1951 which claimed that more than 99.9% of the Nagas overwhelmingly approved the stand of Nagas in support of an independent nation.⁵⁹ Being an unconstitutional act, the government of India paid little heed to the plebiscite. Phizo made another attempt to emphasize his long-standing demand for independence after the plebiscite attempt failed to deliver the intended outcome. In December of 1951, he was in Guwahati when he met Pandit Nehru. Phizo pleaded with Nehru to honor the Nagas' natural right to self-rule by granting them independence. Nehru, in opposing Phizo's desire for Naga independence, argued that such a move would be detrimental not just to the Nagas but to all of India.⁶⁰ As a result to this event, the NNC issued a call all over Nagaland for non-cooperation with the government in an effort to bring about a state of emergency and paralyzing the government machinery.

In 1952, the NNC wanted to demonstrate to the world that they were not a part of India, therefore they boycotted the country's first general election and sent back all the ballot boxes empty. As a result, no Nagas were chosen to serve in the Assam Legislative

⁵⁸ Mar Atsongchanger, *Unforgettable memories from Nagaland*, Tribal Communications and Research centre, Mokokchung, Nagaland, 1994, p.15.

⁵⁹ Murkot Ramunny, *The World of Nagas*, op. cit. pp. 57-59.

⁶⁰ Ashikho Daili Mao, *Nagas: Problems and Politics*, op.cit. p.50.

Assembly or the Indian Parliament, despite the Naga Hills having its own District Council. All public institutions, including schools, were forced to close down. As a result, the Naga government employees were ordered to quit their jobs and boycott elections. Phizo urged the Nagas to harass anyone who supported the Indian government and to avoid paying any taxes.

Nehru and the Burmese Prime Minister, U Nu travelled to the Naga Hills on November 30th, 1953 to lobby for the Naga people's help in ending the growing tumultuous political situation in the Naga Districts. The Nagas refused to participate in this visit because they were barred from reading out a statement at the public meeting. A crowd of 15,000 individuals dispersed quickly, leaving Nehru with only a small audience. Indian authorities responded to the deteriorating situation in the Naga Hills by becoming even more firm and resolute. Eight leaders of the NNC had arrest warrants filed for them shortly after the incident. In the Naga Hills District, the Assam maintenance of Public Order Act of 1953 was enacted, and sensitive areas were designated as "disturbed."⁶¹ The Nagas were already hostile when, in 1952, the Tuengsang sub-division was removed from the Naga Hills district and merged with the North-East Frontier Area (NEFA) to protect it from the Naga National Council.⁶² . All these events made the NNC's top brass go underground and launch a military uprising to declare Naga independence.

Armed Movement

The failure to resolve the political crisis through peaceful negotiations led to search for a solution through armed conflict between the government of India and the NNC. The NNC set up an underground Naga Government of 'Peoples Sovereign Republic' of Free Nagaland.⁶³ In order to neutralize the underground movement, the Indian Government strengthened the police force which created more police outposts. Further, various units of the Army were also deployed in the Naga Hills. By the year 1954, acts of armed

⁶¹ Kaka D. Iralu, *Nagaland and India: The Blood and the Tears*, Kaka D. Iralu, 2003, p. 65.

⁶² Vivashera Neikha, *Political Developments in Nagaland (1963-2002)*, M. Phil Dissertation, Unpublished, 2003, University of Hyderabad, p.28.

⁶³ Ashikho Daili Mao, *Nagas: Problems and Politics*, op. cit. pp.52-53.

violence, including murder, arson, looting, and kidnapping, had developed into a widespread and routine occurrence. In 1955, some of the rebel leaders stepped down from their positions from the Naga National Council. These individuals had never accepted Phizo's violent ways of doing things and could not reconcile themselves. Among them were Dr. Imkongliba, T. Sakhrie, Jasokie, and T.N. Angami.⁶⁴

The moderate side of the NNC, led by T.N. Angami, Jasokie, and a few others, continued to pursue peaceful constitutional tactics despite the fact that the politics of Naga territories had become violent between the government of India and the NNC under Phizo. After the assassination of a moderate named T. Sakhrie in 1955, the relationship between moderates and radicals became even more complicated. The moderates came together and established a Reforming Committee, to which T.N. Angami was appointed as chair. The committee published a statement on the 18th of February, 1957, denouncing violence and the radical techniques, thus providing formal confirmation on the divide that had occurred between the two sides.

On the other side, the Naga National Council (NNC) founded the Naga Army in order to solidify their fight for independence. It was established with two distinct organisational structures, namely the Naga Home Guards (NHG) led by Thungti Chang and the Naga Safe Guards (NSG) led by Kaito Sema. Both of these men served as the heads of their respective units. After some time, these two organisations united together to become the Naga Country Guards on November 8, 1956, with Kaito serving as the organization's Chief. However, by March 1957, the previous nomenclature of "Naga Home Guards" was used once again. On January 3, 1964, following restructuring, the name was ultimately changed to the "Naga Army." By 1956, the size of the Naga Army, which had around 5,000 soldiers initially, had expanded to over 15,000 soldiers.⁶⁵

The government of India passed the Assam Disturbed Areas Act, 1955 in order to combat and subdue the armed organizations. This law gave the Assam Armed Police and the

⁶⁴ R. Vashum, *Nagas' Right to Self-Determination*, op. cit. p.81.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p.82.

Assam Rifles the authority to openly carry out their missions without being constrained by any legal requirements. As a result of these events, unrest and commotions extended to the Naga Hills, and despite the best efforts of the Army, they were unable to be kept in check. Therefore, on April 2nd, 1956, the responsibility of maintaining law and order in the region was given over to the Army.⁶⁶ All of these actions demonstrated that the Indian government was prepared to put an end to the hostile underground Naga operations, which were causing widespread dread and difficulties for the government and the public in general.

On the other hand, Phizo's operations gained momentum and their numbers steadily increased, culminating in a reign of terror by the beginning of 1956. On March 22, 1956, the flag of the Federal Government of Nagaland was first raised in the Rengma village of Phesinyu. There was also the creation of the Naga government's constitution, which they dubbed 'Yehzabo'. It called for a president with a cabinet of 15 Kiloners and a parliament of 100 Tatars (members of parliament) (Ministers). In addition, Governors, Magistrates, Deputy Commissioners, and other officials were appointed for the different tribal territories.⁶⁷ Likewise, civil administration and military structure were addressed in the constitution of the alleged Naga Federal Government.

The subsequent political violence in Naga-populated areas disillusioned the peaceful Nagas. The moderates who had defected from NNC also tried to rally other Nagas who shared their views in order to counter NNC and find a political solution to the conflict with the Indian state. This made the NNC forced to battle not just the Indian government and its armed forces in the Naga Hills, but also the more moderate Nagas themselves.⁶⁸ The law and order crisis worsened, and Phizo's Naga Federal Government was outlawed as well. The moderates at the time saw that resorting to violence and antagonism towards India was not the solution to the situation, but rather that mutual understanding and discussions were the way forward. On January 18, 1956, as tensions between moderates

⁶⁶Ibid., pp.26-27

⁶⁷ R. Vashum, *Nagas Right to Self-Determination*, op. cit. p.82.

⁶⁸ Chandrika Singh, *Political Evolution of Nagaland*, Lancers Publishers, New Delhi, 1981, p.52.

and extremists peaked, Sakhrie⁶⁹ was killed because he supported the Indian government and worked against the NNC. This fate was shared by many others who publicly rejected the initiative for a mutual and peaceful settlement.⁷⁰ All these acts of violence were initiated to instill fear and terror in the hearts of the people, specifically within the moderate camp. Eventually, Phizo rose to the top of his profession with an unwavering commitment to Naga rights and aspirations, which allowed him to dominate his peers. The continuous violence made the Indian government to issue an arrest warrant against Phizo in a bid to suppress the insurgency. But before anything could be done, Phizo escaped to England using a false passport.

Naga Peoples' Convention: Statehood and the Rise of Modern Politics

As law and order situation deteriorated due to ongoing fighting and political unrest, moderate Naga leaders came to the conclusion that the only way forward was to embrace statehood within the framework of the Indian constitution. They concluded that the best option for the welfare and progress of the Naga people was to remain a part of India rather than to form their own independent state, as the extremist, Phizo and his supporters had argued. T.N. Angami, a prominent Naga leader, broke with Phizo's faction at the start of 1957 and sided with the moderates. To speed up the negotiating process with the government, he formed the Naga National Council's Reforming Committee in February 1957. This group explicitly stated its opposition to violent tactics while establishing its goals and objectives. The committee pledged its support for efforts to bring stability back to Nagaland. Furthermore, it outlined the goals for convincing the extremist faction to abandon their violent course. The committee stated clearly that: "It stands by the Prime Minister's assurance that when peace is restored, administrative changes would be introduced in the Naga Hills in full consultation with the Naga people of all tribes... It also claims for the Naga people their rightful share of India's independence and is convinced that the majority desire of the Nagas is for a separate administrative unit in

⁶⁹ Former general secretary of the NNC and who resigned from the NNC for its extreme and violence means. See R. Vashum, *Nagas' Right to Self-Determination*, op. cit. p.82.

⁷⁰ M. Alemchiba, *A Brief Historical Account of Nagaland*, op. cit. p.185.

keeping with the Naga tradition within the framework of the constitution of India.”⁷¹ Eventually, they began pressing for changes in administration and petitioned the Indian government to release the Naga Hills from Assam's jurisdiction. The Naga Peoples' Convention, comprising of leaders from every Naga tribe except the rebels, was thus established as a direct consequence in August 1956. On August 22nd, the NPC met to discuss various issues, and on August 26th, Imkongliba Ao was chosen as chairman, while J. B. Jasokie was chosen as secretary. It is believed that in the beginning the NPC had the support of the underground Nagas as there was an understanding between the conveners of the NPC and the underground representatives that the NPC would act as a medium between the underground and the Government of India. This changed when the NPC leaders went their way after getting the assurance from Nehru about the creation of a separate administrative unit. The primary demands from this initial assembly were for “(i) a satisfactory political settlement and solution of the Naga problem within the union of India, and (ii) the constitution of a single administration unit of the Naga Hills district of Assam and the Tuengsang Frontier, Division of the North East Frontier Agency, under the Ministry of External Affairs.”⁷² This convention ultimately laid the groundwork for Nagaland to become a full-fledged state.

The Indian government also made it clear that any political solution must take place within the context of the Indian Union. The NPC leaders understood the need for clarity, thus on August 26, 1957, they passed a resolution defining "satisfactory political settlement" to imply a conclusion acceptable to the Indian Union.⁷³ This drew the last straw in the conflict between the two camps as they sought a political settlement with the Indian government. The NPC constituted a nine member delegation to start negotiations with the Indian government under Imkongliba's leadership in the light of the resolution adopted at the convention. They then met the Governor of Assam and the then Prime Minister and submitted their proposal for the formation of a separate Naga Administrative unit. This

⁷¹ *Asian Recorder*, February 16-22, 1957, 1307 in Chandrika Singh, *Political development*, op. cit. p. 55.

⁷² Hokishe Sema, *Emergence of Nagaland: Socio-Economic and Political Transformation and the Future*, op. cit. p.94.

⁷³ Chandrika Singh, *Political Evolution of Nagaland*, op. cit. p.62.

initiation was welcomed by Nehru and accordingly, the Lok Sabha voted in favor of a constitutional modification measure on November 25th, 1957, making good on Nehru's promise to do so. This resulted in the creation of the Naga Hills Tuengsang Area (NHTA) on December 1, 1957. Out of this, Kohima, Mokokchung, and Tuengsang became the three administrative divisions. An amnesty was announced, and those who had been convicted of or were awaiting trial for crimes against the state were released, in order to clear the way for the new administration to do its work. Many of the underground extremists therefore surfaced and returned to their hometowns.

The establishment of NHTA paved the ground for Nagaland to become an autonomous state inside the Indian Union. The more peace loving and moderate Nagas celebrated the settlement as the beginning of a new era in the Naga Hills, while Phizo and his adherents condemned the development.

The outcome of the first convention was a milestone in the creation of Nagaland state where the moderate leaders gained more advantage and encouraged, terming it an 'eventful triumph'. On the other hand, it made Phizo's supporters intensify their struggle, as they believed, this arrangement was the tactic of the Indian government to consolidate and strengthen their position in the Naga Hills. Despite the dismay of the Naga underground, the shift in Naga political strategy from conflict to conference has had a positive impact.

Hostile Nagas protested and threatened the second Naga Peoples' Convention, which took place in May 1958. Ungma hamlet in the Mokokchung district was the site of the discussion from May 21-23, 1958. An important motion was passed to have Mr. Kevichiisa head up a new Liaison Committee. One of the committee's primary goals was to make contact with the underground Nagas in order to ascertain their thoughts on the political compromise. In spite of the committee's best efforts, the rebel leaders refused to negotiate on anything but the topic of independence, therefore the committee was unable to accomplish the aim of the mission. Thus, the second Naga People's Convention which

started with great hopes had to abruptly end its work after considering this report from the Liaison Committee.⁷⁴

After failing to accomplish its goals, the NPC decided that it could ignore the underground Nagas in favor of striking new deals with the Government of India, who appeared willing to cooperate.⁷⁵ A Drafting Committee was established to develop specific constitutional demands. At the same time, they insisted that the government keep the option open for the underground leaders to join them in the process of drafting if they so desired. As a result, a former underground government minister and many other ex-rebel leaders formed a drafting committee and drafted a 16-point memorandum to establish a new Indian state named Nagaland.

At the third Naga People's Convention, which took place in Mokokchung from October 22nd to the 26th, 1959, the 16 Point Memorandum was thoroughly reviewed and endorsed by all participants. To facilitate communication between the Naga underground movement and the moderate faction supporting a constitutional agreement, the assembly passed a special resolution calling for the release of political prisoners, the granting of a general pardon to underground Nagas coming over-ground, and the easing of military operations in the Naga Hills.⁷⁶ The Convention further urged the Nagas to grant pardon to one another and build a unified state, inviting the underground Nagas to also fully participate in the running of the government.

Following the submission of the Sixteen-Point Proposal, Imkongliba Ao led a delegation of fifteen Naga people in negotiations with the Government of India to reach a permanent political solution to the issues plaguing the Naga Hills region. In April of 1960, the team initially met with the Governor of Assam and gave him a paper that detailed the Sixteen-Point Proposal. Thereafter, the team met with the Prime Minister once more in July of 1960, insisting that the Naga people be recognized in a separate state within the Indian

⁷⁴ Luingam Luithui and Nandita Haksar, *Nagaland File: A Question of Human Rights*, op. cit. p. 65.

⁷⁵ M. Horam, *Thirty Years of Naga Insurgency*, Cosmo Publication, New Delhi, 1988, p. 84.

⁷⁶ Ashikho Daili Mao, *Nagas: Problems and Politics*, op. cit. p.68.

Union. Nehru patiently listened to the delegation's concerns and eventually agreed to the Sixteen-Point Proposal with little changes. He declared in Lok Sabha in August 1960 that "A new state to be called Nagaland will be established within the Indian Union comprising the territory of the existing Naga Hills and Tuensang Area. It is now the intention of the Government of India to give effect to the arrangements reached with the Nagaland leaders without delay. This will involve amendment to the constitution and a bill will be placed before the parliament for approval in due course."⁷⁷

With the Sixteen-Point Proposal in mind, the Government of India enacted the Nagaland (Transitional) Regulation, 1961 to govern the territory of Nagaland and any issues arising from it till the establishment of Nagaland as a separate state within the Indian Union.⁷⁸ To implement its provisions, the Governor was tasked with appointing a 42-person Interim Body and a 5-person Executive Council from within the Interim Body.⁷⁹ The Executive Council was to serve as the Naga government's Cabinet while the Interim Body handled legislative duties. The Governor of Assam established the Interim Body at Kohima on February 18, 1961. These changes certainly represented a watershed moment in Naga political history, but they were hated by the factions operating underground. On August 22, 1961, militant Nagas killed Imkongliba Ao, Chairman of the Interim Body, while he was returning from his dispensary in Mokokchung as a form of protest and expression of displeasure. The murder of Imkongliba was an open challenge to the recently established Naga Government (Interim Body) and the Indian government. The moderates, however, remained strong in their commitment to achieving peace and prosperity for the Naga people, and were unfazed by the political assassination of Imkongliba Ao.⁸⁰ Accordingly, the Interim Body initiated measures to expedite the process of establishing Nagaland as a separate state.

⁷⁷ Chandrika Singh, *Political Evolution of Nagaland*, op. cit. p.73.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p.76.

⁷⁹ To ensure that all segments of Naga society are adequately represented, members of the Interim Body were selected from all of the major and minor tribes. Its term was set at three years, and it was required to convene at least once every four months. See Chandrika Singh, *Political Evolution of Nagaland*, op. cit. p.76.

⁸⁰ Ibid., pp.77-78.

Two bills in Parliament, the Constitution Amendment (Thirteen) Bill and the Nagaland Bill, were drafted by the government of India in 1962 to make changes to the Indian Constitution and to initiate the “formation of the State of Nagaland and for matters connected herewith.”⁸¹ The Nagaland Bill was met with strong opposition when it was first brought to the Assam Legislature, and it was only narrowly passed by the Assembly. It happened again when Nehru introduced similar bills to the Lok Sabha. The opposition said that Nehru had planted the seeds of the country's demise. To wrap up the discussions, Nehru remarked that everyone in India was like a family. While the establishment of Nagaland state may seem like it will fuel separatist and radical movements among the Naga people, in reality it would help integrate the Nagas into India's mainstream society. Subsequently, on August 29, 1962, the Lok Sabha passed the Constitutional Amendment Bill No. 13 and the Nagaland State Bill. The Rajya Sabha approved the bills on September 3, 1962, and on September 4, 1962, the President of India signed off on them, thereby creating the state of Nagaland.⁸²

In relation to the creation of the state of Nagaland, it is to be noted that certain special provisions were outlined in Article 371A of the Indian Constitution, which were established by the Thirteenth Amendment. It stated that no federal law would apply to Nagaland unless approved by the state legislature in respect of-

- i. Religious and social practices;
- ii. Naga customary laws and practices;
- iii. Administration of civil and criminal justice involving decisions according to the Naga customary law; and
- iv. Ownership and transfer of land and its resources.⁸³

⁸¹ Kuhoi K. Zhimomi, *Politics and Militancy in Nagaland*, op. cit. p.118.

⁸² Chandrika Singh, *Political Evolution of Nagaland*, 86.

⁸³ Mar Atsongchanger, *The Historical Memoranda of the Nagas and their Neighbours*, Naga Peoples Movement for Human Rights, Guwahati, 1995, pp.114-115.

Moreover, for as long as the internal disturbances lasted, the Governor of Nagaland was given additional authority over law and order in the State.⁸⁴

Once all the necessary constitutional procedures were completed, Nagaland became the sixteenth state to join the Indian Union. On December 1, 1963, President of India, S. Radhakrishnan gave a ceremonial opening address. The oath of office was taken by a five-person caretaker cabinet led by P. Shilu Ao.

Though there was much hope and optimism among the moderate Nagas to enter into a new era of peace and development with a new system of democratic politics with certain constitutional safeguards and provisions, it failed to pacify the extremist Nagas who had long battled for complete Naga independence. The extremist faction of Nagas argued that accommodating the needs of the underground Nagas, rather than establishing Nagaland, was the true answer to the Naga problem.⁸⁵ So the source of disagreement did not change despite the setting up of the state of Nagaland.

However, the state was established, with the concerted efforts of peace-loving Naga leaders who believed in nonviolent resistance and worked for the betterment of Nagaland and its people. The NNC did not acknowledge the state's existence and continued to maintain its violent and hostile acts, making it imperative for other actors to restore peace and order in the state. As a result, the establishment of the state of Nagaland served only to further perplex the Nagas' political journey.

The formation of the state of Nagaland and the introduction of electoral politics, though initiated with much hope and optimism, turned out to be an inchoate attempt to solve the vexed Naga political issue. Thus, one can argue that the efforts of political elites to maintain order in the Naga people's tumultuous political climate, political support was consolidated that paved the way for the establishment of Nagaland as a state and the birth and development of political parties there on.

⁸⁴ Kuhoi K. Zhimomi, *Politics and Militancy in Nagaland*, op. cit. p.121.

⁸⁵ Chandrika Singh, *Political Evolution of Nagaland*, op. cit. p.99.

Prior to the creation of the state, there were no real established political parties in Nagaland. Though the various organizations and pressure groups played an important role in registering protest and the varied demands for the Nagas political future, no formal political party was developed to represent Nagas within the new modern parliamentary democratic system when the Naga Hills were under the administration of the Assam State. The political conditions and situations in which the political parties emerged and developed in the period after the creation of the state of Nagaland shaped the nature of the party system and the mechanics of party politics in the years that followed. The results of this political space finally provided the institutional circumstances and political incentives that allowed political parties to sharpen and shape their regional identity based on Naga identity, culture, traditions and the political issue of the Nagas.

Unlike other states in India, Nagaland did not see any national political party taking shape in the state because of their separatist tendency. The NNC president in his speech on the day of the Naga plebiscite, May 16, 1951, had said “...there is no political party in Nagaland. We do not need it. And we hope we shall not be pushed to a position in which we have the least desire to shift our stand even so much for an expedient measure. All things, Nagaland need not imitate or adopt foreign institutions like India in matters of political organizations. The basic structure of political organization in Nagaland had withstood the change of time all these centuries because it is based on the democratic principle of sovereignty of the people over land ownership as private property. It needs no substitute.”⁸⁶ Thus, no national political party could open its account in the Naga Hills. However, with the formation of the state of Nagaland, regional political parties came into existence. The historical contingencies- the struggle for identity and independence- made it possible for parties to rise in Nagaland politics.

This chapter charted out the historical trajectories of various changes within the political system and structures seen among the Nagas from the pre-British period to the creation of the state of Nagaland. It also analyzed in detail the rising political awareness among the

⁸⁶ V. K. Nuh, *The Naga Chronicle*, Regency Publications, New Delhi, 2002, p. 127.

Nagas, shifting from the ideas of the socio-economic welfare focused Naga Club to the divisions between the moderate and extremist factions within the NNC eventually leading to the armed underground movement. This chapter concluded with the establishment of the state of Nagaland and the factors that laid the foundation for the setting up of political parties in Nagaland. The next chapter will focus on the rise of regional political parties, how they performed in the state elections, their manifestos, their functioning and intra-party rivalry, and how Nagaland as a state adds to the study of electoral politics in India.

CHAPTER - 3

EMERGENCE OF POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL POLITICS IN NAGALAND: THE REGIONAL PHASE

In the recent years, there has been a substantial increase in the significance of political parties to the operation of democratic systems in both newly emerging democracies and established democracies in the modern world. Unlike many other Indian states, Nagaland did not have its first democratic experience of electing its representatives to the legislature through the use of ballot paper until the year 1964, one year after it became the 16th constituent state of India. In contrast to the majority of the other regions of the country, the regional political parties were the ones that dominated its political landscape for the first fifteen years after the state was officially recognized as a separate entity in 1963. It was the beginning of a brand-new period of the democratic process that had a significant impact on Naga political life. Even before the formation of the state, the Naga people participated in two elections. The Naga National Council (NNC) decided not to participate in the first general election held in India in 1952, hence not a single Naga cast their ballot. In the second general election that took place in 1957, there were three candidates who ran, but none of them had any opposition, hence they were all elected without a vote being cast. Only after the establishment of statehood did electoral politics in Nagaland start to take shape, despite the fact that elections were not free from the influence of Naga extremists due to the presence of the Naga national movement. This factor has persisted into the present day and continues to exert some kind of influence over the electoral politics of the state.

Because there was no major national political party at the time, the first two regional political parties in Nagaland, the Naga Nationalist Organization (NNO) and the Democratic Party of Nagaland (DPN), later changed into UFN and UDF, were the ones that contested the first three elections, which resulted in the establishment of a two-party system. The absence of any national party in the state has provided an opening for the two regional parties to develop their support base under the banner of bringing "peace and solution to the Naga political problem" to this troubled region of the North-east. First created as a two-party system, Nagaland's party system has since evolved into a multi-party system in the present context. This chapter will analyze the working of the first democratic experience and the emergence of the first two political parties that emerged in

the context of Nagas struggle for independence and the political change that took shaped in this disturbed state. This section will try to understand and discourse on the political contestation between the two regional political parties that envisaged a competitive party politics with the first three assembly elections in the state.

The Emergence of the First Two Political Parties in Nagaland

The British administrators observed, recorded and were almost in awe about the ‘democratic nature of tribal arrangements’, pointing out the traditional Nagas as a thorough democratic communities with customs that were deeply and extremely democratic. One could point out that these were too much of sensationalizing the political life of the traditional Nagas, that sounds unrealistic and improbable. Wouters precisely pointed out, in the light of reminiscing the history of the Nagas through records, reports, monographs and narratives by the British administrators, that the image of the traditional Naga democracies has “crept a tinge of romanticism”.¹ In a strict sense, the Nagas’ participations and engagements in the formal democracy and election is not only relatively recent, but also disparate and complex. In contrary to the rather ‘reckless’ observations and generalizations about the political life of the traditional Nagas as a thoroughly and deeply democratic, the Nagas’ first experience and engagement in the ‘formal democracy’ was in the first state Assembly election in Nagaland in 1964. Nagaland had newly acquired statehood on 1st December 1963, making it the 16th Indian state, and exercised their first franchise in the 1964 first state Assembly election. This was also the time when the state of Nagaland was in the midst of political unrest with endless chaos, confusion and the horror of bloodshed because of the Naga National movement.

With the creation of the state, democratic processes were set in motion to elect representatives to the newly constructed democratic body. The beginning of electoral politics in the state starting from the first state assembly election in the state in 1964 till

¹ Wouters Jelle J P, “Introduction: Exploring Democracy in Nagaland” in Jelle J P Wouters and Zhoto Tunyi edited book, *‘Democracy in Nagaland: Tribes, Traditions, and Tensions’*, 2018, The Highlander Books: Kohima, Edinburg, Thimpu 2018. pp. 3-5

the fourth assembly election in 1977 witnessed the complete dominance of regional parties in the assembly elections where only two regional parties fought for power besides a good number of independent candidates. This period did not see the presence or the coming of national parties in the state's electoral politics, giving complete way for the regional parties to dominate the electoral battle.

The Reforming Committee

The NNO first emerged out of the Reforming Committee that was formed by Imkongliba Ao with other leaders who were former NNC members. They dissociated themselves from the extremist Phizoist denouncing arm conflict and came overground to pursue a political settlement of the Naga issue on peaceful grounds without the use of arms. Mr T. N. Angami was elected as the chairman of the Reforming Committee. The Committee's main aim was to denounce violent activities and work for bringing peace and order among the Nagas'. These leaders were in line to participate in the constitutional system of India. This stand can be clearly seen when in 1957, the second Indian general election was to take place, they decided not to boycott the election and instead try to participate in the new democratic system. They conclusively decided to send three candidates to the Assam Legislative Assembly. As a result, Mr I. Chubatemsu Ao, representing Mokokchung district, Mr Khelhose Sema representing Naga Hills Central and Mr Satsuo Angami representing Kohima District finally gave their nomination to contest in the said election, all as independent candidates.² The three were returned elected uncontested as no other candidates from within the Naga Hills participated or file their nomination. This was basically the result of the boycott call by the underground Nagas, also in the form of intimidation and threats that prevented any other candidates as well as the general public to participate in the election process. The Reforming Committee's attempt to help the Nagas participate in the democratic system somehow failed as no Naga voted in the election though their representatives were elected. The credibility of this representation

² Statistical report on General Election, 1957 to the legislative assembly of Assam, Election Commission of India, New Delhi, 1957, 4.

can be argued as the consensus of general public was much divided during this period. However, as stated by Chandrika Singh, “The second general Election marked the beginning of the working of the democratic system in Nagaland.”³

The continued efforts of this group of moderates continue to deliberate and work towards finding peace and bringing normalcy to the Nagas became more vibrant in the ensuing years. All these efforts resulted in the organization of a convention which took place in 1957, under the name Naga People’s Convention. This Convention marked a historical achievement for laying the foundation for modern representative form of government by creating the first political party to contest in the election. Besides bringing together the various tribes and leaders to deliberate consciously about the political and social issues of the Nagas, the Reforming Committee emerged into a full-fledge political party, expressing its faith in democratic values and a constitutional Government.⁴

The rise of political parties in Nagaland can be traced back to the state's turbulent past, specifically its fight for self-determination and recognition. Democratisation has been a key feature of post-conflict scenarios, often seen as the primary political foundation for the restoration of a nation. In the case of Nagaland, political parties formed as a post-conflict peacebuilding initiative between the two sides following Nagas political uprisings (Indian government and Naga nationalist group). This is one of the procedures necessary for a peaceful end to a violent conflict to emerge politically. As a result of pre and post-statehood political unrest and conflict, Nagaland's first two political parties, the Nationalist Naga Organization (NNO) and the Democratic Party of Nagaland (DPN), emerged with the stated goal of fostering peaceful coexistence and resolving the Naga political issue within the framework of the Indian union.

³ Chandrika Singh, *Political Evolution of Nagaland*, Lancers Publication, New Delhi, 1981, p.169.

⁴ Ibid.

Naga Nationalist Organization (NNO)

The Naga Nationalist Organization (NNO) was the first political party to be officially registered in the state and also the first regional political party to be established. The NNO ran candidates in the first election for the state assembly, which took place in 1964. In spite of the fact that it was a regional party, from the very beginning it had a preference for the Indian National Congress.⁵ The leaders of the NNO worked along with the government of India to establish peace and make constitutional amendments in Nagaland. After this, the NNO became a close partner of the Congress Party and remained so until the two parties merged in 1976. The party's constitution was written in a manner that was analogous to that of the All-India National Congress. Because it had a larger following and a mass base that consisted of well-known public figures from a variety of various tribes, it eventually emerged as the party with the majority of seats in the assembly. Additionally, the majority of its members came from the Interim Body and were considered to be moderate members of the former Naga Peoples' Convention. In the end, this ultimately opened the path for its electoral win in the very first election for the state assembly. The opposition was represented by the Democratic Party.

The First General Election held in Nagaland resulted in the Nationalist Naga Organization (NNO) claiming 34 seats in the 46-member legislative assembly, while the Democratic Party claimed 12 seats.⁶ Therefore, the NNO became the majority party in the state Assembly, and the ministry that has continually campaigned for Nagas' integration into the mainstream India was founded under the leadership of P. Shilu Ao. Both of these events resulted in the NNO becoming the majority party. It sought a constitutionally compliant and satisfying resolution to the Nagas' issue while maintaining Nagaland's status as an integral part of India. The immense suffering of the Naga people as a result of bloodshed and armed struggle was the primary impetus for the founding of the party.

⁵ Chandrika Singh, *Naga Politics: A critical account*, op. cit., p.117.

⁶ Out of the 46 seats, 6 seats are elected indirectly from the Tuensang District.

Additionally, the party was established with the goals of restoring peace and advancing the general welfare of the Naga people.⁷

The NNO was responsible for the implementation of a wide variety of welfare policies, which facilitated the growth and development of the Naga people. It made an effort to persuade the Nagas operating underground to end their hostilities and work together with the government to achieve peace and prosperity. There was a concerted attempt made to rehabilitate those Nagas who had fallen prey to the aggressive activities of the subterranean Nagas. Additionally, under the NNO's initiative and effort, the Legislative Assembly was successful in passing a resolution that established English as the official language of the state for both educational and administrative functions.⁸

Democratic Party of Nagaland (DPN)

The DPN was formed by those who differed from NNO's leadership and harboured sympathy for the secessionist underground group. The Democratic Party was the first opposition party in Nagaland, formed in October 1963, under the chairmanship of A. Kevichiisa.⁹ Kevichiisa, a retired I.A.S. officer and one of the most respected leaders of the Nagas who was sincerely concerned about the political plight of the Nagas, worked hard in his own right to bring solution to the chaos and confusion filled new state. In the year when the first General Assembly Election was declared, there was only the Naga National Organization to go for election. Kevishiisa, being very observant and farsighted individual felt that if in a democratic set up, if the election is without an opposition party running for the election, the meaning of democracy has no base. With this in mind, he urgently formed a new political party- The Democratic Party of Nagaland to counter the NNO. The party pledge for peace and lasting good relationship with the government of India.¹⁰ It was the moderate faction of the NNC that had formed the Democratic Party

⁷ L. S. Gassah, *Regional Political Parties in North East India*, Omsons Publications, New Delhi, 1992, p.207.

⁸ Chandrika Singh, *Political Evolution of Nagaland*, op. cit. p.176.

⁹ L.S. Gassah, *Regional Political Parties in North East India*, op. cit. p.208.

¹⁰ S.K. Chaube, *Hill Politics in Northeast India*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1973. p.151.

under his leadership and it was under this that the party leaders, Angami Kevichiisa and Rano Shaiza (Phizo's niece) were linked to the NNC.

The identification of the Front with the underground was so close that in popular parlance, it was described as a 'pro-underground' party.¹¹ The DPN came into picture just on the eve of the election, which shows its immaturity when compared to the NNO despite of having a strong dynamic leader (Kevichiisa). Most of the party members were not in par with their adversaries in terms of experience and popularity. It was because of this that it lacked mass base and popular support which resulted in its defeat in the assembly election of 1964.

Having a strong desire to change the Nagas by bringing peace and normalcy, the party declared in an official statement that "the party will strive to set up a pattern of administration best suited to the tribes so as to pave the way for permanent internal peace and lasting good relationship with the government of India."¹²

The Front had more sympathy for the underground cause and so it had nothing to do with Indian nationalism or any other national issues. It was the issue relating to the Naga's independence that suited them most. According to Hokushe Sema, "The formation of the Democratic Front was a tactical move calculated to keep the doors open for Phizo's return if they won the elections. Even if they failed to win the elections, they wanted to create a situation which would undermine the successful functioning of the administration."¹³ In another statement the party resolution read, "The party is to be regarded as an ad-hoc party set up to unite the people of Nagaland in those troubled times, and it will be opened to the party to dissolve itself if and when the task is considered accomplished."¹⁴ Thus, it is obvious that the DPN from its inception did not aim to be a permanent body in the

¹¹ S.K. Chaube, *Electoral Politics in Northeast India*, University Press, Madras, 1985. p.164.

¹² Natwar Thakar, 'Some observations on the last general elections', in K.S. Singh, (ed), *The Tribal Situation in India*, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, 1972. p.321.

¹³ Hokushe Sema, *Emergence of Nagaland, Socio-Economic and Political Transformation and the future*, op. cit. p.103.

¹⁴ Democratic Party of Nagaland, *Statement of Policy and Election Manifesto of the Democratic Party of Nagaland*, Kohima, 1964. p.3.

parliamentary politics. The comprehensive propaganda that the Democratic Front had as grist to its mill was the demand for the independence of Nagaland and the involvement of Phizo in Naga affairs. That is why when their demand to call Phizo from England and include him in the peace talks was rejected, they all resigned en-block from the Assembly's membership.¹⁵

In the first state assembly election held in February 1964, the DPN won 12 seats in a 46-member Legislative Assembly. It became the opposition party when the NNO formed the ministry with a majority of 34 seats. Being more nationalistic and showing solidarity with the NNC even though it has to abide by the constitution, the party reacted when its demand to the state government, requesting to let Phizo join in the peace talks to solve the Naga problem failed.¹⁶ The Democratic Front which had set great store for Phizo's return was shattered. Consequently, all the DPN legislators resigned after the signing of Peaceaccord in September 1964, as their task to bring two conflicting parties (i.e., Naga Underground and the Government of India) to a negotiating table was accomplished.¹⁷ Another interesting event was that, at the time of bye-election, none of the members of the DPN party contested for the vacant seats in the assembly which was held in October 1965. Eventually, the party became defunct and dissolved with the intention of paving the way for the underground to have a better peace talk with the Indian government after the cease-fire, thus leaving no opposition party in the Nagaland Legislative Assembly till the next election.

The Election of 1964

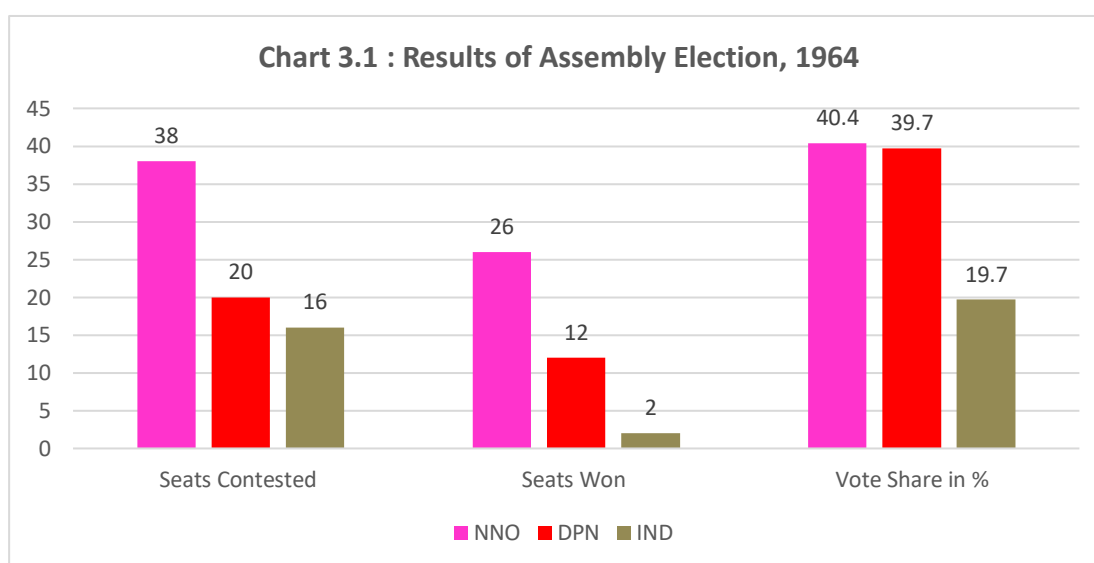
The first State Assembly election in Nagaland of January 1964 was to elect its representatives from the territorial constituencies of the two districts; Kohima with 19

¹⁵ Chandrika Singh, *Naga Politics: A Critical Account*, op. cit. p.119.

¹⁶ During this time Phizo was exiled in London and so the State government argued that since he had acquired U.K. citizen, he has no *locus standi* in Nagaland. See Chandrika Singh, *Political Evolution of Nagaland*, op. cit. p.176.

¹⁷ L.S. Gassah, *Regional Political Parties in North East India*, op. cit. p.208.

seats and Mokokchung with 21 seats respectively.¹⁸ The remaining 6 seats were left to be indirectly elected by the Regional Council of Tuensang District which was set under the special provision of Article 371A of the Constitution of India.¹⁹ This historic mark of the first Legislative Assembly election of Nagaland took off with a strength of 46 seats.



Total Electorates = 1,24,166
Polling Percentage = 50%

Votes Polled = 62,125

SOURCE: Government of Nagaland, *Report on the First General Election to the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland, 1964*, Chief Electoral Officer, Kohima, 1964.

Besides a handful of independent candidates, the election of 1964 was contested between the two newly formed regional political parties: the Naga Nationalist Organization (NNO) and the Democratic Party of Nagaland (DPN). Altogether, 213 polling stations were set up in the 40 Assembly Constituencies in the districts of Kohima and Mokokchung. 74 candidates contested for only 26 seats and 14 candidates were declared elected uncontested.²⁰ Analysing the electoral outcome of the two political parties in this first

¹⁸ Government of Nagaland, *Report on the Third General Election to the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland, 1974*, Chief Electoral Officer Kohima, 1974, p.2.

¹⁹ Government of Nagaland, *Report on the First General Election to the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland, 1964*, Chief Electoral Officer, Kohima, 1963. p. 2

²⁰ Chandrika Singh, *Political Evolution of Nagaland*, op. cit. p.174.

electoral battle, the NNO dominated the election verdict, winning all the 13 contested seats and the 13 elected uncontested seats, winning in total 26 seats. NNO came out way ahead of its opponent DPN, securing 40.4% of the total valid votes polled. DPN contested for 20 seats winning just 11 seats with a single seat elected uncontested, winning a total of 12 seats with a voting percentage of 39.7% of the total valid votes polled. The independent candidates contesting for 16 seats, won just two seats but interestingly hold a good voting percentage of 19.7% of the total valid votes polled.

The Verdict

The NNO formed the first ministry with P. Shilu Ao as its first Chief Minister. The 6 members from Tuensang district and 2 independent candidates joined the NNO in the formation of the first government of Nagaland, raising the strength to 34 seats in the 46-member Assembly. The Democratic Party of Nagaland, under the leadership of Kevichiisa became the opposition party with 12 seats in the Assembly. The total electorate in this election was 1, 24,166 and the polling percentage reached at 50%.²¹

The election was held under disturbed law and order situation where the underground vehemently boycotted the election. However, the desire of the people in participating in the election cannot be waived as all the Naga masses were yearning for peace and development after a decade long of sufferings. The NNO became the dominant party since it had a larger mass public image with members representing various communities. It replicated an ideal political party for the Nagas in achieving peace and development. With party leaders who were active members of the Naga People's Convention, and has their community support, was better equipped and organized in playing the game of politics compared to its rival (DPN). Another important factor was its good relation with the central government under the Congress party added to its victory. On the other hand, the DPN failed to gain majority in the Assembly as it lacked mass base and most of its members were concentrated more in the capital and nearby regions, dominantly in the

²¹ Government of India, *Key highlights of General election, 1964, to the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland*, Election Commission of India, New Delhi.

Tenymia regions.²² The Naga people had little faith in the DPN since it was a pro-underground party whose members were earlier active members in the NNC. T. Sentichuba Ao, said that “the main reason behind their participation in the election was to put an end to all the sufferings of the Nagas under the hands of the armed forces and to bring peace and settlement of the long-standing Naga political problem by letting the underground leaders initiate the move.”²³ With the new era, the people wanted to retain peace and set up development activities in the region which they believe only the NNO could provide. Thus, the credibility of the DPN cannot be in par with the NNO. The independent candidates who contested the election were either those candidates who failed to get party tickets or individuals who wanted to win and deliberately determine the fortune of the two regional parties.

A major political event took place in December 1964, when all the 12 members of the DPN resigned en-bloc from the Assembly. This happened when the Government of Nagaland refused to call and include Phizo for solving the Naga problem. Consequent to this event, by-election was held on 28 May, 1965, in which eight candidates of the NNO were declared elected unopposed, the other three of its candidates won by defeating their opponents. One independent was also elected. Thus, the already strong NNO party was again raised to 45 seats. In the by-election, the DPN did not contest and so the assembly was left with no opposition till the next election.

The NNO believed that what the state of Nagaland needed presently was not violent movement for independent and sovereign status, but peace and economic development, which would be possible only when the democratic processes, which were set, must be allowed to prosper. Under this realization, the government of Nagaland worked hard without taking note of the threats from the undergrounds. However, the NNO was not free from internal differences. In 1966, a no-confidence motion was passed against Shilu Ao by his own party. As a result, he resigned from the post of Chief Minister of Nagaland on

²² David Sachii, *Emergence of Coalition Politics in Nagaland*, M. Phil Dissertation (unpublished), Jawaharlal Nehru University, 2007, p.26.

²³ T. Sentichuba Ao, ‘The Political Scene,’ *The Nagaland Journal*, October 21, 1992.

15th August, 1966. The same day T.N. Angami was appointed the Chief Minister, who constituted an eleven-member ministry.²⁴ 'The reasons for Shilu's removal were never made known, though it was rumoured that he fell from favour because he had tried to shift the state capital to Mokokchung'.²⁵ During discussion of the no-confidence motion, allegation was brought against Shilu that he drinks heavily and is under influence of liquor. The fall of Shilu was greatly resented by the Aos who even at one moment thought of seceding from Nagaland. However, good sense prevailed among some of them, particularly Sashimeren Aier, an Ao himself, and thus the sentiment calmed down.²⁶

The NNO was faced with a herculean task in providing peace and normalcy in the state along with so many other promises and responsibilities. Problem before the Nagaland government was not only to run the affairs of the state but also to adopt the measure to solve the prolonged Naga political problem, taking the underground leaders in good faith. Besides initiating welfare measures for the development and progress of the Naga people, the Peace Mission was constituted along with the initiative of the church and peace was relatively restored back.²⁷ Fortunately, the Cease Fire agreement was signed on 23rd May, 1964 where there was a general sigh of relief, hope and happiness all around.²⁸ The NNO was credited with this historic achievement. It gained the hearts of the peace-loving Nagas which was to later shape the party in the next election. However, after having several rounds of peace talks, a solution could not be found as the underground Nagas want nothing less than an independent nation. The Nagas still have sympathy for the Naga national cause. The NNO proximity with the Indian government and the indifference attitude of the Naga Nationalists towards it has also damaged the position of the state government.

²⁴ Chandrika Singh, *Political Evolution of Nagaland*, 1981. p.176-177.

²⁵ S.C. Dev, *Nagaland: The Untold Story*, op. cit. p.11.

²⁶ B.B. Ghosh, *History of Nagaland*, S. Chand and Company Ltd, New Delhi, 1982. p. 191.

²⁷ Chandrika Singh, *Political Evolution of Nagaland*, op. cit. p.176.

²⁸ Government of Nagaland, *Road to Progress*, Directorate of Information and Public Relations, Kohima, 2002. p.12.

With the first Assembly election, people began to take more interest in political affairs and activities. With their increasing interest in party politics, the attention of the people declined towards the movement of insurgency and turn towards progress and prosperity. As a result, political dimension of Naga politics began to expand unexpectedly.²⁹ With the introduction of modern democratic electoral system, political parties in the form of regional parties gradually got institutionalized with the development of representative form of government in the newly created state.

NNO against a new regional front: The United Front of Nagaland

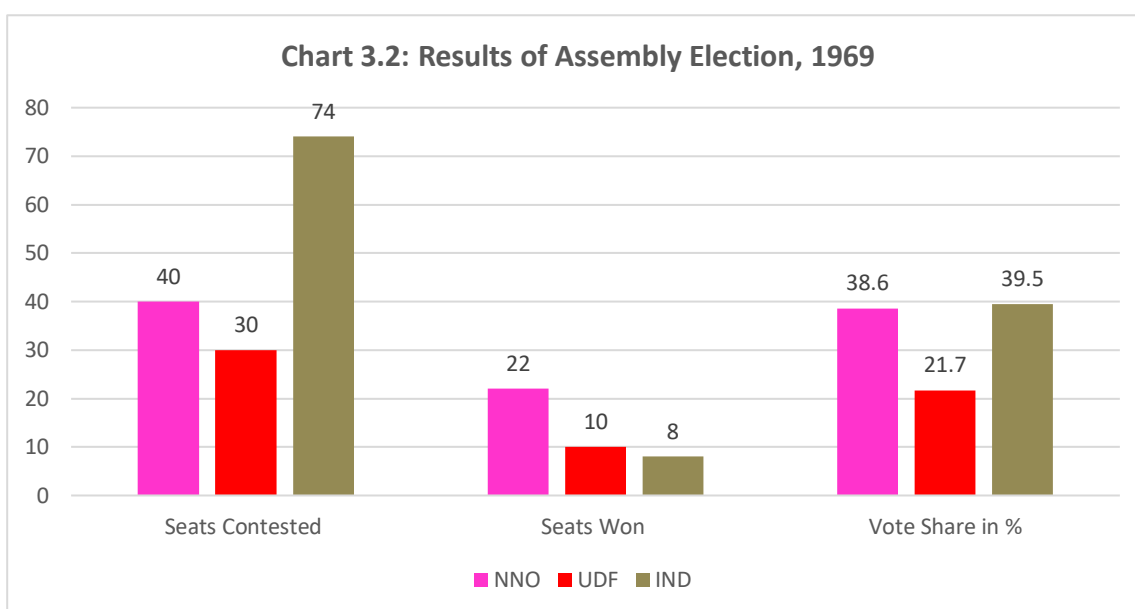
Second State Assembly Election (1969)

The Second Assembly Election in Nagaland was held from 6th to 10th, February, 1969, amidst a political situation of uncertainty and violence. The election was more or less like the previous one, except some few notable changes. One such was the increased in the total number of seats allotted to the Tuensang District in the State Legislature from 6th to 12th under Act 61 of the 1968 of the Indian Parliament. Thus, the total number of seats in the assembly was raised to 52 from 46. The Democratic Party which was earlier dissolved, got rechristened with a new name 'United Front of Nagaland'.³⁰ The number of independent candidates also increased considerably. Thus, the second elections to the 52 member Legislative Assembly were contested between three political formations - the NNO which was a recognized regional party, the United Front of Nagaland a registered unrecognized regional party and independents candidates.

²⁹ Chandrika Singh, *The Naga Society*, Manas Publications, New Delhi, 2008, p.192.

³⁰ The party got dissolved with the intention of paving the way for the underground to have a better peace talk with the Indian government after the Cease-fire. However, the failure of the peace talks with the Indian government made the former DPN leaders to reform the party under a new name.

In this election, the total electorate rose to 1,76,931 as against 1, 24,166 in 1964, registering a rise of almost 30% over the last electorate and the percentage of electors who voted was 78.37% as against 50.51% to 1964.³¹ Polling stations were also increased from 213 to 334 because of the increased in the number of electors and the deduction of the maximum distance that an elector has to cover to reach the polling station from three miles to two miles. There were altogether 144 candidates, including 2 ladies for the first time to seek election for the 40 Assembly Constituencies. All the 40 seats were contested, where as in 1964 in as many as 14 assembly constituencies, there were uncontested returns.³²



Total Electorates = 1,77,931
Polling Percentage = 77.8%

Votes Polled = 1,38,408

SOURCE: Government of Nagaland, '*Report on the First General Election to the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland, 1969*', Chief Electoral Officer, Kohima, 1969.

Out of the 144 candidates, the NNO fielded 40 seats whereas the UFN contested only in 30 constituencies. There were altogether 74 independent candidates in the election fray. When the results were declared, the NNO won 22 seats with a polling percentage of

³¹ Government of Nagaland, '*Report on the Second General Election to the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland, 1969*', Chief Electoral Officer, Kohima, 1969. p. 2

³², Government of Nagaland, '*Report on the Fourth General Election to the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland, 1977*', Chief Electoral Officer, Kohima, 1977, p.2.

38.6%, the UFN secure 10 seats with a vote share of 21.7% and the independents won 8 seats respectively with the highest poll percentage of 39.5%. Again, the NNO came to power when the 12 members from the Tuensang District and seven out of eight successful independent candidates joined them. This raised the strength of the NNO to 41 in a 52 member assembly giving it a comfortable majority. Thus, the NNO ministry was formed under the leadership of Hokishe Sema for the second consecutive term in the presence of a strong opposition, the UFN.³³

The increase in the number of electorates and the candidates in the election show that the people of Nagaland had realised the importance of democratic institutions brought about by statehood. The political awakening gave the Nagas the responsibility in the governance of the state by electing their representatives to the state formal structure. However, in spite of a repeated show of a high democratic participation, Nagas have always retained their sympathies for the Naga Nationalist. It is in this election that a good number of underground Nagas came over ground and contested in the election. They joined the UFN; the party which is believed to be a pro-rebel party in popular parlance. The joining of the undergrounds in the state party politics can be mainly attributed to the liberal and helpful role of the Government of India in developing the economy of the Nagas. By 1969, the underground Nagas were losing their ground sharply due to the controlling of the tense situation by the Nagaland Government and the Indian security forces. Many undergrounds have had enough of their lives in the jungle and decided to join the mainstream of the nation on the request of the moderates.³⁴

Naga Nationalist Organisation (NNO): 1969

The NNO under the influence of the Indian National Congress, had broader concept compared to the opposition party; the DPN. In the second general election to the Nagaland Legislative Assembly, 1969, the party gave its assurance that if it is again voted to power it would work for modernising the agriculture of the State so that self-sufficiency in food

³³ Chandrika Singh, *Political Evolution of Nagaland*, op. cit. p. 179-180.

³⁴ Kuhoi K. Zhimomi, *Politics and Militancy in Nagaland*, op. cit. p. 119.

might be achieved.³⁵ It also promised to improve the communication system for the rapid development of Nagaland. In its election manifesto, it also said that it would not only provide a stable and clean administration but would also work for providing free medical facilities, better education and increased employment opportunities to the Naga people. It also assured the people that it would make sincere efforts for integrating all the Naga inhabited areas.³⁶ The NNO's popularity brought it to power for the second time in state assembly election in 1969. In a house of 52 seats, the NNO again secured 41 seats with the support of 7 independents and the 12 members who were indirectly elected from the Tuensang District. The NNO for the second time formed the ministry under the leadership of Hokishe Sema which witnessed a ruling political party completing its tenure under the same leader for the first time. Its victory was not only viewed as an electoral victory but it also became the voice of the people for change in the development and peace. It had mass public image because its members represented different sections of the Naga society. One important factor was that it was better organised and had good relation with the central government, specially, the congress party.

It must also be noted that NNO also tried to reach out to the armed groups through persuasion and inducement. In 1970, the NNO enunciated the following policy towards the guerrillas-

*“... the NNO accepts the underground Nagas as inalienable part of the Naga community and thus, they must have a say in the final settlement. This party is convinced that Naga problem has to be solved by the Nagas themselves and this can be done only when there is peace and unity among the Nagas. This party, therefore, appeals to all contending groups and parties to observe strictly the ceasefire agreement.”*³⁷

³⁵ *Election Manifesto of the Naga Nationalist Organisation*, English Press, Dimapur, 1969.

³⁶ Chandrika Singh, *Political Evolution of Nagaland*, op. cit. p.179.

³⁷ Gordon P. Means, *Cease-Fire politics in Nagaland*, Asian Survey, Vol. 11, No. 10, Oct. 1971, p.1014.

For example, disagreement rose between T. N Angami and Hokishe Sema on the question of peace talk with the armed groups. Angami was of the opinion that only Naga National Council should be invited in the peace talks with the government, whereas Hokishe Sema was of the view that the NNC did not represent all the underground Nagas and there were other underground groups also such as the Revolutionary Government of Kughato Sukhai and the Honking Government of Thongdi Chang. Therefore, all the underground groups must be associated in the negotiations. Their differences grew acute and consequently three ministers, namely, T. N. Angami, Akom Imlong and T. Sangtam, including the Deputy Speaker had to resign. They defected from the party and joined the opposition (UFN) in 1972. As a result of which the United Democratic Front was formed. Thus, the NNO got split which consequently resulted in its defeat in the third state general election.

United Front of Nagaland: 1969

The United Front of Nagaland came into being when the leaders of the erstwhile Democratic Party of Nagaland along with some leaders of the NNC, who had broken away from Phizo like Tajen Ao and Ungshim Sheza, met in Dimapur in the house of Kevichiisa in June 1968. They decided to form a new political party to participate in the election that were scheduled for early 1969. Consequently, the United Front of Nagaland came into being once again under the chairmanship of A. Kevichiisa at Kohima Village Panchayat Hall in September 1968.³⁸ However, they decided to stick on to the Party's original objectives and programmes and also continue to use the same symbol (Cock). Prominent leaders like Shri Vizol, Shri Vamuzo and Shri Shiirhozeli were the moving spirits behind the party. The basic objectives of the party were declared to be "(1) to work for unity among the Nagas on the principle of justice and equality; and (2) to take steps to bring about a political settlement through a peaceful means."³⁹

The creation of the UFN was a healthy development as it provided an alternative to the Naga Nationalist Organisation. Since some of the leaders of the UFN were formerly in the

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.208.

³⁹ Y.D. Gundeia, *War and Peace in Nagaland*, Palit and Palit, New Delhi, 1975, pp.198-199.

underground camp, their joining of the UFN for contesting the election was widely welcomed by the moderate Nagas. Rev. Savino, the president of the ruling NNO, applauding the creation of the UFN, said that it was a welcome feature because for the first time, some of the members of the Naga National Council would “be fully consisting themselves to an arrangement within the state of Nagaland.”⁴⁰ Knowing that a sincere and earnest dialogue was required with the underground Nagas in order to establish a lasting peace in the state, the UFN impressed upon the importance of bringing the rebels over-ground. It also claimed to be the only possible link between the government and the underground Nagas and consequently in a better position to solve the Naga problem.

Being in the opposition, the party in its elections campaigning has attempted to criticize the Nagaland Government for its failure to gain greater concessions from the Government of India. The UFN blamed the NNO for failing to achieve a permanent settlement to the Naga dispute, and also argued that with more determination, peace talks could be brought to a satisfactory conclusion.⁴¹ In its election manifesto, it promised to take steps to bring about a political settlement through peaceful means and also giving the assurance that, if voted to power, it would work for economic development of the State. One of the pre-election statements of the party included the following:

*“Our stand for peace includes everyone, even those ‘hard core’ who have gone over to China. We do not advocate their total annihilation because we know peace cannot be obtained by such means. We know that the spirit of nationalism once aroused can never be suppressed by force. Violence only breeds more violence. It is unnecessary to deny that we are Pro-Phizo.”*⁴²

The UFN with great enthusiasm and vigour went for the State Assembly Election in 1969 but could retain only 10 assembly seats out of the 40 elective seats and 12 nominated

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.199.

⁴¹ Gordon P. Means, ‘Cease-Fire Politics in Nagaland’, op. cit. p. 1018.

⁴² *Ibid.*,

members from Tuensang District. The UFN as a party did not fare well in the election as compared to the erstwhile DPN. In spite of putting up the slogan ‘A vote for UFN is a vote for permanent peace’, the party could not win the favour of the electorates. Even the party leader A. Kevichiisa was defeated by a substantial margin. The cause of the defeat of the United Front was the general belief of the Naga electorates that it was a pro-rebel party which had no faith in parliamentary democracy. The voters considered the United Front, an instrument of the underground Naga leaders which caused doubt in the minds of the general Nagas that the Front had little interest in development, making the voters turn deaf ears to the appeal of the Front. But instead of resigning after the elections, as happened in 1964, the UFN assembly men remained in the legislative assembly to function as critics and opponents of the government.

It has advocated granting amnesty to detained guerrillas, repealing the Nagaland Security Regulations of 1962, and it has attempted to hold the Nagaland Government responsible for ceasefire violations by the Indian Army arising from counter-insurgency operations against the NFG. During the latter half of the 1970, the party has been active in organizing opposition to the government’s proposal to initiate a sales tax to generate more revenue for development purposes. It has also pressed the government very hard on the “Naga consolidation” issue.⁴³

Another important political development arises when in 1971 the parliamentary election was held. Nagaland went for the first Parliamentary election because in earlier Lok Sabha elections, the NNO had been sending its candidate without having to face any election. Nagaland has got only one seat in the Lok Sabha and so both the parties set up its own candidate for the poll. Kevichiisa representing the UFN won with 60.5% of votes and represented the Naga people in the Lok Sabha. On the other side, Chubatoshi Jamir the candidate for the NNO lost with only 39.5% of votes.⁴⁴ However, the defeat of the NNO gave its candidate S. C. Jamir his first opportunity to enter state politics.

⁴³ Ibid.,

⁴⁴ Chandrika Singh, *Naga Politics: A Critical Account*, op. cit. p.122.

The UFN as an opposition party in the assembly however, could not clearly enshrine its nature or purpose in the minds of the people. There is a reality of the group seeking to be bridged between the underground and the Government of India but the people lost faith in the party as it was pro-rebel.

Outcome

The NNO's liberal attitude and commitment to the services of the people, especially in economic development, enabled it to gain much popularity among the Nagas and won the election. On the other hand, several factors contributed to the defeat of the UFN. Firstly, it was the general belief that the UFN was a pro-hostile political party which had no faith in parliamentary democracy. The voters considered the UFN, an instrument of the underground Naga leaders. The underground Nagas had not yet stopped their hostile activities. Hence, the voters did not have faith in them. The UFN claimed to be the only possible link between the Government and the underground Nagas and consequently in a better position to solve the Naga problem. But the Naga people were aware that the talk between the Government and the rebels were not going to succeed. They voted for the NNO. Secondly, the sudden dissolution of the DPN in 1964, had given a shock and surprise to its supporters. The UFN, being a successor to the DPN, was also suspected of possibly behaving like the DPN. Thirdly, the NNO at that time had more popularity and mass base than the UFN.⁴⁵

This period witnessed a power struggle within the NNO between the Sema faction led by Hokishe Sema, and Angami faction led by T. N. Angami. The then Chief Minister, Hokishe Sema had a close link with the Revolutionary Government of Nagaland and sidelined the FGN. These uneasy biased relations of Hokishe Sema's government with the underground government caused a split in the NNO spearheaded by Chubatoshi Jamir who joined the UDF which was pro FGN. Hokishe Sema also sacked four other ministers

⁴⁵ Chandrika Singh, *Political Evolution of Nagaland*, op. cit. p. 180-181.

for their alleged sympathy to the FGN.⁴⁶ This also provoked some more NNO members to rebel against Hokishe Sema. They defected from the party and joined the UFN which resulted in the creation of UDF. Thus, the politics of tribalism was taking roots in wider context where political leaders were identified with their community and region.⁴⁷ Political conditions in the state worsened when the Cease-fire agreement of 1964 was withdrawn since both the sides breached the Agreement. The existence of the Arms Forces Special Power Act added more woes to the depleting situation. However, besides witnessing deteriorating law and order situations, Mr Sema's ministry managed to run the government till the completion of its term.

The Naga Nationalist Organization's Defeat

Third State Assembly Election (1974)

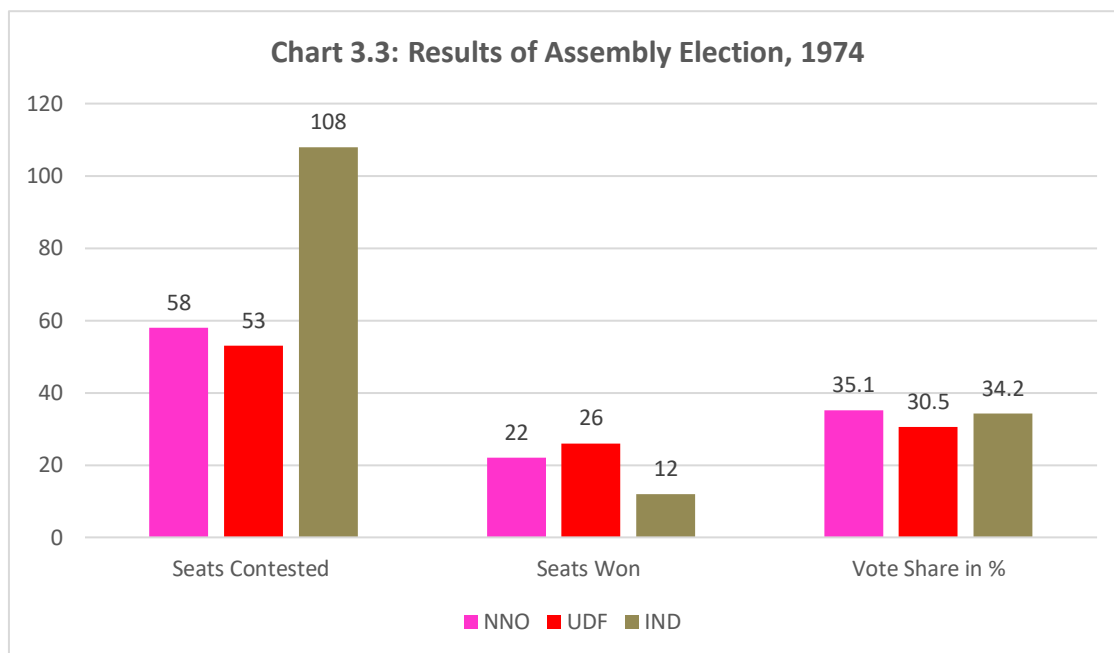
The increase in the interest and faith of the people in the democratic processes which had taken deep root was once again put to test in the Third Assembly Election in February 1974. This election can be said to be truly an all Nagaland in character and content, for the reason that the entire Tuensang District was allowed to exercise its adult franchise for the first time. Their total seats for the Assembly were raised from 12 to 20 seats respectively, where members were to be elected directly following the expiry of 10 years provision, increasing the Assembly seats to 60 under Delimitation Act 76 of 1972.⁴⁸ Consequently the number of electorates shoot up to 4, 06587 and the total number of votes polled was 2, 89, 899. An important feature of this election was the emergence of a new regional political party United Democratic Front, which was earlier known as UFN. The election campaign was hectic and lively where party workers went door to door carrying the messages and objectives of their respective parties. The election campaign's main theme was to bring peace and normalcy in the state. The total number of candidates in the

⁴⁶ T. N. Angami, Akum Imlong, Weprenyi Kapfo, and Tsubongse Sangtam. See Murkot Ramunny, *The World of Nagas*, Northern book Centre, New Delhi, 1988. p. 291.

⁴⁷ David Sachii, '*Emergence of Coalition Politics in Nagaland*,' op. cit. p.32.

⁴⁸ , Government of Nagaland, *Report on the Third General Election to the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland, 1974*, Chief Electoral Officer Kohima, 1974. p. 11.

election also increased to 219 where the NNO field 58 candidates, UDF 53 and the independents 108 candidates.



Total Electorates = 4, 06,587
Polling Percentage = 71.3 %

Votes Polled = 2,89,899

SOURCE: Government of Nagaland, *Report on the First General Election to the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland, 1974*, Chief Electoral Officer, Kohima, 1974.

When the results were declared, a new picture was shown where the mandate turn towards the UDF. The UDF became the single largest party, capturing 26 seats with 30.5% of vote share, while the NNO won only 22 seats though having the highest vote share of 35.1%. The independents won 12 seats with 34.2% of vote share, enabling it to play a deciding factor in the formation of the government. Eventually, the UDF formed the Government on 26th February 1974, with the support of seven independents under the leadership of Mr Vizol Angami.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Chandrika Singh, *Naga Politics: A critical Account*, op. cit. p. 125.

The most notable feature of this election was that it brought a decade's rule of the NNO to an end. This change in the leadership obviously brought into focus two more important natural and political inclinations of the Nagas. Firstly, they showed their innate desire for change. Secondly, they not only merely gave the required impetus and proved the essentiality of an effective opposition for the survival of democracy but more truly, they sustained political opposition.⁵⁰ The UDF show of strength was being attributed to tribal and personal rivalries and was not regarded as marking any accentuation of anti-central trend.⁵¹

The NNO's defeat in the election can be attributed to intra-party differences and personality clashes. The growing political consciousness and the involvement in party politics and also the flow of financial funds for the development of the state and its people made the Naga politicians more ambitious for power, wealth and prestige. This gave rise to politics of defection. Also, reasons like the promulgation of Arms Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA) and the failure to extend the Cease-Fire had not only soured the relation between the Naga nationalist and the Indian Government but, it also created a feeling of insecurity and alienation which was responded with public disappointment towards the NNO government.

The NNO party's election manifesto of 1974 was more elaborate. Apart from promising implementation of the 16 point agreement, more emphasis on development of Tuensang, separate university and high court, protection of the rights of the minorities and reservation of non-gazetted and non-technical posts for the locals, it laid more emphasis on economic development programmes such as agriculture, small scale industries, power, development of rural areas and welfare of youth etc.⁵² Despite giving out its full enthusiasm in providing the state a stable government with commitment to work for people's progress and prosperity, the NNO failed to induce the Naga electorates to be on their side. Internal feuds

⁵⁰ Kekuchol Pusa, *Congress (I) in Nagaland*, M. Phil Dissertation (unpublished), University of Hyderabad, 2004, p.52.

⁵¹ Shiv Lal, *Encyclopedia of Elections: The Election Archives*, Navrang Book Sellers and Publishers, New Delhi, 1975. p.46.

⁵² L.S. Gassah, *Regional Political Parties in North East India*, op. cit. p.207.

within the party resulted in the party's failure to retain majority. In the third assembly election, one decade rule of the NNO came to an end. The UDF won 26 seats, the NNO 22 seats and the independents 12 seats. Eleven independent candidates joined the UDF, making it to form the ministry under the leadership of Mr. Vizol. However, Vizol's ministry was toppled due to defection in March 1975. Right after its fall, the NNO formed the ministry under the leadership of J. B. Jasokie which lasted for ten days. Defections and fluctuating loyalties of the legislators brought NNO's downfall and the state was brought under the President's Rule on March 22nd 1975.⁵³

During the period of emergency, the NNO finally decided to merge with the Indian National Congress. The demand for the merger of the NNO with the INC was first put up in the Party's Tenth General Session in February, 1975, at Tuensang. However, the final decision regarding the merger was taken in the Eleventh Session of the Party which was held at Kohima in the first week of May 1976.⁵⁴ This was done with the intention that, after its merger, the party would win the elections to be held after Emergency. But this expectation of the leaders of the NNO which had merged with the Congress (I), was belied.⁵⁵ However, this election was a historic event as it opened a new chapter in Naga politics. The merger was a big step because it linked the leaders of the NNO with broader national approach, but this step was not appreciated by all the sections of the Naga society.⁵⁶ The coming together of the NNO with the INC lured many of the UDF leaders to join the Congress. For the first time a national political party (INC) got its share in the Naga political scene putting an end to the long NNO's regime in the State.

United Democratic Front: 1974

The United Democratic Front (UDF) came into being when some NNO legislators joined the United Front of Nagaland. The defection of these NNO legislatures was triggered when the difference of opinion regarding the association of the Naga National Council in

⁵³ P.S. Dutta, *Electoral Politics in North East India*, Omsons Publications, New Delhi, 1986. p.185.

⁵⁴ Chandrika Singh, *Political Evolution of Nagaland*, op. cit. p.188.

⁵⁵ Kuhoi K. Zhimomi, *Politics and Militancy in Nagaland*, op. cit. p.125.

⁵⁶ Chandrika Singh, *Naga Politics: A Critical Account*, op. cit. p.132.

the peace talks with the Government reached such a point that the Chief minister Hokishe Sema asked some of his ministers to resign.⁵⁷ Consequently, Mr. T. N. Angami along with the other fourteen dissident NNO members joined the UFN which led to the creation of the new political party the United Democratic Front on 19th July, 1972.⁵⁸ Mrs Rano Shaiza became the chairman of the new party. The party became a recognised state party of Nagaland on 29th May, 1973 with the symbol 'Cock'.⁵⁹ At this time, the hope for bringing peace and finding a permanent settlement of the Naga problem was at its peak and the UDF leaders and party workers left no stone unturned to obtain the support of the Naga electorates. New economic schemes were promised to be introduced to the people that would directly benefit the poor section of the Naga society. The party's symbol (Cock) and the policies and programmes remained the same. Thus, so far as principles, manifestoes etc. are concerned DPN, UFN, and UDF have sequence of continuity.

The UDF pledged to the highest ideals of morality and the party's guiding principle for resolving differences was 'fide non armis' (by faith not arms). Its manifesto had declared that the party 'shall take all possible steps to achieve by constitutional means a final negotiated settlement of the problem.' Describing Nagaland as a 'State of high fences, escorts and bodyguards,' the UDF manifesto declared that 'no pain shall be spared to transform the area into a welfare state in which every citizen shall be able to live and move freely and proudly without fear of life or property merely because of his or her 'political views.' The unification of the contiguous Naga areas, restoration of civil liberties, suitable rehabilitation of the victims of political and administrative injustice and all round

⁵⁷ Hokishe Sema was of the view that if negotiations were to be made it should include all the other underground factions such as the Revolutionary Government and the Honking Government. He put his stand saying that the NNC does not represent all the underground Nagas. Hence, T. N. Angami, Akum Imlong, T. Sangutham and the Deputy Speaker resign. See Hokishe Sema *Political Evolution of Nagaland*, op. cit. p.183.

⁵⁸ Chandrika Singh, *Political Evolution of Nagaland*, op. cit. p.184.

⁵⁹ Government of Nagaland, *Report on the Fourth General Election to the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland, 1977*, Chief Electoral Office, Kohima, 1977, p.10.

development in the field of social, educational and economic undertakings were amongst other pledges given to the people by the UDF.⁶⁰

Outcome

In the third Assembly Election in Nagaland held in 1974, the UDF became the single largest party winning 25 seats in a 60-member Legislative Assembly. The NNO could obtain only twenty-three seats. The UDF after obtaining the support of seven independent candidates, formed the ministry under the leadership of Vizol who was sworn in as the fourth Chief Minister of Nagaland on 26th February, 1974.⁶¹ An important feature of this election was that for the first time the pro-underground political party came to power, defeating the one-decade rule of the NNO. Important factors which contributed to the defeat of the NNO were the development of inter-party differences and personality clashes among the NNO leaders, the joining of T.N. Angami to the UDF who had established his reputation as one of the most prominent Naga leaders boosted the morale and confidence of the members of the UDF. The underground support to the UDF was prominent as the Shillong Accord enabled many underground cadres to come overground, helping out rigorous campaigning for the party against its rival NNO.

A respondent⁶² talks about the 1974 election- in her own words

“My husband contested twice in the election, representing NNO party, but could not come out successfully. There is no denying that there were lot of tensions, political games and dramas, but elections during our time were more about campaigning and pursuing voters to support and vote for candidates. For instance, for Nagas’ cause and the others were labelled as Indian supporters or anti-Nagas. Since my husband represented a party affiliated to the central party, we were not seen in a positive light. It was not that pleasant to be seen that way, but what could we say- this is all part of the political processes.

⁶⁰ Shiv Lal, *Encyclopedia of Elections: The Election Archives*, op. cit. p.48.

⁶¹ Chandrika Singh, *Political Evolution of Nagaland*, op. cit. p.185.

⁶² 73 years old woman, whose husband contested in the state election twice representing NNO. Interaction on 8th January 2017

The use of money and muscle power were not there. But of course, there was an element of pressure from the underground and its supporters especially when one supports NNO candidate who is pro-national party. My husband was a candidate for the NNO in 1969 and 1974 elections and so, the propaganda about supporting an Indian party and not with the Nagas, taken as anti- Naga, was much proclaimed. He lost both the elections more because during this time, they tactfully played with the sentiments of the masses, making sure they know that only UDF, a regional party could understand needs of the people and could bring needed solution to the Naga masses. They made sure to keep the support of the people with tactful use of words and make them believe any political party with an affiliation with national parties will be harmful to Nagas in general.”

The UDF after coming to power promised that it will try to arrange reconciliation with the Nagas who have been fighting for an independent state. Having a good relation with the underground, the activities of the underground Nagas were greatly reduced and seemed as if underground no longer follows its old policy of achieving its aims by relying mostly on armed activity.⁶³ After coming to power, giving a big change in Nagaland, the UDF was keen to accomplish two task: (1) to create conditions for a peaceful settlement of the Nagaland problem through reopening of talks between the Government of India and the Naga National Council, and (2) to provide honest and clean administration to Nagaland State.⁶⁴

In spite of its great efforts to satisfy the people and to bring a permanent settlement of the Naga problem, trouble soon started and a crisis situation engulfed the UDF. Tokheho Sema, a Cabinet Minister, resigned from the Vizol ministry and defected to NNO along with eleven members of the Legislative Assembly. Thus, Vizol Ministry collapsed on 9th March 1975 and was replaced by the NNO.⁶⁵ J. B. Jasokie formed the NNO government the next day which lasted only for ten days. The house lost its majority when 10 NNO

⁶³ Harish Chandola, 'Bureaucratic Terrorism', *Economic and Political Weekly*, September 28, 1974. p.1651.

⁶⁴ Harish Chandola, 'The Day of the Eagle; Ouster of UDF Government', *Economic and Political Weekly*, April 5, 1975. p.575.

⁶⁵ Chandrika Singh, *Political Evolution of Nagaland*, op. cit. p.186.

members again defected to the UDF bringing the state under the President's Rule on March 22, 1975.⁶⁶

The unchecked growth for power, prestige and wealth made the party leaders forget their commitments to their party's principles and ideologies. Hence, on March 8th, 1975, the UDF ministry witnessed a crisis when twelve of its members defected to NNO making it to lose its majority in the Assembly, allowing the NNO to form the government. It was under the leadership of Mr Jasokie that the NNO ministry was formed again on 9th March 1975.⁶⁷ However, due to political maneuvering, Jasokie's government too proved to be short lived as ten of its members again defected to the UDF. It is to note that these defections had no ideological background and the motive was only to secure ministerial office or a higher ministerial position or in some cases a more attractive portfolio. Thus, following these grave political crises in the state, President's Rule was imposed in Nagaland on March 22nd, 1975. The Assembly was suspended and subsequently dissolved on May 22nd, 1975. The President's Rule lasted for 32 months, so far, the longest in the country.⁶⁸

During the President's Rule, a very significant event took place that opened a new chapter in the political history of Nagaland. It was the Shillong Accord that was signed on 11th November 1975, between the underground Nagas and the Government of India to put an end to militancy.⁶⁹ It was in a way accepting the constitution of India unconditionally by the underground Nagas. This ushered into a new era of hope and peace as a large scale surrender of arms and personnel took place. However, the Naga movement did not die down as some section of the underground vehemently opposed the Accord. The Signing of the Accord also had a tremendous impact on the Assembly election of 1977.

⁶⁶ P.S. Dutta, *Electoral Politics in North-East India*, op. cit. p.185.

⁶⁷ Chandrika Singh, *Naga Politics: A critical Account*, op. cit. p.126.

⁶⁸ Government of Nagaland, *Road to Progress*, Directorate of Information and Public Relations, Kohima, 2002. p.8.

⁶⁹ M. Horam, *Naga Insurgency; The Last Thirty Years*, op. cit. p.185.

The most important and notable event of this period was the realignment of political parties, where the NNO decided to merge with the Indian National Congress. The decision for merger was a gradual process and was done tactically to gain electoral support in the election after the lifting of emergency from the state. The move made some of the leaders within the party to change over to the UDF citing a national party cannot represent the Naga's aspirations. An interesting narration was given by a former NNO leader who contested in the elections of 1969 and 1974. He narrated, "some of us within the party appeal that the NNO party should maintain its regional identity and not change to a national party. Even Indira Gandhi told us to remain as a regional party and fight elections. But the majority of the party leaders decided to merge with the Congress as they feel that the party will gain more power and confidence along with the party at the Centre."⁷⁰ This discussion also highlights the regional leaders strong desire to ally and work with a bigger party for better prospects and to elevate their future political milage.

However, the plans of the NNO leaders could not materialize in the electoral outcome as it was not supported by some sections of the Naga society. NNO leaders were blamed and judged for having themselves sold to the Indian leaders, becoming Centre's political agents in Nagaland. No doubt, the merger was a big step because it linked the leaders of the NNO with broader national approach.⁷¹ Meanwhile, some congressmen broke away from the party and one group, under the leadership of Mr. Vero formed the NCN, while another, under the leadership of Pangerchiba formed the Nagaland Janata Party.⁷² It marked the beginning of a heightened political activity and increasing nationalization in the Indian perspective.

This chapter enlisted the development of political parties in the form of regional parties in the state and how during this period, the two regional parties were able to represent the interest of the people with much viable offerings in the absence of a national party. The prominent features of this period marked by the beginning of tribalism, defection politics

⁷⁰ An informal discussion with a former politician on the 7th of January, 2016.

⁷¹ Chandrika Singh, *Naga Politics: A Critical Account*, op. cit. p.132.

⁷² S.C. Dev, *Nagaland Untold Story*, Glory Printers, Calcutta, 1988. p.21.

and factionalism have been discussed and analyzed. The proceeding chapter will focus extensively on the coming of the national party Congress and how it successfully maneuvered in the state electoral politics enabling it to become a key political player starting from the 80's till the 2003 elections.

CHAPTER- 4

ENTRY OF NATIONAL PARTY AND ITS PROMINENCE (1977-2003)

The national party Congress established its presence in the state when the Naga Nationalist Organisation (NNO), the major regional party, merged with it. With the advent of the national party, the regional political party's one-and-a-half-decade reign was challenged, and the national party established its electoral base. This era was marked by the decline of regional parties and the rise of the Congress party. Nonetheless, it marked the height of political instability, with newly constituted governments influenced by political manoeuvrings. This chapter will discuss the political dynamics under which the Congress party was able to make its way in and eventually became a prominent party in the state. It will also detail about the beginning of defection politics, merger and formation of new alignments and transmogrified parties and the rising political ambitions of the leaders. It also depicts the state politics of the time which were riddled with avarice for power, wealth, and status. It examines the elections from 1977 to 1998, during which the Congress party gradually and effectively eclipsed the regional party and maintained power for a decade. It showcases how money culture gained a foothold in the electoral politics of the Nagas during this period and how it became a defining characteristic.

Fourth State Assembly Election (1977)

Nagaland witnessed the entry of a national political party in the state politics for the first time. The President's Rule in Nagaland came to an end on November 18, 1977, and that was the day that general elections for the state's Legislative Assembly was held for the fourth time. The election was held against the backdrop of the Shillong Accord, which envisioned to solidify the "democratic experiment" launched by the government of India to resolve the Naga conflict.¹ Besides independent candidates, this election saw the participation of three political parties, two of whom were first-timers: the Congress and the Nationalist Convention of Nagaland (NCN). The United Democratic Front (UDF), on the other hand, had a long history to trace. The fact that this election was held in a very peaceful atmosphere was undoubtedly the defining characteristic of 1977 election. The

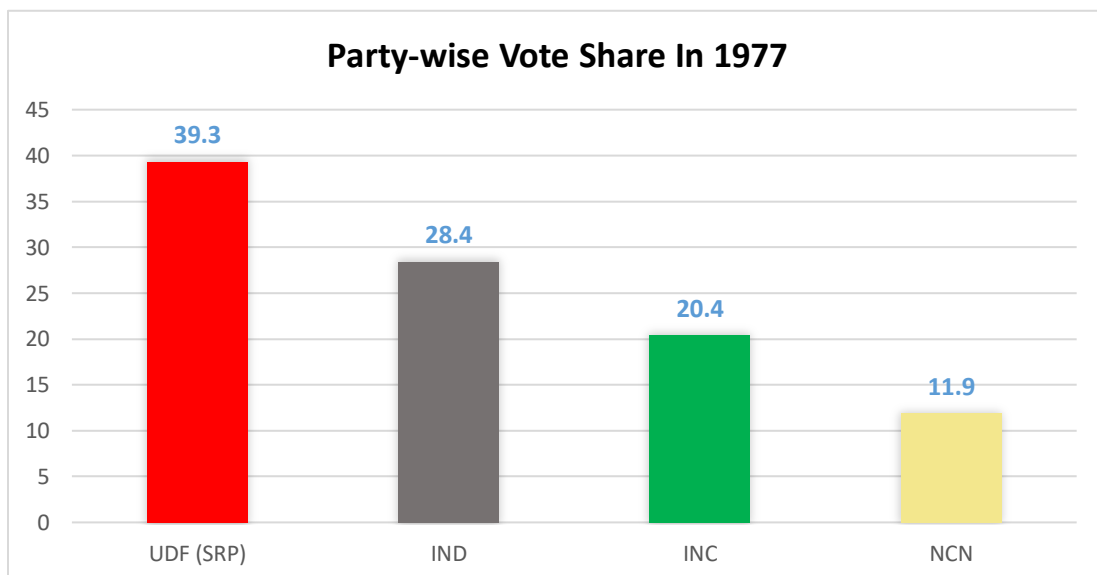
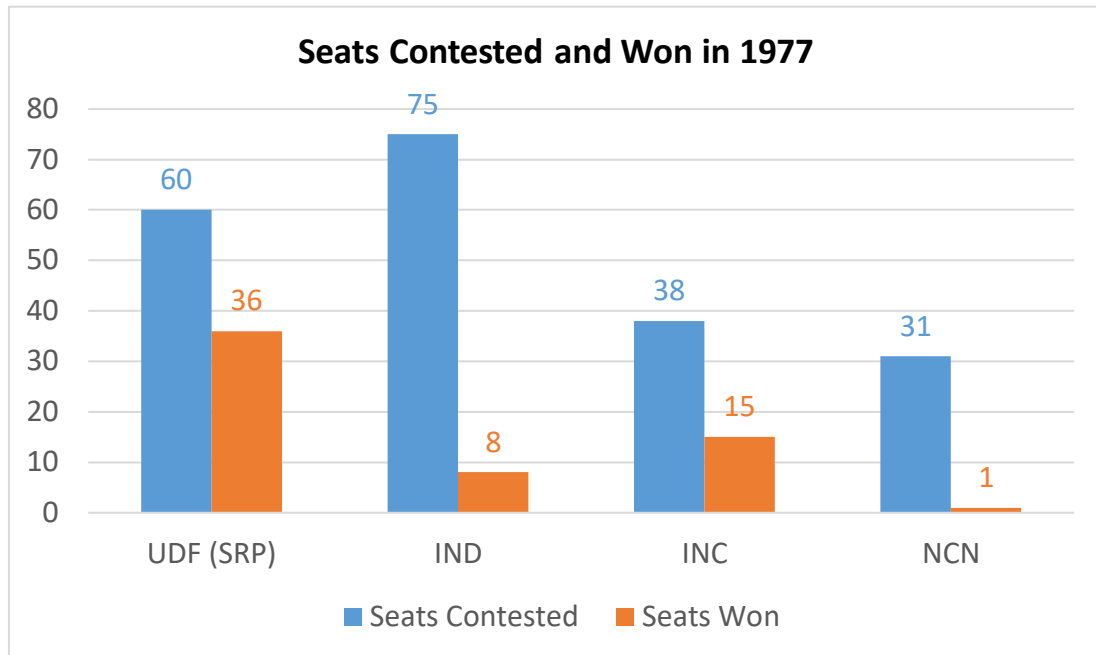
¹ Apurba K. Baruah and Rajesh Dev (ed), *'Ethnic Identities and Democracy; Electoral Politics in North East India,'* Regency Publications, New Delhi, 2006. p.75.

entirety of the voting process went off without a hitch, without any disturbances or disruptions from any direction, and without any reports of abnormalities. It is uncontestedly agreed that the election held in 1977 was the least contentious of those that had been held in the state up to that point. Owing to Shillong Accord, the majority of the subterranean personnel came above ground and surrendering, resulting in a more tranquil environment. In contrast to previous elections, there was not a request made by the underground to abstain from voting in this election.

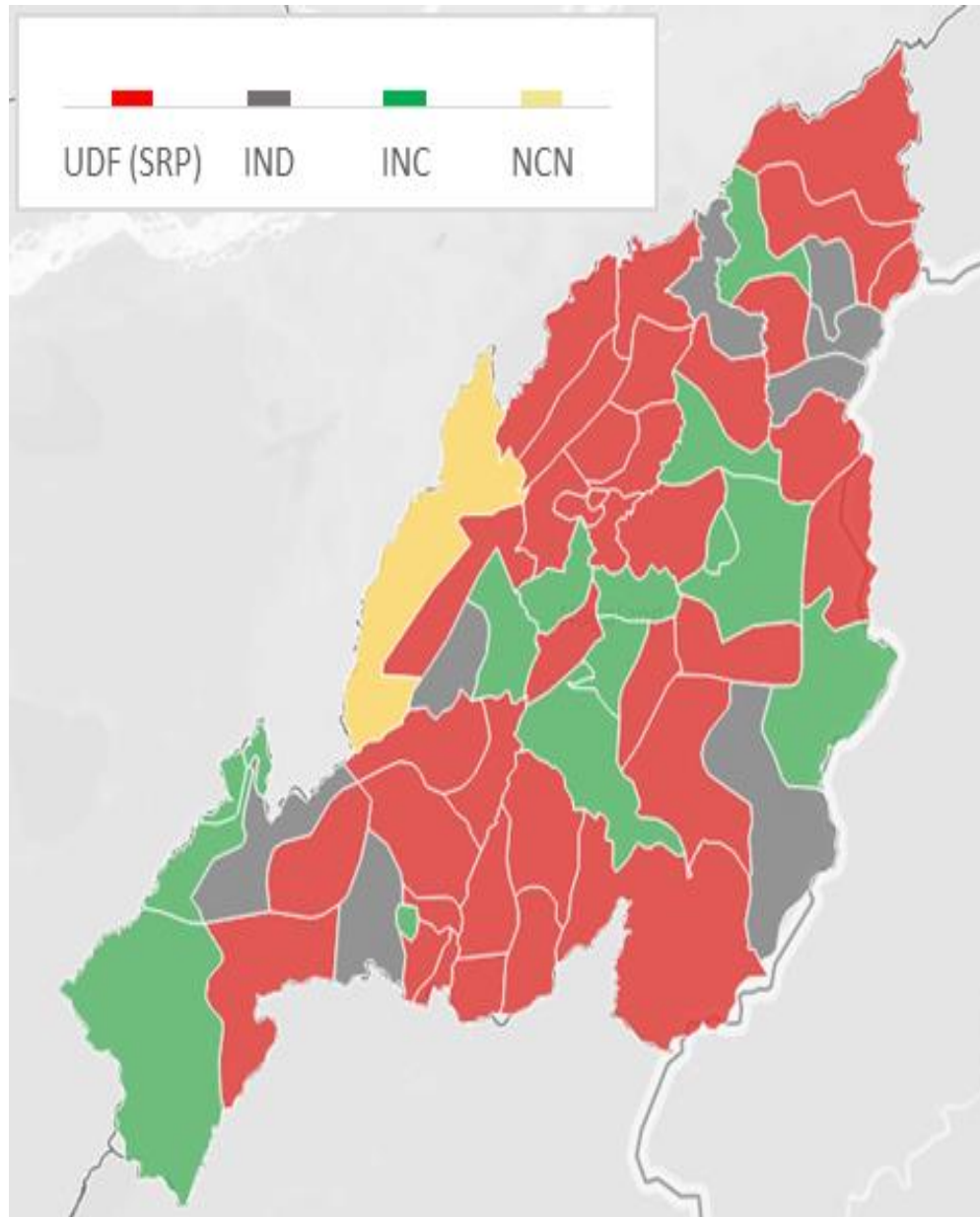
The total number of electorates in this election stood at 4,02,579 with a population of 5, 16,449 (according to 1971 census).² The decreased interference of the Naga Nationalist in the election, as well as the enthusiasm and the keen desire of the people to have a functional and democratic government with sound governance, can both be credited to the larger number turnout of electorates which can be attributed to the significantly reduced interference of the Naga Nationalist in the election. In spite of the fact that their sentiments and sympathies still rested on the nationalist struggle, during this time period, the general Naga masses drew more of their reliance on the democratic process, which they felt to be the only alternative that might bring in peace, development, and progress in the state.

²Government of Nagaland, *Report on the Third General Election to the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland, 1977*, Chief Electoral Officer, Kohima, 1977, p.10.

Charts 4.1 & 4.2: Results of Fourth General Assembly Election, 1977



Map 4.1: Seat Share of Different Parties in 1977



Total Electorates = 4,02,579
Polling Percentage = 80.7 %

Votes Polled = 3,24,994

SOURCE: Government of Nagaland, *Report on the Fourth General Election to the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland, 1977*, Chief Electoral Officer, Kohima, 1977.

There was a total of 204 candidates running in this election, with 38 representing the Congress (I), 60 representing the UDF, 31 representing the NCN, and 75 representing independents accordingly. The voter turnout reached a record high of 80.7 percent, making it the highest proportion ever recorded in elections held in the state. Following the tallying of the votes, the results showed that the Congress (I) had secured 15 seats in the arrangement, while the United Democratic Front (UDF) had secured 36 seats, giving it a commanding majority in the Assembly. Only one seat was held by the NCN, while eight seats were held by independents. As a result, the leader of the UDF, Vizol, formed the government, and the state subsequently entered a period of relative calm and prosperity.³

Nationalist Convention of Nagaland (NCN)

In August of 1977, the Nationalist Convention of Nagaland, which was eventually recognized by the Election Commission, came into being. Melhopru Vero, a former member of the Rajya Sabha, and many other individuals who had previously been affiliated with the Congress party went on to start the new political organization. It was established with the primary purpose of "redeeming the tarnished image of the Nagas and its political maturity and to obviate the lost faith of the Nagas in the existing political parties." This was done with the intention of igniting a new hope in the hearts and minds of the Nagas. The leaders of the NCN made a significant effort to ingratiate themselves with the electorates in order to instill confidence in the Naga people. The Nationalist Communist Party (NCN) made public its plans for the upcoming general election in Nagaland. The NCN also declared its intention to make genuine efforts to improve the economic situation of the state of Nagaland, as well as the conditions of students and members of minority communities. It also gave the public the assurance that it would serve their interests if given the mandate to do so by the people. The political party made a public statement pledging its allegiance to India's constitution and also made a commitment to promote socio-economic growth within the state.

³ P.S. Dutta, *Electoral Politics in North East India*, op. cit. p.186.

The Nationalist Convention of Nagaland (NCN) campaigned for the first time and the very last time in the Fourth Assembly Election, which took place on November 18, 1977. In order to gauge its strength in a chamber with 60 members, the NCN fielded 31 candidates in the election. However, when the results of the election were announced, the NCN presented an extremely diminished figure. It had to make do with just one seat in the assembly and be pleased with that. The Nationalist Convention of Nagaland (NCN) only received 38,528 votes out of a total of 3,24,994 votes cast, which was a devastating loss for the party. NCN was unable to win the favor of the people despite its huge amount of enthusiasm and assurances, resulting in its eventual evaporation.

United Democratic Front (UDF)

In the Fourth Assembly Election of Nagaland held on 18th November 1977, both the Congress and the Nationalist Convention of Nagaland (NCN) posed a challenge to the United Democratic Front (UDF), which was the party in power at the time. In its election manifesto, the United Democratic Front (UDF) stated that it "unreservedly stands devoted to the constitution of India." The UDF stated that it believes in the Shillong Accord, and expressed that constitution offers legitimate and peaceful mechanisms by which the aspirations of the Naga people can be realized. In addition, it pledged "to assist in locating a solution to the political problem in the spirit of reconciliation; to work toward the integration of the contiguous Naga areas; to expedite settlement of boundary issues with neighbouring states; to appropriately rehabilitate the victims of political and administrative injustice; to strengthen Naga democratic institutions, tradition, and cultural heritage and usages by appointing a Cultural Board in which the educated youths will be associated to undertake comprehensive and pragmatic educational programmes." In addition to these things, the United Democratic Front gave the people the assurance that, should it be elected to power, it would achieve self-sufficiency in food production within

ten years by stepping up development activities in agriculture, soil conservation, animal husbandry, fishery, and other allied subjects and providing marketing facilities.⁴

The United Democratic Front (UDF) went to the elections armed with these pledges and assurances, and won 36 seats out of a total of 60. Vizol, the leader of the UDF, was successful in forming the government once more.⁵ The Naga public believed that the Congress party was responsible for instituting the President's Rule, which allowed the UDF to win the favour of the populace and become the dominant political force. The Nagas were fiercely critical of President's Rule, and as a result, the credibility of the Congress party gradually declined in the eyes of the Nagas. The Shillong Accord of 1975 resulted in the release of a large number of political prisoners and brought many Nagas living underground to the surface. The UDF candidates received the support of these surrendered undergrounds, which contributed to the UDF's win in the election. In addition, the public's support could be attributed to the friendly connection that the UDF maintained with the central government, which was controlled by the Janata Party who was in power during this election.

The UDF was not immune to the defection that was the order of the day, despite the fact that it had garnered support from the people. Due to the allegations that S. C. Jamir engaged in actions that were against the party's policies, he was expelled from the party. As a direct consequence of this, Jamir and a number of other UDF defectors established the United Legislature Party (ULF) by aligning themselves with Congress. In April of 1980, they established a government and took the position of Chief Minister, but that did not last long. Consequently, the United Legislature Party decided to rebrand itself as the Congress (I) in the May 1980.⁶ On the other hand, the UDF banded together with the Naga National Party, which had been formed by Congress members who had defected, to form the Naga National Democratic Party. Within two months, this party led by J. B. Jasokie successfully overthrew the government that had been formed by the Congress (I) and the

⁴ *United Democratic Front's Manifesto 1977*, Eastern Printers, Dimapur, 1977. pp.1-5.

⁵ P.S. Dutta, *Electoral Politics in North-East India*, op. cit. p.186.

⁶ S.C. Dev, *Nagaland: The Untold story*, Calcutta, Mrs. Gouri Dev, 1988. p.21.

ULP. It has been pointed out that the expulsion of S. C. Jamir was the root cause of political instability that ultimately led to the breakup of the UDF. This is because the political instability was caused by the deportation of S. C. Jamir.

An in-depth analysis of the election demonstrates that the Congress (I) was defeated for a number of different reasons. Both the imposition of President's Rule in the state, which had been done at the behest of the Congress Government, and the proclamation of National Emergency by Mrs. Indira Gandhi, who served as Prime Minister at the time, on June 25th, 1975, were primary contributors to the unrest that ensued. The idea that the President should rule over the entire nation was supported by the majority of Naga citizens as an authoritative strategy. It was also communicated to the Naga electorates that Mrs. Gandhi did not approve of the regional political parties, which occurred at a time when regionalism politics were still prevalent in Nagaland.⁷ The public had apprehensions over the merger of NNO and Congress (I), which resulted in the formation of a new identity for the party as a national one. When Congress (I) had a split inside its own party, which led to the formation of the NCN, this drastically diminished the party's strength. The leaders of Congress (I) were under the notion that they would be able to win a majority of seats in the Assembly if they joined forces with a national party. However, this did not turn out to be the case.⁸ In reality, it led to an increase in the amount of uncertainty and misunderstanding among the Congress party's leaders and supporters, and the party itself became more corrupt as a result.

It is conceivable to attribute the success of the United Democratic Front (UDF) to the hundreds of members of the underground who, following the signing of the Shillong Accord, decided to come above ground and provide their support to the UDF, whose leaders were sympathetic and liberal.⁹

⁷ Chandrika Singh, *Naga Politics: A Critical Account*, op. cit. p. 141.

⁸ *Ibid.*,

⁹ Kuhoi K. Zhimomi, *Politics and Militancy in Nagaland*, op. cit. p.125.

On the other side, political prisoners who had been freed lent their support to the United Democratic Front when they were pardoned and released. Another factor that contributed to its success was the fact that the Janata Party held the position of power at the national level. As a result, the people of Nagaland came to the conclusion that it would be in their best interest to cast their ballots for the UDF, which enjoyed a positive rapport with the national government. People have placed a greater amount of importance on the possibility of a regional political party that is representative of the aspirations of the region. The public was able to assert themselves collectively, successfully, and peacefully, and they were successful in defeating the leaders, who, in the public's view, were to blame for the imposition of Emergency Rule throughout the country and President's Rule in Nagaland.¹⁰

Regrettably, despite holding a strong majority in the Assembly, the United Democratic Front cabinet was unable to survive for the duration of the term. It fell apart in the middle of its tenure because Mr. Jamir, who held the rank of Deputy Chief Minister, was dissatisfied with the responsibilities of his position. The expulsion of Jamir was a direct result of the personal competition that existed between Vizol and Jamir. Soon after, Jamir and the other former members of the UDF who deserted its ranks established the UDF (Progressive). They allied themselves with the Congress (I), established a coalition that they called the United Legislature Party (ULP), and for a brief time, S.C. Jamir served as the head of state under the administration of the United Legislature Party. However, within two months, a new political party called the NNDP, which had been founded by the merger of the UDF and the NNP, was able to topple the ULP government (constituted by the Congress defectors).¹¹ On June 5, 1980, the NNDP, led by J.B. Jasokie, established itself as the party in charge of the government, a position it held until the 5th Assembly election in November 1982.¹²

¹⁰ Chandrika Singh, *Political Evolution of Nagaland*, op. cit. pp.192-193

¹¹ P.S. Dutta, *Electoral Politics in North East India*, op. cit. p.186.

¹² S.C. Dev, *Nagaland Untold Story*, op. cit. p.121

During this time period, politics of defection reached its highest peak and led to an explosion in the number of regional political parties around the state. These brand-new political groups seemed to arise out of nowhere, and practically all of the political leaders got interested in testing their influence. The politics of the state underwent such a dramatic turn during the 1980s that the party's beliefs and ideals, as well as their discipline, were rendered ineffective.¹³ Because the Naga movement did not intercede, the political leaders became more egotistical and self-indulgent, putting their own goals ahead of those of the people and welfare of the state, subordinating the aspirations of the people.

Fifth State Assembly Election (1982)

This election featured only two ideologically distinct political parties competing for power. The Congress (I), which represents Indian nationalism, and the New National Democratic Party, which represents regional interests and identity. Due to the national nature of Congress (I), the Naga populace felt anxious and uneasy about Congress' presence in the state. The regional parties grasped this excellent chance to declare that only regional parties can comprehend and comprehend the Nagas' views, desires, and hopes. In contrast, to refute the assertions of regional parties, Congress (I) delicately informed the Naga electorate that it will safeguard and protect the tribal identity and way of life. This time is characterized by a tug-of-war between political leaders in the state, with party leaders disregarding party ethics and ideology for their own personal gain and position. Taking into account the political turmoil and confusion among the state's political leaders, the congress at the centre seized this opportunity and took a strategic step to establish a solid foothold for congress in the state through the introduction of centre's providence to the state. The NNDP ran the election on a platform of peace, prosperity, and 'Naga identity,' whereas the Congress (I) sought to integrate the residents of this dispersed state into the national mainstream.¹⁴ The Congress (I) was a dominant party in the state at the time when the UDF (Progressive) joined. This established the basis for the Congress movement in the state. The polarization between national political parties and regional

¹³ Chandrika Singh, *Naga Politics: A Critical Account*, op. cit. p.142.

¹⁴ P.S. Dutta, *Electoral Politics in North East India*, op. cit. p.187.

political parties was an additional intriguing development during this period. This period was also marked by the explicit flow of money from the center, laying the foundation for money culture in the conflict-torn state.

NAGA NATIONALIST DEMOCRATIC PARTY (NNDP)

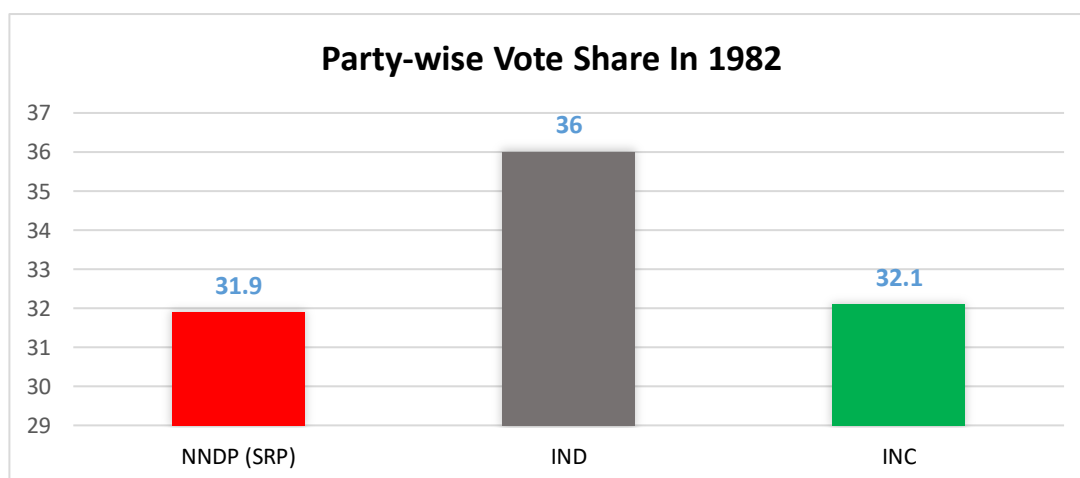
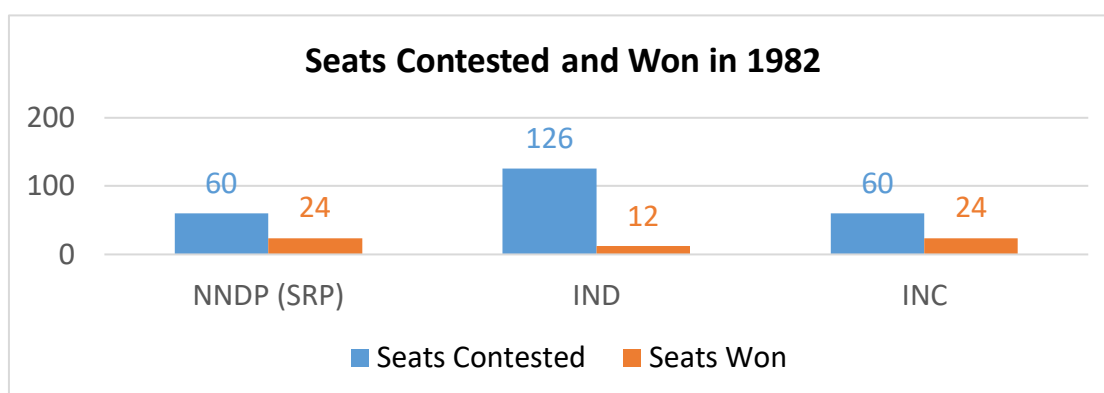
On the first of May in 1980, with J.B. Jasokie at the helm, the United Democratic Front (UDF) underwent yet another metamorphosis, this time into the form of the Naga National Democratic Party. It came into being after the Naga National Party (NNP) and the United Democratic Front (UDF) came together to form a coalition. As a consequence of this, on June 6th, 1980, the Naga National Democratic Party (NNDP) ousted the United Legislature Party (ULP) administration that was led by S.C. Jamir and founded the ministry with J.B. Jasokie as the Chief Minister. This ministry lasted until the next general election took place.

It is possible to consider the Naga National Democratic Party (NNDP) to be the continuation of the older regional party known as the Democratic Party of Nagaland, which was established in 1964 (DPN). Although the name of this particular regional party was changed four times, the party's policies and programs stayed the same throughout all of those name changes. In its election manifesto, it said that despite the change in the party's name, it will continue to maintain its programs and policies in accordance with the 1964 constitution of the party that had hitherto been known as the DPN.¹⁵ As mentioned elsewhere, the NNDP ran its campaign for the election on the platform of promoting peace, prosperity, and what it called "Naga identity," with widespread support from the general population. Villages were given the opportunity to cooperate and work together with the government as part of the NNDP's effort to bring about some development in the state. This was accomplished by establishing Village Development Boards and Village Development Funds, both of which were introduced as part of the program.

¹⁵ *Statement of Policy and Election Manifesto of the Naga National Democratic Party*, Kohima, NNDP, 1987, p.5.

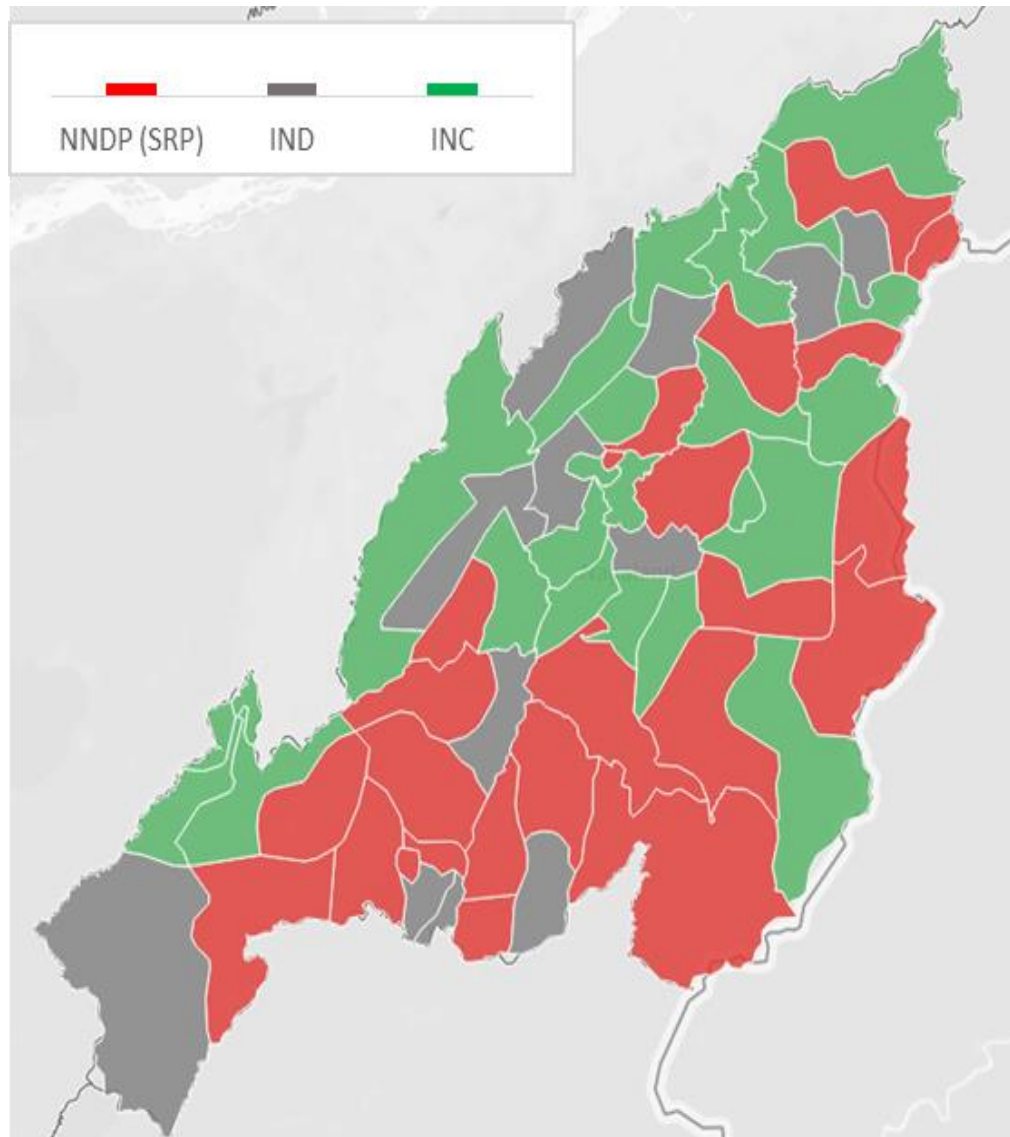
In the fifth general election held on November 10, 1982, the NNDP won 24 seats, the same number as the Congress, but NNDP was unable to seize power. Congress on the other hand, was able to get the backing of 12 independent candidates. Consequently, the NNDP became the assembly's opposition, and due to its strong support for the underground cause, the NNDP has gained the support of the average Naga voters. It was no surprise that the significant portion of the NNDP's leadership consisted of former underground militants.¹⁶

Charts 4.3 & 4.4: Results of Fifth General Assembly Election, 1982



¹⁶ Udayon Misra, *Nagaland Elections*, Economic and Political Weekly, December 19, 1987. p. 2193-2194.

Map 4.2: Seat Share of Different Parties in 1982



Total Electorates = 5,96,453
Polling Percentage = 73.4%

Polled = 4,37,705

SOURCE: Government of Nagaland, *Report on the Fifth General Election to the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland, 1982*, Chief Electoral Officer, Kohima, 1982.

In the fifth Assembly election, held on November 10, 1982, both the NNDP and the Congress (I) won 24 seats with nearly identical percentages of the vote. Independents won 12 seats with 33 percent of the vote. Compared to the previous two elections, there was a slight decline in the total number of candidates. The Congress (I), which possessed better and longer years of expertise on the job as well as bigger resources, was able to attract the 12 independent candidates and create the government under the leadership of S.C. Jamir.¹⁷ Many political experts anticipated political upheaval in the state if the Congress came to power due to personality clashes between S.C. Jamir and Hokeishema Sema, but the central government had a plan: Sema was appointed Himachal Pradesh's Governor.¹⁸

When assessing the success of the Congress (I) in this election, the role of the central government cannot be ignored. Congress (I) campaigning can be cited as a crucial factor in its win. Important national party officials, including Rajiv Gandhi and Union ministers Pranab Mukherjee and Ghani Khan Choudhury, appeared throughout the election campaign. The chief minister of Rajasthan and many figures from other North-eastern states also campaigned within the state.¹⁹ This enhanced the party's credibility and produced a favourable outcome. With the Congress in control of the nation's capital, the perception of the party's chances of gaining power improved. In contrast, the underground's engagement in the election was extremely restricted since, unlike in the past, it did not call for a boycott of the election or threaten candidates or voters. In this context, the election campaign was peaceful, which allowed both the Congress and the NNDP to attract voters with their respective manifestos. It cannot be denied that a substantial amount of money was pumped into the state by the Congress-led federal government to woo votes. This indirectly benefited the congressional candidates in the election. After five years of political exile, the Congress was able to restore power with the assistance of Delhi's superior political skills and resources, as well as a healthy dose

¹⁷ Udayon Misra, 'Nagaland Elections', *Economic and Political Weekly*, New Delhi, Sameeksha Trust Publication, 19th December, 1987. p. 2193.

¹⁸ K. Meyiesiil Chaya, *Impact of Traditional Structures in Legislative Assembly Elections in Nagaland: A case study*, M. Phil Dissertation, (Unpublished), University of Hyderabad, 2008, pp.42-43.

¹⁹ 'High Powered Electioneering', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 17. No. 44, October 30, 1982. p.1755.

of luck. The accession of the S.C. Jamir-led UDF (Progressive) to the Congress was viewed as a further foundation for the party's success.

Slowly, electoral politics took on the aspect of tribalism, in which the candidates' community of origin overpowered their charisma, personality, and qualifications as leaders. During this historical period, the majority of Naga political leaders belonged to the three major tribes: Angami, Ao, and Sema, with each leader attempting to outshine the other with their own tribes. These tribes were dominated by the influence of the Congress (I). Congress (I) ascended to power due to its cohesion, Mr. Jamir's charismatic leadership, and the support of the major tribes which he belonged to.²⁰

In March of 1986, six members of the Congress (I) ministry resigned in protest against the killing of two students who were killed by police firing in Kohima, which is the capital town of Nagaland. This resignation rocked the Congress (I) ministry and caused it to fall apart. The credibility of the Ministry of Jamir was severely damaged as a result of this. At the same time, there were several accusations and claims levelled against the government of engaging in political opportunism and corrupt practices. On October 29, 1986, S.C. Jamir was succeeded by Hokushe Sema as a result of a change in leadership that was guided by the central high command and resulted in a change in the leadership. The Congress (I) ministry was established for the second time under the direction of Hokushe Sema, and it continued to function throughout the remaining period of the term. One of the most noteworthy results of this election was the ascendance to power of a national political party for the very first time.

Sixth State Assembly Election (1987)

The elections for the Sixth Nagaland Legislative Assembly took place on November 18th, 1987. This election, in contrast to previous elections, declared Dimapur – I Assembly seat to be a general seat. The remaining 59 seats, on the other hand, were declared to be reserved seats for the Scheduled Tribes of Nagaland in accordance with the 57th

²⁰ David Sachii, *Emergence of Coalition Politics in Nagaland*, op. cit. p. 43.

Amendment of Article 332 of the constitution of India.²¹ Because of the unusually large number of people that voted in the last recent election, the electoral rolls had to be revised, which resulted in the total number of electorates being reduced from 5,96,453 to 5,82,301.²² The voter turnout percentage reached an all-time high of 83.3%, making it the highest it has ever been recorded in the state since the beginning of electoral politics.

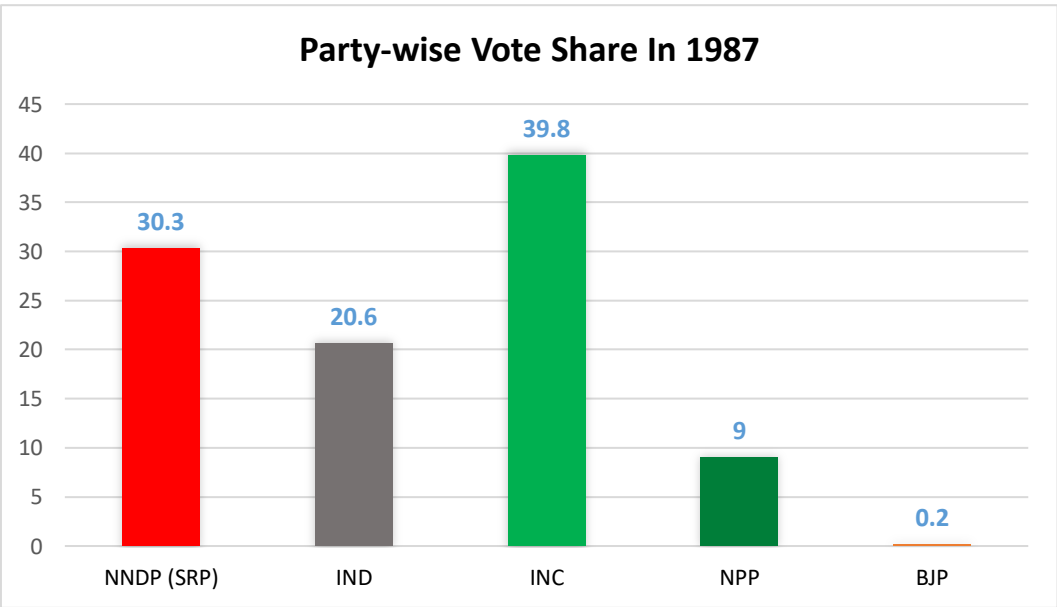
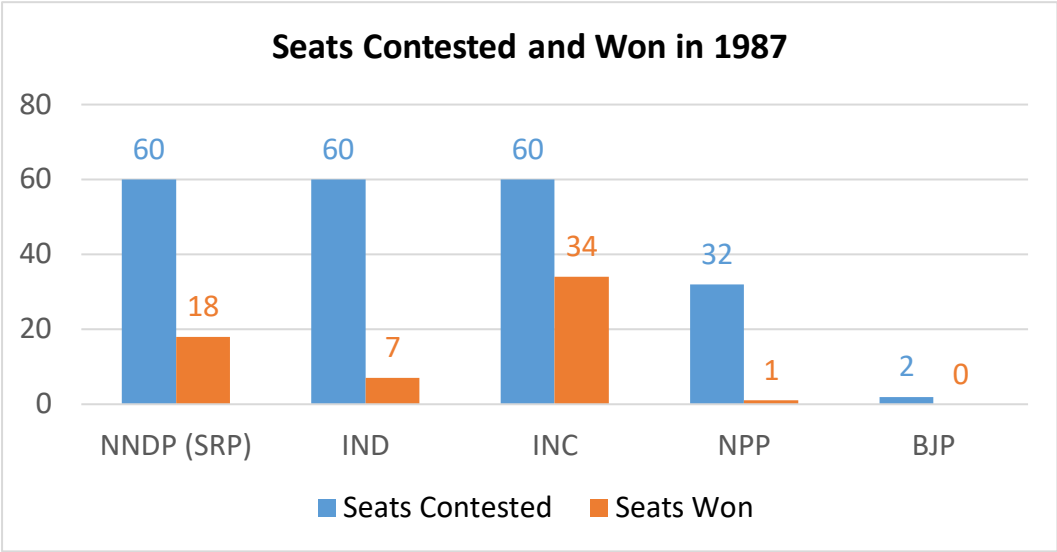
In order to have elections that are free and fair, the people of Nagaland, regardless of their political affiliations and including the church in Nagaland, made an honest effort to bring about an improvement in the electoral system. This was done in order to ensure that the elections would take place in peace. Unfortunately, the electoral war in this election became a competition between tribes rather than a contest between political parties, and this occurred regardless of which party the candidate belonged to. This tendency could be observed from Weiner's argument, which stated that tribal voters in core tribal constituencies do vote as a bloc.²³ The BJP, which is also a national political party, participated in the electoral war for the first time in this election. The political events that took place during this time period revealed the unconquerable money power of the Congress, which was willing to disregard any feeling of right or wrong in order to maintain their position of power. According to the assertions of several authors, the amount of money spent by political parties in this election to influence the political opinions and votes of the electorate was anywhere between 6 and 10 crores. This ultimately resulted in the destruction of the framework of a profile of clean politics in the electoral politics of the state, and it also shows the fact that numerous political leaders abused the democratic process in order to seize power.

²¹ Government of Nagaland, *Report on the Sixth General Election to the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland, 1987*, Chief Electoral Officer, Kohima, 1987, p.1.

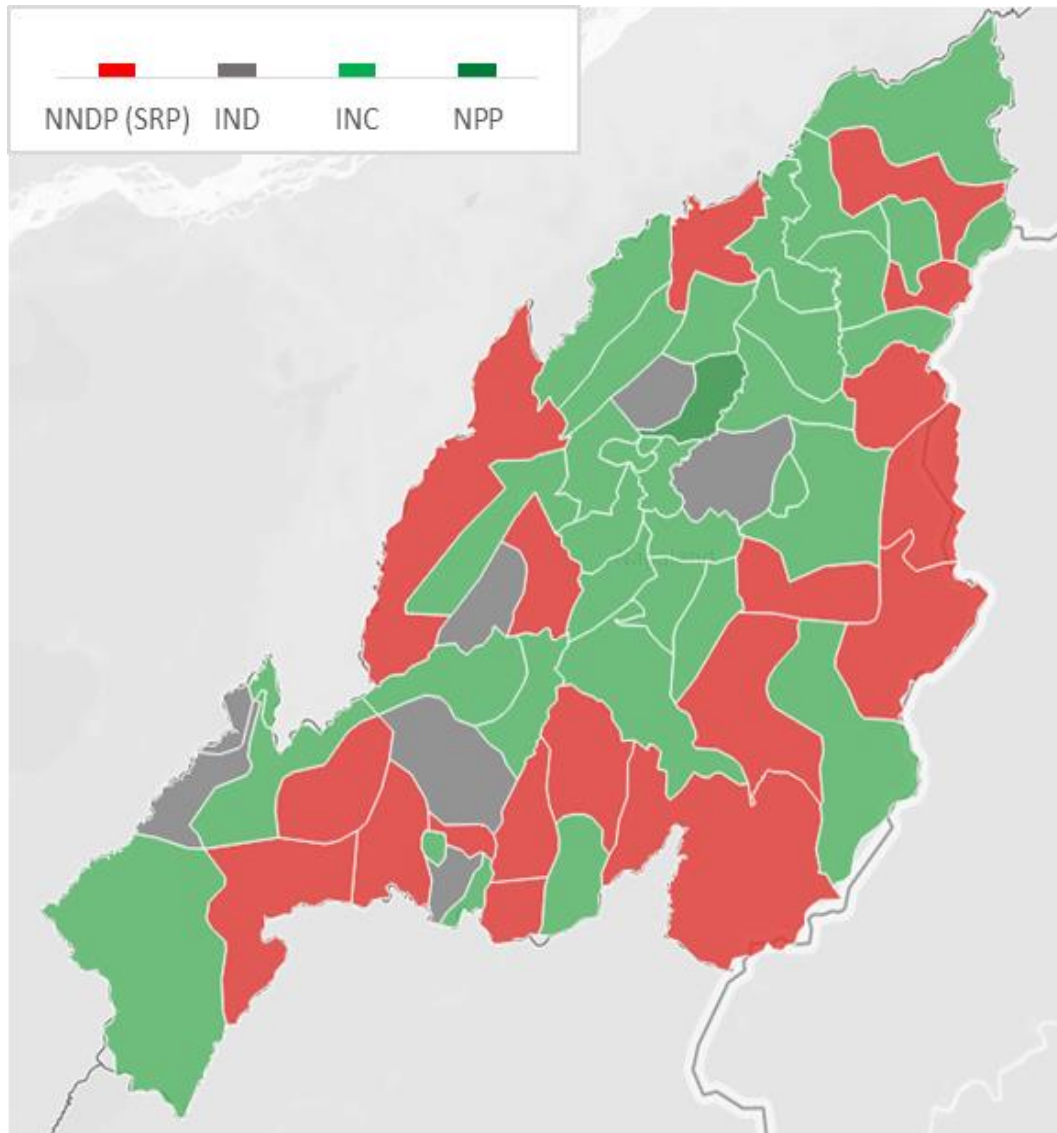
²² *Ibid.*, p.21.

²³ Myron Weiner, *Electoral Politics in Indian States, their Disadvantaged Sectors*, Manohar Book Service, Delhi, 1975, p.100.

Chart 4.5 & 4.6: Results of Sixth General Assembly Election, 1987



Map 4.3: Seat Share of Different Parties in 1987



Total Electorates = 5, 82,301
Polling Percentage = 83.3%

Votes Polled = 4, 84,942

Source: Government of Nagaland, *Report on the Sixth General Election to the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland, 1987*, Chief Electoral Officer, Kohima, 1987.

The Indian National Congress (INC), the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Naga People's Party (NPP), and the Naga Nationalist Democratic Party (NNDP) all participated in the electoral contest for the first time. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) entered the state for the very first time today. There was a total of 214 candidates running for office during the election, with the INC, the NNDP, and the Independents each fielding 60 candidates. In comparison, the NPP had 32 candidates, and the BJP fielded only two candidates during the election. The final tally of the election showed that the INC had won 34 seats, garnering 39.8% of the votes cast; the NNDP had won 18 seats, garnering 30.3% of the votes cast; the NPP had won 1 seat, garnering 9% of the votes cast; and independent candidates had garnered 7 seats, garnering 20.6% of the votes cast. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was unable to win even a single seat in the Assembly, and its share of the votes cast was merely 0.2%. With a total voter pool of 5,82,301, the polling percentage for the entire election came in at 83.3%. As a result, the Congress was elected as the new governing body on November 22, 1987, and it started office with a Ministry consisting of twenty-two members and led by Mr. Hokishe Sema.²⁴ The Naga Nationalist Democratic Party (NNDP) continued to serve in the opposition.

Naga Nationalist Democratic Party (NNDP)

The Naga Nationalist Democratic Party (NNDP) made the prevention of insurgency the primary focus of its election manifesto for the Sixth Assembly Election, which was held on November 18, 1987. The manifesto stated that the NNDP would "continue to give topmost priority to the search for a lasting peace in the Naga homeland by means of a peaceful solution of the Naga political problem through a policy of 'reconciliation.'" The insurgency problem was the primary concern of the election.²⁵ The programmes proclaimed by the party touched upon various fields viz; (i) Administrative Policies (ii) Alcohol and Drugs Control (iii) Cattle and Dairy (iv) Coffee Cultivation (v) Communal

²⁴ Government of Nagaland, *Road to Progress*, op. cit. p.9.

²⁵ *Ibid.*,

and Religious Harmony (vi) Contiguous Naga Areas (vii) Customary Laws (viii) Education (ix) Forestry and Tree Cultivation (x) Gaon Burras (xi) IDTP Rice (xii) Local Self Government (xiii) Marketing Facilities (xiv) Oil and Minerals (xv) Political (xvi) Programme Implementation Committee (xvii) Public Undertakings (xviii) Power Generation (xix) Rural housing (xx) Rural Development (xxi) Woman (xxii) Workers Owned Industrial Unit.²⁶ Besides these, the NNDP held its one day session of the party's 5th General Meeting at Dimapur on 12th January 1988. In this meeting, it resolved to try for unification of all regional forces in the state under a single banner. It urged the Four Man Committee²⁷ headed by Vizol Angami to expeditiously explore all avenues to accomplish this objective. Witnessing the peculiar conditions confronting the state, the party decided to take steps for the establishment of a single regional political party.²⁸ The party emphasized that the presence of both the NSCN and the Federal in any negotiations with the Indian government would be crucial. However, their "attempt to unite the numerous underground parties on a uniform platform in order to bring them to the negotiating table with the Indian government" worked to the Congress' favour. When the Congress presented itself at the negotiating table with the NSCN (IM), Naga voters believed that if they voted for the Congress, the long-standing Naga issue with the central government would be resolved sooner, which would be more realistic and effective. On the other hand, the Congress (I) skillfully exploited the rift between the NSCN and the Naga Federal government. Election results demonstrate their achievement in isolating the NNDP, which had historically been closer to the Federals.²⁹ The 6th Assembly Election revealed that the NNDP won only 18 members in the Assembly, proving that the congress was successful in capturing the attention of Naga voters and gaining power.

²⁶ *Statement of Policy and Election Manifesto of the Naga National Democratic Party*, op. cit. pp.8-14.

²⁷ It was set up on 5th December, 1987, consisting of four members namely Vizol, Takuyuba, R.S. Rengma and Tokheho Sema to make contact with the Naga People's Party leaders and other regional minded groups. See M. Khrienuo Angami *Nagaland People's Council: A study of its Role in the State Politics*, M. Phil Dissertation, (unpublished), Department of Political Science NEHU, 1990, p.42.

²⁸ Ura Mail, 13th January, 1988.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.2194.

Naga People's Party (NPP)

The Naga People's Party (NPP) was born when some members of the UDF opposed the merger of UDF with the 'Naga National Party'.³⁰ Mr. Huska Sumi, who led this particular group of individuals, fought to preserve UDF's independence. 1980 saw its transformation as the Naga People's Party (NPP). NPP represents a radical movement that aims to incite broad participation in constructing a new social order based on the ideals of justice, equality, and liberty, in accordance with the "Nagaism" philosophy.³¹

In contrast to other regional parties, the NNP failed to garner public support during the 1987 State General election. It succeeded to win only one of the 60 seats in the Assembly out of the 32 candidates in the race. In the 1989 State General Election, the party's performance worsened as it failed to win a single seat in the Assembly. The party lost its identity and became a politically inconsequential force in the state.

Like all prior elections in the state, the underground played a significant role in this election as well. With underground activists occupying considerable portions of the NNDP leadership; even the Congress list was expected to include numerous NSCN activists.³² This led Misra to assert that the Congress neutralized the NNDP's claim to represent underground concerns by yielding to underground interests.³³ Both the Congress (I) and the NNDP acknowledged and emphasized the urgency of resolving the state's "unresolved political situation" The leaders of the Congress (I) expressed the desire and an eagerness to negotiate with the NSCN (IM) in order to reach to an understanding with

³⁰The NNP was constituted by the Congress defectors under the leadership of J. B. Jasokie who was elected on a Congress ticket. See B. Pakem, *Coalition Politics in North-East India*, Regency Publications, New Delhi, 1999, p. 188. See also Rajesh Dev, 'Ethnic Self-Determination and Electoral Politics in Nagaland,' in Apurba K. Baruah and Rajesh Dev, *Ethnic Identities and Democracy: Electoral Politics in North-East India (eds)*, Regency Publications, New Delhi, 2006. p.76.

³¹L.S. Gassah, *Regional Political Parties in North East India*, op. cit. p.210.

³² This indicates the fact that by now there is no longer an anathema in the democratic politics between the 'underground and the overground' as had been the case in the late sixties when allegations of such linkages between legal representatives and the underground lead many elected members to openly renounce their membership of Phizo's NNC. See Nirmal Nibedon, *Nagaland – The Night of the Guerrillas*, Lancers Publication, New Delhi, 2000. p.231.

³³Apurba K. Barua and Rajesh Dev (ed), *Ethnic Identities and Democracy: Electoral Politics in North East India*, op. cit. p.76.

them rather than the Federal side.³⁴ The Prime Minister's statements at election rallies indicating the centre's readiness to seek a settlement with the NSCN gave Naga voters hope for a swift resolution to the Naga political issue under a Congress (I) state government. As stated earlier, the Congress (I) was able to secure the support of the NSCN (IM) in a number of constituencies after beginning negotiations with the NSCN (IM). Two charismatic leaders from two major communities, Hokishe Sema and S.C. Jamir, also contributed to the rise of the Congress to power. These villages provided the Congress (I) with its vote banks, transforming the election race into a contest amongst tribes rather than along party lines.³⁵ Congress' massive expenditures during the election also contributed to its win. Chalie Kevichiisa, the leader of the NNDP, observed that the Congress (I) spent Rs 30 crores to win the elections. In contrast, former Congress (I) Chief Minister Chiten Jamir, speaking at a press conference shortly after his party's election victory, voiced his disgust of the brazen use of large quantities of money by his own party to win the election.³⁶

Due to its strong support for the underground cause, the NNDP has garnered the support of the typical Naga voter in previous elections. The Congress- I, though, seems to have seized the initiative this time. The NSCN was naturally angered by the NNDP's request to include the federal government in the upcoming discussions, and it lent its support to the Congress-I in a number of constituencies. It looked that the NNDP was without a cause when the Congress assumed responsibility for the delicate subject of the unresolved political dilemma.

To attract voters, the NNDP as a regional party was unable to present a realistic or alluring agenda centred on regional issues. Instead, it was Congress (I) that appealed forcefully to regional and even chauvinistic attitudes.³⁷ In contrast, in many situations the gap between the NNDP and the Congress (I) shrunk considerably in the public's perception. The

³⁴ Udayon Misra, *Nagaland Elections*, op. cit. p.2194.

³⁵ The higher the tribal leader is placed in the party hierarchy the higher the prospect of that party from that community.

³⁶ Udayon Misra, *'Nagaland Elections,'* op. cit. p. 2193.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.2194

Assam-Nagaland border dispute also had a significant impact on the NNDP when the Congress (I) chose to establish voting stations in the disputed region. The Assam government responded sharply to this, and the AGP-NNDP alliance was strained.³⁸ The AASU economic embargo of Nagaland facilitated and made things easier for the Congress -I. Evidently, the boundary issue was manipulated to prevent the AASU and the AGP from advocating for the NNDP.³⁹ The election was contested mostly on regional issues, and both parties limited themselves to the regional arena. It is intriguing to see that the Congress (I) and the NNDP share almost identical ideologies.

Personality conflicts and a desire for power characterized the time in which the Congress was in power, which was not free of internal strife. Having welcomed a large number of defectors throughout the years, the party has done more harm than good, causing it to lose strength owing to internal discord caused mostly by a leadership crisis. Numerous non-governmental organizations, led by the NNDP, protested the Act that gave the general one seat in the parliament.⁴⁰ As a result, the populace felt anxious and began to doubt the Congress (I) party's commitment to regional desires. After a brief term of around eight months, the Congress (I) cabinet was reduced to minority status on July 30, 1988, when thirteen of its MPs defected from the party and created the Nagaland Regional Congress. This new party partnered with the NNDP to establish the Naga People's Council with the intention of forming a coalition government.⁴¹

When the NPC, led by Vamuzo, asked the Governor for evidence of the party's majority, the request was rejected. This was due to the Governor's partisanship in favor of the central Congress (I) who selected him. The conduct of the Governor in the situation precipitated

³⁸ Both the AASU and the AGP had drawn up plans to campaign for the regional party in the Nagaland elections.

³⁹ Udayon Misra, *Nagaland Elections*, op. cit. p.2194.

⁴⁰ The Act was violative of the 16^{-Point} Agreement of 1960 between the central government and the Nagaland People's Convention which stated that the Nagaland Assembly shall comprise of representative from the various tribes of the state only.

⁴¹ B. Pakem, *Coalition Politics in North-East India*, op. cit. p.119.

a constitutional crisis in the state, and the Assembly was dissolved on August 7, 1988. In Nagaland, the President's Rule was implemented for a second time.⁴²

Seventh State Assembly Election (1989)

Political instability reached its peak during this time period. The parties, which had remained diametrically opposed and antagonistic, readily decided to form forces with their adversaries for the sole purpose of pursuing their political entrenched interests. They forgave one another and set aside their old disagreements, discarding all animosity, but this was more for their vested interests as mentioned earlier, rather than their mindfulness for the welfare of the state or people.⁴³ All of these actions were undertaken with the purpose of attaining power and status. This period's political evolution exemplifies the sordid game of betrayal and horse-trading, in which personality conflicts and changing allegiances reached a fever pitch. Even the Anti-Defection Act could not prevent political elites from maligning Nagaland's pristine politics.⁴⁴ The ongoing process of party creation, split, realignment, re-grouping, and dissensions has prevented the parties from maturing and solidifying, necessitating a new beginning and the ability to adapt to the increasing situation and needs. On the other hand, the process of electioneering grew difficult and convoluted due to the candidates' excessive participation in unpleasant activities and unwarranted meddling in the election process.⁴⁵ The lack of integrity amongst the political parties' leaders was starkly evident during this period.

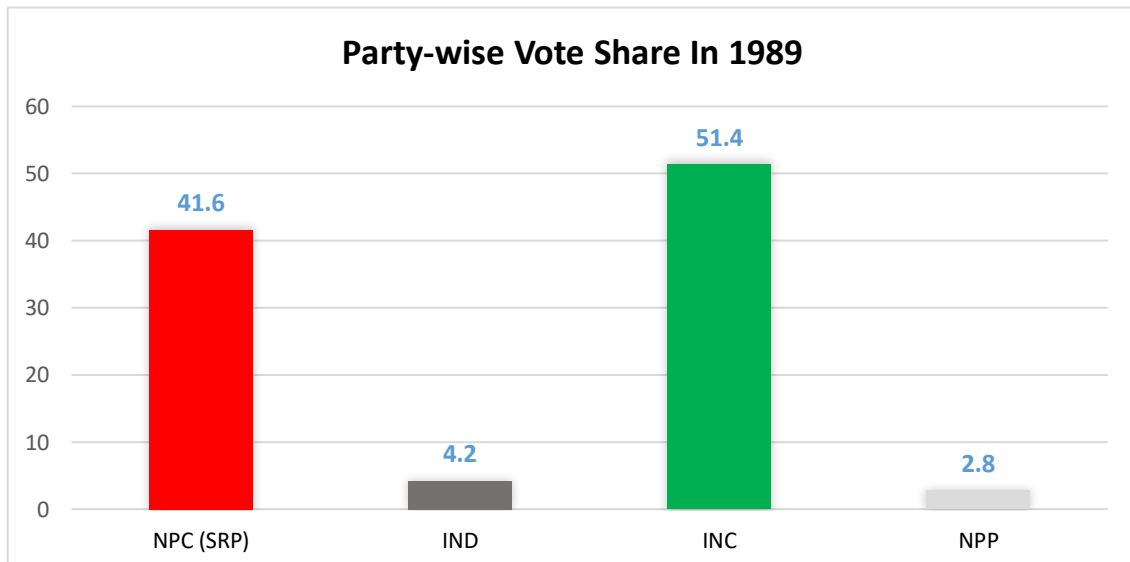
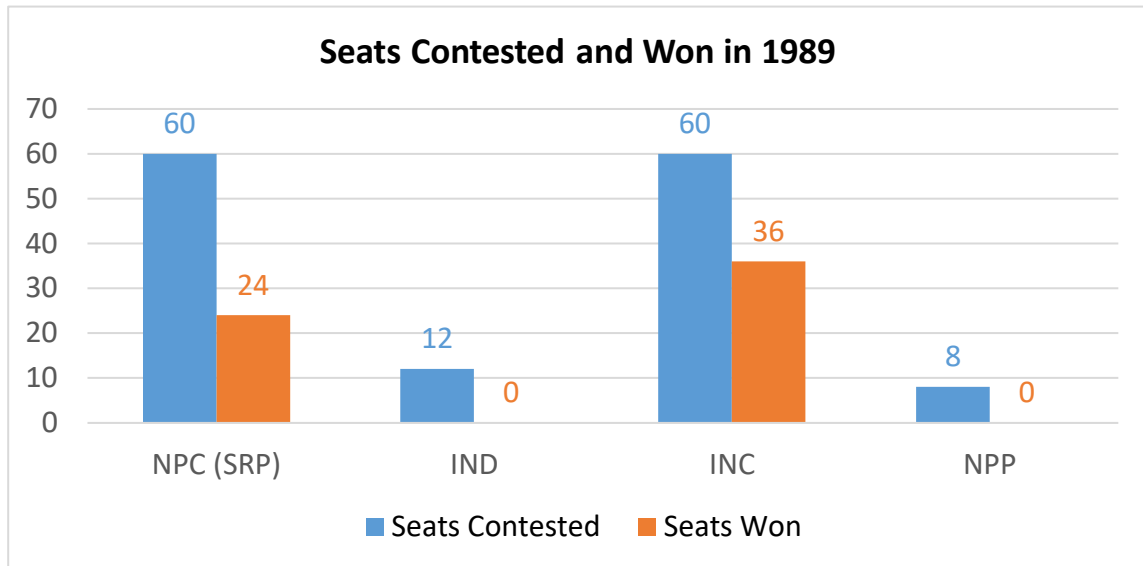
⁴² Government of Nagaland, *Road to Progress*, , op. cit. p.9.

⁴³ Chandrika Singh, *Naga Politics: A critical Account*, op. cit. p.157.

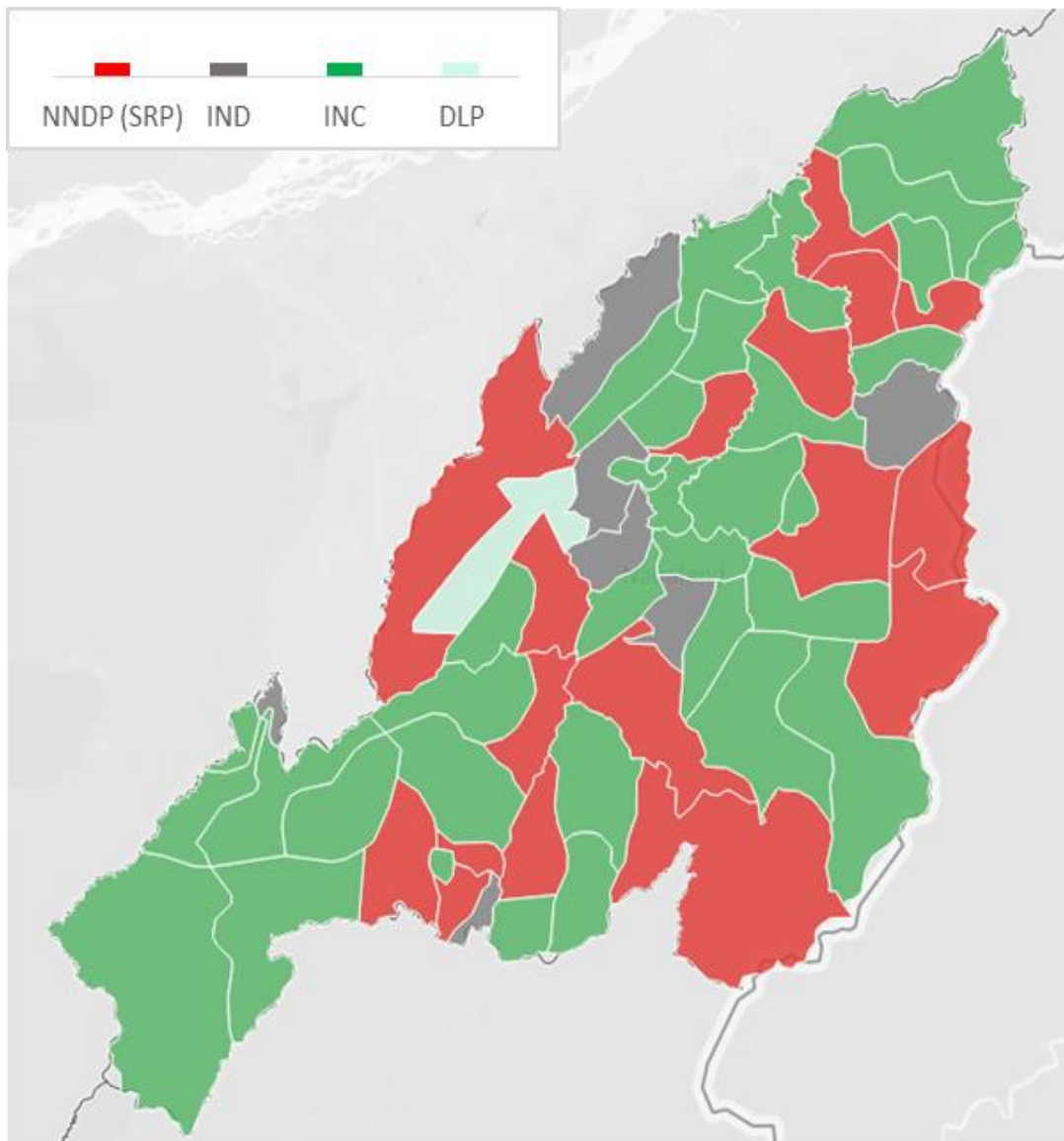
⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.159.

⁴⁵ Chandrika Singh, *The Naga Society*, op. cit. p.197.

Chart 4.7 & 4.8: Results of Seventh General Assembly Election, 1989



Map 4.4: Seat Share of Different Parties in 1989



Total Electorates = 5,82,416
Polling Percentage = 84.7%

Votes Polled = 4,93,296

SOURCE: Government of Nagaland, *Report on the Seventh General Election to the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland, 1989*, Chief Electoral Officer, Kohima, 1989.

On 21 January 1989, following the repeal of President's Rule in the state, the Seventh House of the Nagaland Legislative Assembly was elected.⁴⁶ The election resulted in the formation of a new regional party NPC through the consolidation of numerous regional forces. It was a renamed version of the previous NNDP. There were three political parties: Congress (I) (the only national party in the election), the National People's Congress, and the National People's Party (both regional parties). There were a total of 140 candidates in the election, with the Congress (I) and the NPC competing for all 60 seats. The NPP nominated just eight candidates, while the independent fielded twelve. Except for the 1964 election, this election has the fewest candidates, whereas the 1982 election had the most contestants with 246 candidates. The overall number of electors increased marginally from 5,82,301 in 1987 to 5,82,416 in the 1989 election. The voter participation rate was 84.7%. Congress (I) won 36 seats with the greatest percentage of votes cast at 51.4%, NPC 24 seats with 41.6% of votes cast, while the NPP and Independents were left without a seat in the assembly with polling percentages of 2.8 and 4.2 respectively.

The Congress (I) created a two-tier government under the leadership of S.C. Jamir, who was sworn in on January 25, 1989, by Governor Gen. K.V. Krishna Rao (Retd).⁴⁷ In a political climate of defections and volatility, the creation of the administration was highly precarious. Within a year of its inception, the opposition party was able to relegate the Congress (I) cabinet to a minority status.⁴⁸ In May of 1990, South Carolina fell. Jamir's cabinet, the NPC was able to seize power from K.L.'s Congress (I). On 16 May 1990, Chishi (ULF) was installed as the new Prime Minister.⁴⁹ Mr. K.L. Chishi's ministry was

⁴⁶ Government of Nagaland, *Nagaland Basic Facts, 2007*, Directorate of Information and Public Relations, Kohima, 2007, p.13.

⁴⁷ Government of Nagaland, *Road to Progress*, op. cit. p.9.

⁴⁸ Jamir's Government was dislodged by the defection of 12 MLAs led by Chongsen and Tiameren who formed a new political party and joined hands with the Naga People's Council. The merger of this party and the NPC resulted in the formation of ULF. See Chandrika Singh, *Naga Politics: A Critical Account*, op. cit. p.154.

⁴⁹ Government of Nagaland, *Road to Progress*, op. cit. p.9.

brief since it collapsed in the middle of June, 1990, after less than a month in office.⁵⁰ Chankija aptly remarked “with the help of the very same person against whom Mr. Chishi wasted a lot of lung power, he toppled the Jamir ministry and formed the government. Chishi probably forgot that two can play a game and Jamir played it brilliantly with Vamuzo in the state. Chishi goes down and up comes Vamuzo... and with the generous help of Jamir, he pulled the Chief Ministerial Chair down from Chishi”.⁵¹

Nagaland People’s Council (NPC)

The increasing political instability and defection politics in the state compelled the NNDP to unite all regional factions under a single flag and build a powerful regional party. They realized that the convergence of regional forces was the only legitimate political alternative to the Congress, the national party. Consequently, the NNDP, the Naga People's Party, and the Congress Regional Party joined forces,⁵² and the merger resulted in the formation of a new regional political party known as the Naga People’s Council (NPC). In order to topple the Congress, the NPC developed a powerful regional party in the state by uniting with other regional groups. The NPC's policies and programs mirror the policies and programs of its member elements. There was no difference between them on a practical level. In reality, there exists an ideological and pragmatic affinity between the many NPC units. In their manifestos, these parties addressed crucial themes such as the preservation and promotion of Naga identity, culture, and tradition, as well as the protection and promotion of the Naga way of life, and the peaceful resolution of the Naga political situation.

As far as the manifesto of the NPC is concerned, it has the same issue. Its 1989 election manifesto runs as;

⁵⁰ The fall of K.L. Chishi ministry was caused by the defection of 17 NPC MLAs led by Noke to Vamuzo’s camp and joined hands with the Congress (I). See Chandrika Singh *Naga Politics: A Critical Account*, op. cit. p.154.

⁵¹ Monalisa Chankija, ‘Nagaland Politics with Hopes and Disgusts’, *Northeast Sun*, August, 1990. p. 20/XII.

⁵² It was the party formed by the thirteen Congress (I) MLA’s who defected from the party and joined hands with the NNDP to form a new party. K.L. Chishi was elected as the party President. See L.S. Gassah, *Regional Political Parties in North-East India*, op. cit. p.210.

“The search for lasting peace in the Naga homeland by means of a final negotiated settlement of the Naga political problem between the Government of India and the Naga underground shall remain the first priority of the NPC.”⁵³

It also promised to take up the following issues.

To fight against abuse of alcohol and Drugs. Towards this end, it has committed itself to pursue the policy of bringing about prohibition through social education and necessary legislation, thereby limiting the consumption of alcoholic drinks to medicinal use only.

Improving of agricultural production by encouraging the use of improved methods of cultivation.

1. “The NPC also reiterated its commitment to protect and promote the customary laws of the Nagas. It promised to strive for the introduction of new and improved system of education, whereby the social and cultural background of the Naga people could be given.
2. The NPC promised to strive for the unification of all contiguous Naga areas under one administrative unit and in this regard resolved to settle the entire boundary disputes through the participation and involvement of the people at the grass-root level.
3. As regards the preservation and protection of forests and tree cultivation, the NPC promised to protect and preserve the flora and fauna and chalk out new afforestation programmes for the benefit of the people.
4. The credit for the formation of the Village Development Boards goes to the erstwhile NNDP now NPC which claimed had made considerable impact on the

⁵³ ‘NPC’s Election Manifesto 1989’, *Ura Mail*, January 4, 1989.

rural economy. The NPC thus, promised to continue to work through the VDB's for the upliftment of the rural people.

5. The NPC committed itself to provide employment facilities to the unemployed youths. It also promised to open new avenues of self-employment by introducing a new scheme to be known as the Workers Owned Industrial Units.
6. The NPC in its manifesto also gave primacy towards steps for the upliftment of the women.”⁵⁴

The NPC's dedication to preserving and promoting the Naga Identity was a second significant concern that it highlighted. It endeavoured to defend and preserve the Naga way of life, their customs, and their traditional policies. Thus, the NPC determined to ensure that Article 371 (A)⁵⁵ of the Indian Constitution provides particular protections for the Nagas.

In light of the worrying growth rates of the non-Naga population relative to the number of voters in Nagaland, it reaffirmed its position on the rigorous and efficient implementation of the inner-line permission. This inflow of non-Nagas into the state has significantly disrupted the socioeconomic, moral, political, and cultural lives of all Nagas. Large-scale alcohol consumption in the state was considered as a danger to the Naga identity. Therefore, the NPC endorsed the call for a total ban to be imposed in the state. It voiced its opposition to the taxing policies adopted by the Congress administration in the state. Thus, in due time, the NPC organized several protests in the state to protest the imposition of additional taxes and to urge the governing Congress (I) administration to remove all taxes charged because they exacerbated the plight of the populace.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ M. Khrienuo Angami, *Nagaland People's Council: A study of its Role in the State Politics*, op. cit. pp. 76-78

⁵⁵ See Appendix No. 2. p.128.

⁵⁶ M. Khrienuo Angami, *Nagaland People's Council: A study of its Role in the State Politics*, op. cit. p.76.

Despite all the promises made to the electorate, the party's goal of gaining control of the Assembly was not realized. In the 7th Assembly Election in January 1989, the party won only 24 seats, leaving the remaining 36 seats to the Congress (I). The party's guiding principle for problem-solving is the Latin phrase 'fide non armis', which translates to 'by faith, not by arms,' which it inherited from its predecessors as its motto. As a prerequisite for a political party and its government to devote themselves to the social, economic, and cultural advancement of the people, the NPC waged its electoral campaign under the slogan "Stability."⁵⁷ The party's 1993 election platform highlighted the same issue of its political stance on the Naga political issue. On one occasion, the NPC demanded that the Central Government establish a separate cabinet committee at the national level in order to resolve the Naga political issue. Considering the protracted unresolved political issue of the Nagas, this was indeed remarkable. As a political party, the NPC vowed to champion the cause of the people in the fight against corruption. In addition, it guarantees a clean and efficient administration if elected.

Prior to this, the Congress (I) and the NPC had been bitter rivals, but in 1990, when the chance presented itself, the leaders of both parties got together and created a coalition government in order to share political power. This marriage was solely one of convenience. Mr. S.C. Jamir endorsed his former political opponent, Vamuzo.⁵⁸ When 17 NPC MLAs, led by Noke, defected to the camp of Vamuzo, who had defected from the NPC and joined the Congress, (I) the practice of horse-trading brought down Chishi's ministry.⁵⁹ This resulted in the formation of the Joint Legislature Party, led by Vamuzo, who was sworn in as Prime Minister on June 19, 1990. As the JLP was a coalition of Congress (I) and the NPC, it essentially eliminated opposition in the Assembly.⁶⁰

In a radio address, Vamuzo explained his decision by stating, "it is through a unique political experiment that the NPC and the Congress (I) have joined hands to provide a

⁵⁷ 'NPC promises 'Stability'; Makes Manifesto Known', *Nagaland Post*, 1 February 1993. p.1.

⁵⁸ Chandrika Singh, *Naga Politics: A Critical Account*, op. cit. p.157.

⁵⁹ Chandrika Singh, *The Naga Society*, op. cit. p.198.

⁶⁰ Government of Nagaland, *Road to Progress*, op. cit. p.9.

stable and efficient government. This Government is not only expedient but also desirable in the larger interest of the state.”⁶¹ The main purpose of Vamuzo and Jamir's alliance was not to provide a stable administration, but to promote their own personal interests and teach their opponents a lesson at the expense of Nagaland's political instability. The JLP cabinet ended on December 4, 1990, when all Congress (I) ministers resigned. On December 6, 1990, Mr. Vamuzo could create a new cabinet with the addition of twelve more Ministers. On the advice of the state's chief minister, Mr. Vamuzo, the state's governor, Dr. M.M. Thomas, dissolved the state legislature on March 27, 1992. On April 2, 1992, the state was placed under President's Rule for the third time.⁶²

This election brought in a politics of vengeance as opposed to progress. The power-hungry strategies of Naga politicians have caused them to stray far from their assigned responsibilities and embraced ideology. There was no longer any party discipline; rather, the primary objective among political leaders was how to seize power and overthrow the government.⁶³ As the underground movement grew less outspoken, regional and national political parties began to engage in money politics and tribalism, further dividing the Nagas. The sixth and seventh election studies reveal the tribal identification of the parties. In 1987, when Hokishe Sema replaced Mr. Jamir as head of the Congress (I), the Zunheboto district, to which Hokishe Sema belonged, returned all Congress (I) candidates, whilst the Mokokchung district's performance was abysmal.

In the election of 1989, however, when Mr. Jamir succeeded the previous party head, the trend reversed. The Mokokchung district returned all Congress (I) candidates, however the Zunheboto district's performance was terrible.⁶⁴ From the outcome of this election, it is evident that the smaller political parties lost their footing in the state Assembly elections, leaving the voters with only two options. Political parties other than the NPC and the Congress (I) were unable to win a single member in the Assembly, paving the way

⁶¹ *The Hill Express*, 26 June, 1990. p.5

⁶² *Nagaland Legislative Assembly*, <http://www.nagaland.nic.in/functionaries/assembly/7th.htm>

⁶³ Chandrika Singh, *Naga Politics: A Critical Account*, op. cit. p.152.

⁶⁴ David Sachii, *Emergence of Coalition Politics in Nagaland*, op. cit. p.50.

for these two formidable parties. The politics of betrayal reached its pinnacle between the years 1975 and 1990, when it became clear that neither party's morals nor philosophy could win the day. The influx of financial wealth brought about by the expansion of the state and the population made politics in Naga more lucrative and preposterous.⁶⁵

There is little denying that the infusion of "easy" money in Nagaland led to a rise in political opportunism and instances of corruption. The reign of Congress (I) was when all of these events first started to take place. The politics of defection also resulted in an increase in the number of regional political groups, which was detrimental to the consistency of the administration, and thus, the instability of the government. The unbridled ambitions of Naga politicians during the 1980s and 1990s of the 20th century opened a new chapter in the chronicles of Naga political history. Nothing could put an end to the sleazy game of betrayal and horse trafficking that was going on in Nagaland at this time, despite the fact that personal competition and hostility among Naga leaders was growing. According to Chandrika Singh, the political leaders of Nagaland borrowed all political tactics and maneuvers from Delhi in order to manage the elections and develop and reform the new parties. She added that the political leaders of Nagaland applied all of these strategies in Nagaland politics.⁶⁶

This ushered in an era of uncertainty and skepticism among the Naga people as a whole regarding the sanctity and knowledge of the political character of their leaders, as well as their claim of commitment towards the welfare of the state during the election period, which seemed nothing but just blowing in the wind.⁶⁷ At that time, neither long-term progressive plans nor initiatives that were already in operation were capable of being executed within the time limit that was allocated.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Chandrika Singh, *The Naga Society*, op. cit. p.195.

⁶⁶ Chandrika Singh, *Naga Politics: A Critical Account*, op. cit. p.160.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*,

⁶⁸ Chandrika Singh, *The Naga Society*, op. cit. p.201.

Period of Congress Stability (1993-2003)

During this whole decade-long era, the Congress party held an absolute majority. As more time passed, the dynamic nature of the political environment gave each election a unique aspect that was shaped by the political atmosphere that prevailed during the previous election. Prior to the 1990s, elections were marked by factors such as tribalism, betrayals, horse trading, shifting loyalties, and personality confrontations. It was always the goal of political parties to take power for themselves and bring down democratically elected governments when they first come into existence. As a consequence, there were many instances of the state government collapsing, leading to three occurrences of President's Rule.⁶⁹

The state was ushered into a new age of stability with the Eighth State Assembly election, when the Congress party came to power, restoring people's confidence and faith in the democratic process. This happened after a lengthy period of instability and significant political turbulence.

Eight State Assembly Election (1993)

On the expiry of the President's Rule, which was instituted in the state on April 2, 1992, new elections were called. In accordance with subsection (2) of section 15 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 (43 of 1951), the Governor of Nagaland, acting on the advice of the Election Commission, issued a directive to all assembly constituencies in the state to conduct elections in accordance with the provisions of the aforementioned Act and the Rules and orders issued thereunder.⁷⁰ On February 15, 1993, the Eighth Assembly Election to the Nagaland Legislative Assembly was held.⁷¹ Similar to previous elections, the contest for power was between a powerful national party and a powerful regional party: the Congress (I) and the NPC. The BJP and the DLP made up the third

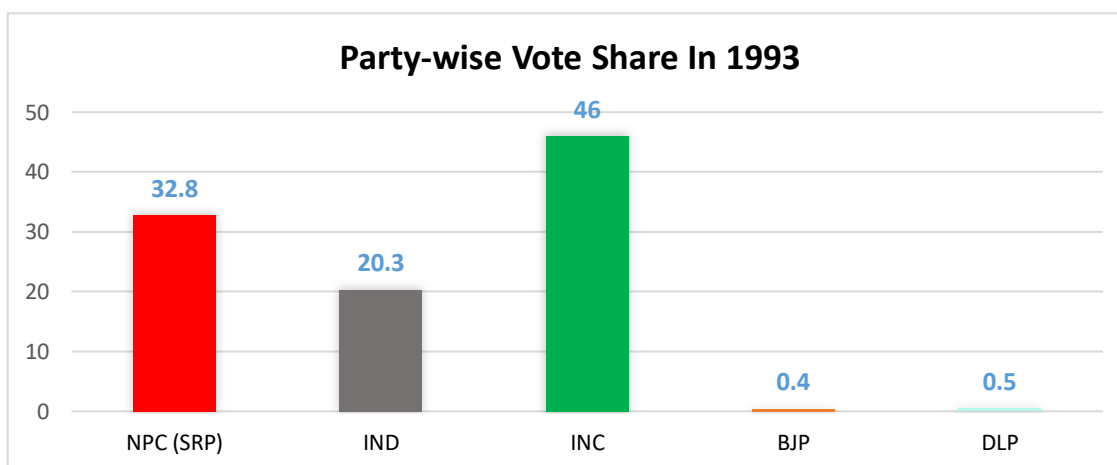
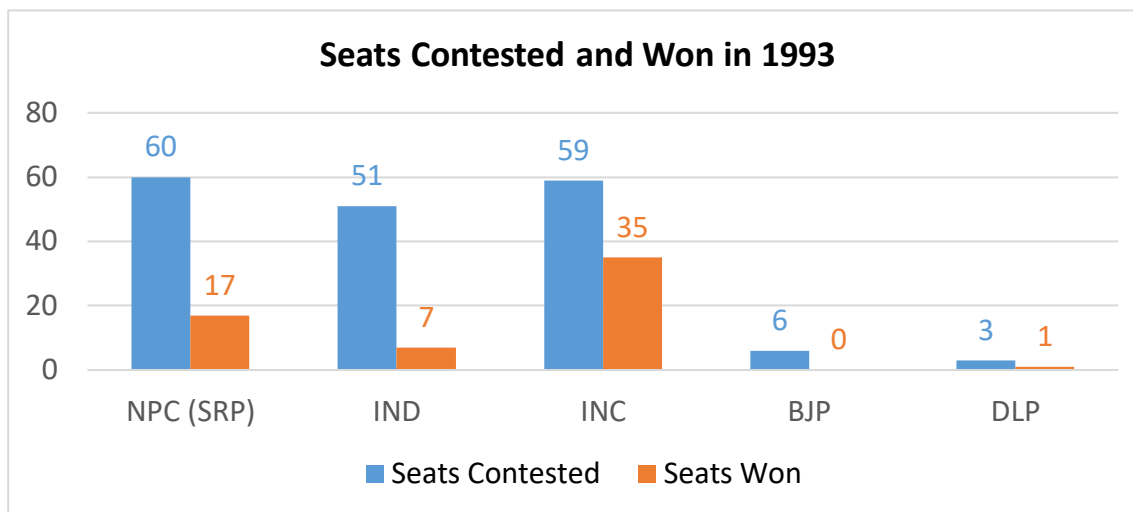
⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.201.

⁷⁰ Government of Nagaland, *Report on the Eight General Election to the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland*, 1993, Chief Electoral Officer, Kohima, 1993, p.13.

⁷¹ Government of Nagaland, *Road to Progress*, op. cit. p.10.

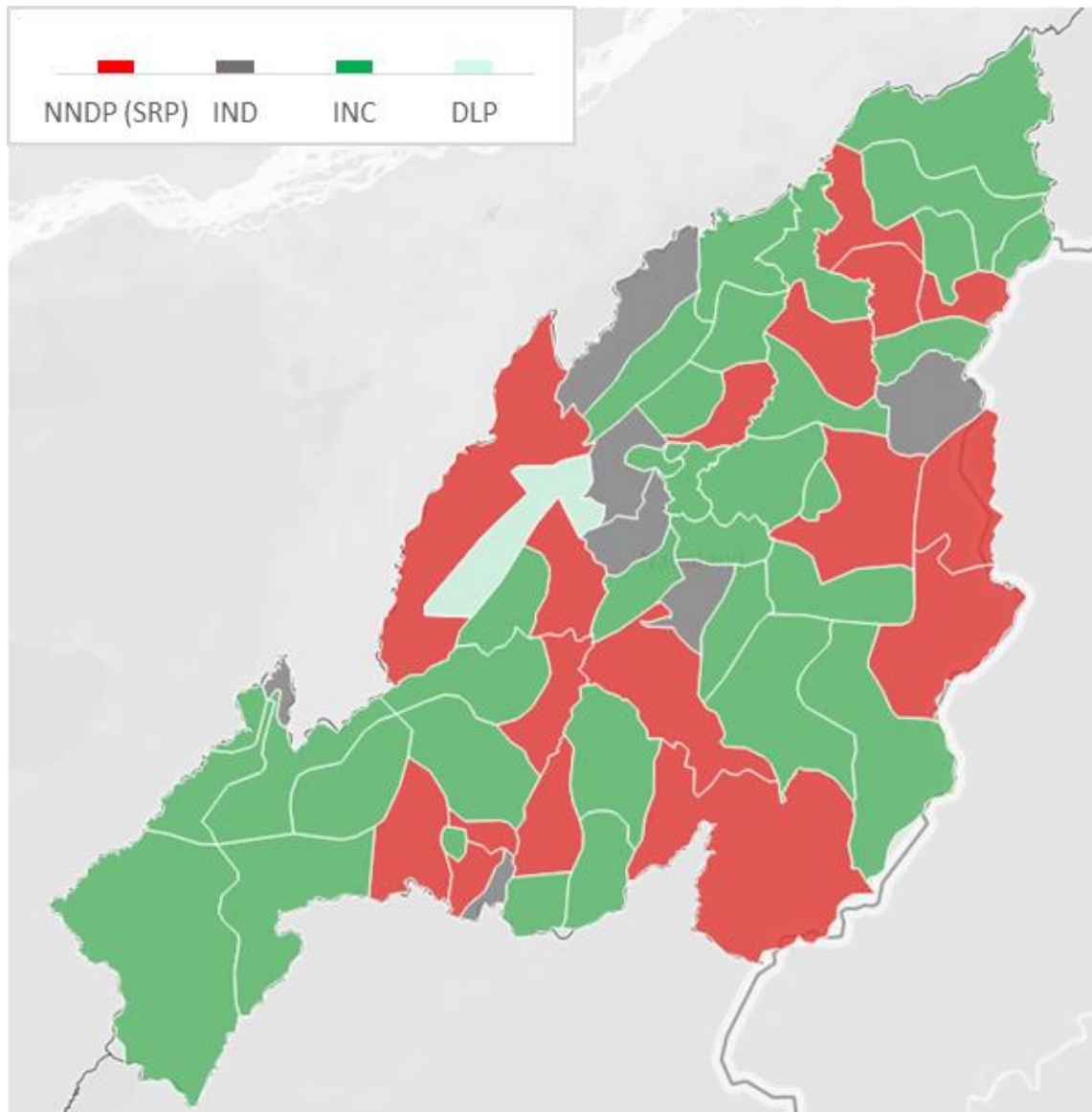
force. The number of voters in this election climbed from 5,82,416 in the election of 1989 to 8,02,911 in this election.⁷² The voter participation percentage of 91.53 percent was the highest ever recorded for elections to the state Assembly.

Chart 4.9 & 4.10: Results of Eight General Assembly Election, 1993



⁷² The increase in the number of electorates was mainly due to the reduction of the age of adult suffrage from 21 years to 18 years. See 'Eight lakh voters, 1450 polling stations', *Nagaland Post*, 12th January, 1993.

Map 4.5: Seat Share of Different Parties in 1993



Total Electorates = 8,14,805
Polling Percentage = 89.6%

Votes Polled = 7,29,744

SOURCE: Government of Nagaland, *Report on the Eighth General Election to the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland, 1993*, Chief Electoral Officer, Kohima, 1993.

There were several independent candidates and four political parties on the ballot. The Congress (I) and the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) were national parties, whilst the NPC and the DLP were regional parties. The Congress (I) ran 59 candidates in the election, while the BJP ran 6, the NPC ran 60, the DLP ran 3, and the independents ran 51. With 46 percent of the vote, the Congress earned an absolute majority of 35 seats in the House of Representatives. The NPC won 17 seats with 32.8 percent of the vote, while the DLP got just one seat with 0.5 percent. Seven seats were won by independents with 20.3% of the vote. The BJP, which competed for re-election in the state election for the second time, performed poorly, gaining no seats and getting 0.4 percent of the vote.⁷³ The NPC became the Congress Government's major opponent. In an interview with the 'Post' in the final week of January 1993, S.C. Jamir confidently predicted a Congress (I) majority of 32 or more seats and between 17 and 18 seats for the NPC.⁷⁴

After a lengthy period of instability, the Congress (I) under the leadership of S.C. Jamir brought stability to the governance of the state. This resulted in fewer individuals leaving their party. S.C. Jamir created history by being the first politician in Nagaland to hold the position of Chief Minister for a record-tying fourth term. Tribalism and the power of money played key roles in this election's campaign, which was far more publicized than the previous election's campaign.⁷⁵ "The election also saw the rise of gun-power including a near institutionalizing of rigging and booth-capturing," according to the author, "where all competing politicians seem to have accepted this as part of the system."⁷⁶ As is common for campaigns of this nature, significant persons from neighbouring states were invited to join. Politicians were voracious and thirsty for power, and they were willing to use any means or strategies to obtain it. Due of this, the election became more about money politics, which obscured the many other legitimate political issues of the state.⁷⁷

⁷³Apurba K. Barua and Rajesh Dev (ed), *Ethnic Identities and Democracy; Electoral Politics in North East India*, op. cit. p.77.

⁷⁴Ralph Waldo Emerson, 'People's Mandate', *Nagaland Post*, Dimapur, 22nd February, 1993, p.4.

⁷⁵David Sachii, *Emergence of Coalition Politics in Nagaland*, op. cit. p.54.

⁷⁶In many constituencies, the electorates could not cast their votes since imposters queuing up since the early morning hours were the early birds that got the worm. See, Horace Mann, 'Imposters Poll,' *Nagaland Post*, Dimapur, 19th February, 1993, p.4.

⁷⁷David Sachii, *Emergence of Coalition Politics in Nagaland*, op. cit. p.54.

It is also crucial to note that the manifestos of different political parties were essentially identical, as there were little ideological divisions. In their respective platforms, both the Congress (I) and the NPC vowed stability. As stated earlier, the NPC ran for office with the motto "Stability."⁷⁸ In its platform, the Congress (I) guarantees "stability, peace, and progress" along the lines of the NPC.⁷⁹ In addition to other agenda items, the major political parties outlined their goals for a peaceful resolution of the Indo-Naga political problem.⁸⁰

In spite of its earnest efforts to mobilize public opinion in its favour by promoting its programs and policies, the NPC won just 17 out of a total of 60 seats in the 1993 8th State Assembly Election. As a powerful regional political party in the state, the NPC played a vital role in the Assembly as opposition through its constructive and tenable promises to the people. In 1998, NGOs and the Naga Hoho (an apex body and reputable non-government organization in Nagaland) campaigned for a postponement of elections in the state, bringing an end to party rule. Other non-Congress parties boycotted the election, resulting in the de-recognition of the NPC. The Election Commission has ruled that if a political party boycotts an election, its emblem and recognition would be taken away. NPC became a state-registered unrecognized party.⁸¹

Democratic Labour Party (DLP)

The Democratic Labour Party, which arose in the state, was distinguished from other political parties in Nagaland due to its nationalist perspective and proclamation. According to A.S. Atai Shimray, if there is any chance of reaching the Nagas' objective by peaceful means and reorienting the Naga society within the recognized Naga nationalist perspective, then the DLP is the only party capable of doing this.⁸²

⁷⁸ NPC Promises 'Stability; Makes manifesto known', *Nagaland Post*, 1st February, 1993.

⁷⁹ 'Congress (I) Election Manifesto,' *Nagaland Post*, 31st January, 1993.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.55.

⁸¹ 'Boycott poll, lose symbol: Election Commission,' *The Tribune*, 21 September, 1998.

www.tribuneindia.com/1998/98sep21/head2.htm. Page viewed on 6/28/2007.

⁸² A.S. Atai Shimray, *Let Freedom Ring*, Promilla and Co., Publishers, New Delhi, 2005, p.229.

These truths are obviously stated in its manifesto:

*“DLP is, therefore, founded on the remaining solid rock of Naga nationalism to further the cultural struggle aimed at preserving Naga pride as our national asset. Thirty years is a long time not only in the life of an individual but even in the life of a small developing country as Nagaland for anybody with conscience to learn.”*⁸³

To integrate all Naga areas under one administrative entity and to help in any way feasible on any approach towards a peaceful resolution of the Indo-Naga political conflict, if such aid is wanted, were also stated as significant goals in its platform.⁸⁴ It also promised reformation in the state, aimed at removing the old generation tainted by unhealthy politics of money and muscle power and replacing them with a new generation of determined political leaders capable of guiding Nagaland to her final destiny with dignity and respect.

During elections, the DLP abhors the use of money power and intimidation. It seeks the mandate of the masses by appealing to the Nagas to work for a change in the current society, which was plunging farther and further beyond redemption with the passage of time.⁸⁵ In the 8th Assembly Election held in February 1993, DLP contested for three seats but could win only one seat. In the eighth Assembly Election, held in February 1993, the DLP ran for three seats but was only able to win one. In addition to being one of the earliest political parties to arise in the state with a clear commitment to support the Naga national cause, the party lacked a significant presence in the state.

Without a doubt, the Congress (I) rose to power due to its aggressive electioneering strategies. People have trust in the party since it was viewed as the only party capable of bringing stability to the state's administration due to its all-inclusive nature and central backing. The fact that the Congress party was in control at the center and hence possesses

⁸³ *Manifesto of Democratic Labour Party*, Nagaland, 1993, p.2.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4

⁸⁵ ‘DLP Invites Independents’, *Nagaland Post*, 22 January, 1993.

people, money, resources, and influence is a significant advantage.⁸⁶ The strong showing of the Congress (I) demonstrated that despite internal fighting, the public had greater faith in the party, and that regional parties like the NPC lacked mass support in the state.⁸⁷

The same sentiment is reflected in one of informal interviews for this study- talking about how his own village look up to congress for stable governance because the regional parties have been disappointing in their services.⁸⁸

In his words;

At the beginning, we used to be so supportive of the regional parties' candidates, thinking they would be working for the welfare of our people and to bring solution to the long pending Naga issue which has caused a lot of bloodshed and violence. All the dark past we have to live for the rest of our lives, but we kept giving chance to regional parties to game up their act and do the needful for the peaceful solution, but to no avail. It was only words without work. So, when the Congress set their feet on our soil, with the support of the centre who was the ruling Government during this time, we discussed and decided to extend our support to Congress and at least get some benefit, if not solution for the Naga issue. Because the Congress was ruling at the centre, they were more prepared and mindful in building up their strategies to woo voters. I am sure everyone has their own story to tell, but for me, these are some of the reasons for me and my family, clan and village to vote for the Congress. We lost hope and confidence in the regional parties and built our confidence in the Congress.

The vote bank it obtained from the major tribes and the addition of seasoned leaders like as K.L. Chishi to the Congress (I) ticket, which improved the party's prestige, also contributed to the Congress (I)'s success.⁸⁹

Along with many other changes in the state, the Nagas political environment was in constant transition since its exposures to democratic politics. This is also a period which

⁸⁶ David Sachii, 'Emergence of Coalition Politics in Nagaland,' op. cit. p.57.

⁸⁷ Ralph Waldo Emerson, *People's Mandate*, op. cit. p.4.

⁸⁸ A 76 years old male respondent- one of the village leaders (who prefers not to be named) from a village in Kohima District.

⁸⁹ K. Meyiesiil Chaya, *Impact of Traditional Structure in Legislative Assembly Elections in Nagaland: A case Study*, op. cit. p.50.

was gradually getting marked by tribalism. The political leaders in power who belonged to major tribes took this opportunity to keep their position and leadership, endorsing tribalism through their campaigns. This not only manipulates the minds of innocent public who has close attachment and loyalties to Naga issue in general and towards their own tribe in particular, but also sowed the seed of tribalism in the blood of the people

An informal group⁹⁰ interaction/discussion with some of the village leaders belonging to major tribe mirrors the same thoughts, talking about their attachments and loyalties to their own tribe first and the rest of the tribe. They also expressed about the leadership qualities as crucial trait for political party leaders to hold the attention of their supporters.

In their words:

“We have always believed that regardless of the situations, our loyalties and attachments should be towards our own tribe and it plays pivotal in keeping our own people together. We also believe that our own people will only understand our problems and our requirements. Keeping this in mind, when election is ahead of us, our people will have group consensus and locate political leaders from our own locality and vote for him. Sometimes, we really do not care whose party he belongs to or even if he defects, we still follow his leadership and vote for whichever party he belongs to. That way, we feel secured and confident that regardless of the election result, an individual we commit to will help us and our community to the best of his capacity even if he is not with the ruling party. I think the victory of congress and holding power for more than a decade would be credited to the tribe these leaders belong to and the support they get from their own major tribe. In a state like Nagaland, it is important to acknowledge the significance of tribal affiliation of the political leaders. This is nothing new to you or any Naga- this has been with us for too long and would be awkward to pretend not to know or be aware about. It would be wrong on our part to deny that there is a change and there is not much rigidity as it was during our times, but tribal affiliation has always been crucial in our daily lives in general and most importantly in politic of our society.”

Leadership in politics is the capacity to motivate and direct a group of individuals toward a single objective. There are several attributes that are essential for political leaders, but

⁹⁰ A group of 5 men age-group from 60 to 70 from Zunheboto district

overall, the most effective political leaders are those who can inspire and direct others toward a shared purpose, as well as adapt to changing circumstances and make difficult decisions when necessary. While leadership with charisma can be a powerful force for change, it is important for charismatic leaders to use their influence responsibly and to consider the needs and well-being of their followers. One of the main reasons why Congress could permeate its space in the state despite the strong presence of anti-national political parties, was leadership of the congress and many related attributes that enabled its eventual dominance in the Nagas electoral politics.

In an informal conversation⁹¹ with one of the ex-senior Congress leaders, many insights were received on what enabled Congress part to hold political space for more than a decade in the state with strong presence of regional parties.

In his words:

“I worked many years within the Congress party and could qualify even as a loyal follower. This was during the time where regional parties had strong presence, but Congress managed to permeate into the political space of Nagaland. As an ex-member of the party, I may sound bias, but let me try to be as truthful and candid as possible in my expressions. While it is true that the Congress party in the state had the full support at the centre making it to run smooth and keep the support of the Naga people, it is also true that the congress party managed to seep through the electoral politics of the state owing to the backing and the careful strategies provided by the centre. Of course, there are many other factors that enabled Congress to be in power for a decade – as mentioned earlier, the strong organisational structure, though national in character it was regional in content thus wooing the public. Another important factor is the Congress’ promise to focus on peace and development which

⁹¹ Senior ex-member of Congress party: informational interaction with 65 Male on 20th December 2015, Kohima Village

the Nagas were craving so much during that time. Another most important and most crucial reason for the congress to occupy the political space was the presence of a strong and charismatic leadership, S. C Jamir. He was a man of vision and with clarity, and has the aura to hold the attention and support of his followers. There had been and will be many leaders before and after him, but he will remain one of the significant figures in the political history of the Nagas who, with his charismatic leadership, provided a stable and strong government during the 90's."

As agreeably mentioned by the respondent, in the political history of the democratic system in Nagaland, the charismatic leadership of S.C. Jamir enabling the reign of Congress (I) cannot be overlooked. He worked towards maintaining its party members together and uninjured, which liberated the party from desertion. After nearly two decades of political volatility, Jamir's charismatic leadership led to the beginning of political stability in the state.

From above two narratives, it is apparent how the tribal affiliation and leadership qualities become crucial and could become vital indicators for political parties to win seats in the election. In this specific context, the congress leaders belonging to major tribes coupled with their leadership qualities assured their space in the governance, and thus their reign in the state electoral politics for over a decade.

On the other hand, the NPC had been relegated to the background primarily as a result of the party leadership, lack of flexibility in accommodating the greater segment of society and its operation as a small organization.⁹² As a result, a number of faithful party members resigned in protest over the leadership's method of operation. Some former NPC leaders declared in a news statement that the party failed to "bring the goods to the people" owing

⁹² William Allen White, 'Time to Reconcile', *Nagaland Post*, 19th February, 1993. p.4.

to their own selfishness.⁹³ The NPC also suffered another blow when Asu Keyho,⁹⁴ resigned, alleging a lack of "respect for democracy" inside the party. In his statement, Mr. Keyho accused the NPC of being "driven by immaturity and blatant manipulation rather than the majority of the people. In his statement, Mr. Keyho accused the NPC of being "driven by immaturity and blatant manipulation rather than the majority of the people."⁹⁵ The NPC lost trust owing to the "autocratic manner in which a few so-called original party workers ran party matters."⁹⁶ While the Congress (I) was plagued by internal squabbles, the NPC was afflicted by a caucus whose actions have been totalitarian. When he founded the JLP Government, Mr. Vamuzo's credentials as a regional party leader were questioned. Additionally, Mr. Jamir and Mr. K.L. Chishi's alliance inside the Congress (I) party exacerbated the leadership issue within the NPC. The complete term of S.C. Jamir's government rekindled the Naga electorate's hope in a democratic process that was nearly on the verge of collapse. The Congress (I) has strengthened its position in the state with this election.

Ninth State Assembly Election (1998)

In the political history of the state, the Ninth Assembly Elections for the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland were unprecedented in their uniqueness. The electoral procedure that took place in Nagaland in 1998 was without precedent in Northeast India or in Nagaland itself. This was due to the involvement of the Naga Hoho and the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in the state's political politics.⁹⁷

Since the outset, these entities have been quiet observers of the elections in Nagaland. During the 1998 elections, however, they intervened to ensure that a fair election was conducted and that all political parties were well-prepared for the electoral war. At this moment, NGOs and the Naga Hoho issued a demand for the postponement of elections in

⁹³ 'NPC Members Join Congress (I),' *Nagaland Post*, 15th January, 1993.

⁹⁴ He was a member of the Central Publicity Board of the NPC.

⁹⁵ 'NPC Members Join Congress (I),' *Nagaland Post*, op. cit.

⁹⁶ 'More Resign NPC, Congress (I),' *Nagaland Post*, 20th January, 1993.

⁹⁷ B. Pakem, *Coalition Politics in North-East India*, op. cit. p.120.

Nagaland under the slogan "Nagas want a solution, not an election" and "give peace an opportunity to bring about a permanent solution to the vexing Naga issue."⁹⁸

The Central Government and the NSCN (IM) signed a ceasefire that went into effect on 1 August 1997,⁹⁹ during which representatives of both sides were coming close to negotiating a solution to the protracted Naga issue. This gave the Naga people optimism for the state's eventual lasting peace. People desired a solution for the Naga problem rather than an election. The main religious-civil organisation in the state, the Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC), supported the demand for a poll boycott and produced an "Agenda for Peace" that was endorsed and supported by the NSCN.¹⁰⁰ The Naga Hoho Summit went so far as to proclaim that "if any political party or intended candidate submits his or her candidacy for the aforementioned election, he or she would be deemed and labelled anti-Naga, and will be solely liable for the repercussions."¹⁰¹ In their wisdom, the NGOs believed that the current environment was favourable to bringing unity and a final resolution between the Government of India and the guerrillas, in particular, and the Nagas, in general.

The words of one of the church members¹⁰² reflects the state of mind of the Naga masses who were getting more and more frustrated with Government's delay in bringing amicable solution to the prolonged Naga problem.

In his words:

"You see, if we carefully look at the Naga history, there have been many false promises from the central Government of India. First of all, we never want to be under their rule- it was the British who left us in their control, and thus the struggle for this many years. This conflict and unresolved political situation of the Nagas have affected the lives of

⁹⁸ Chandrika Singh, *Naga Politics: A Critical Account*, op. cit. p.164.

⁹⁹ Naga People's Movement for Human Rights, 'Naga People's Declaration (Hoho),' *Quarterly Publication*, April, 2002. p. 26

¹⁰⁰ The boycott call was made in support of the demand for political dialogue between the Government of India and the Insurgents to end the five-decade old Naga imbroglio. See *Nagaland Post*, 19th December, 1997, p. 1.

¹⁰¹ 'North -East Politics,' Vol. 1, No. 6, June-July, 1990, p. 2.

¹⁰² 73 Male, informal interaction on 19th May 2017, Kohima Village.

the Naga masses in an untold miseries and horrors. Elections, in the first place, were brought against strong opposition, but the public suffered for too many years under the conflicted situation between the Nationalist group of the Nagas and the Indian army, a group of leaders brought us under this electoral politics with full hope and prayers that Nagas issue be solved at the earliest possible. But despite many promises every election and every agreement, the real problem was never resolved and kept prolonging. We were just silent spectators, but we were observing the whole situation. We got too frustrated and thus joined hands along with other NGOs and expressed our dissatisfactions. No promises made by the central government materialized nor improved. We decided to seek definite solution by boycotting the election, saying, Nagas need solution, not election. Many more to say on the centre as well as on the political leaders of Nagaland, but it would rather be a waste of my energy- only we could do is pray for them and hope for better tomorrow. We are still under the shadow of the past without any definite solution for the Nagas”

One could hear screams of frustrations and dissatisfaction with the centre in the expressions of the Nagas. In response to such a demand for a boycott of elections, the two largest regional groupings, the NPC and the NDM, as well as a national party such as the BJP, endorsed the boycott call, and no candidates from these parties submitted nomination papers.¹⁰³ The opposition leader Vamuzo of NPC, NDM President Hokushe Sema, and state BJP president N. Rhetso, accompanied by other leaders of their respective parties, informed the Home Minister that the law and order situation in Nagaland was not favorable to having elections at this time, and that they supported the call by NGOs such as the Naga Hoho, the apex tribal body, Naga Students Federation, Naga People's Movement for Human Rights, and Naga Mothers Association.¹⁰⁴ They stated that if the central government did not postpone the elections, they would be compelled to abstain from voting.¹⁰⁵

In the meantime, efforts were also undertaken to convince the Indian government to delay the election date. Thousands of individuals from all tribes and walks of life participated

¹⁰³ 'Nagaland Post,' 2nd February, 1988, p. 1.

¹⁰⁴ Ajailiu Niumai, 'Nagaland: 1998 – Current Political Issues,' 20th February, 1998, p. 1

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

in demonstrations held throughout the whole state. Participating in the 1998 elections without resolving the Naga issue would be undemocratic and unlawful, it was argued with greater vigor.¹⁰⁶ One could read that the regional parties fervently advocated for the region's feelings and endeavoured to fulfil the Naga people's goals, in contrast to the Congress (I), which still aspires to go against the will of the people by participating in the election.

The Government of India, ignoring the plea of the NGOs, instructed the state government to hold the poll according to the previously announced schedule. In support of its decision to hold elections in Nagaland in 1998, the Election Commission said that parties that choose not to participate may be de-recognized.¹⁰⁷ In a statement to the press, Congress (I) president and Chief Minister S.C. Jamir argued that contesting the election was a constitutional requirement and obligation for his party. He also maintained that it was only doing so to serve the people while the government of India continues negotiations with the NSCN (IM).¹⁰⁸

Despite the demand for a boycott, the Congress party emphasized the need of participating in the elections, which they believed would not impede political talks. Nonetheless, sensing the pulse of the electorate, the Congress declared its commitment to a policy of "reconciliation among various groups and support for Naga unity"; "and permanent resolution of the Naga problem by the year 2000 through peaceful dialogue and negotiation among the disputing parties."¹⁰⁹

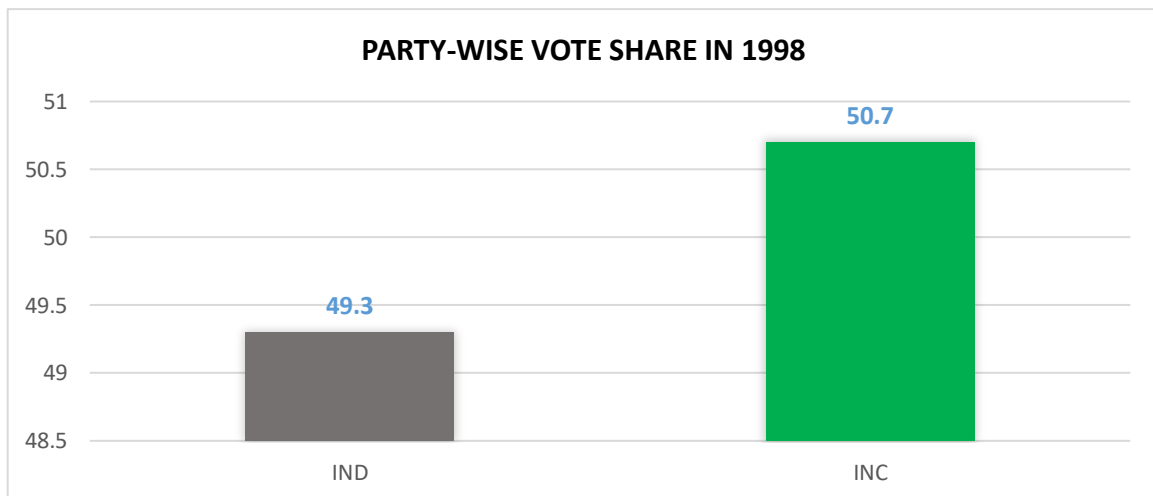
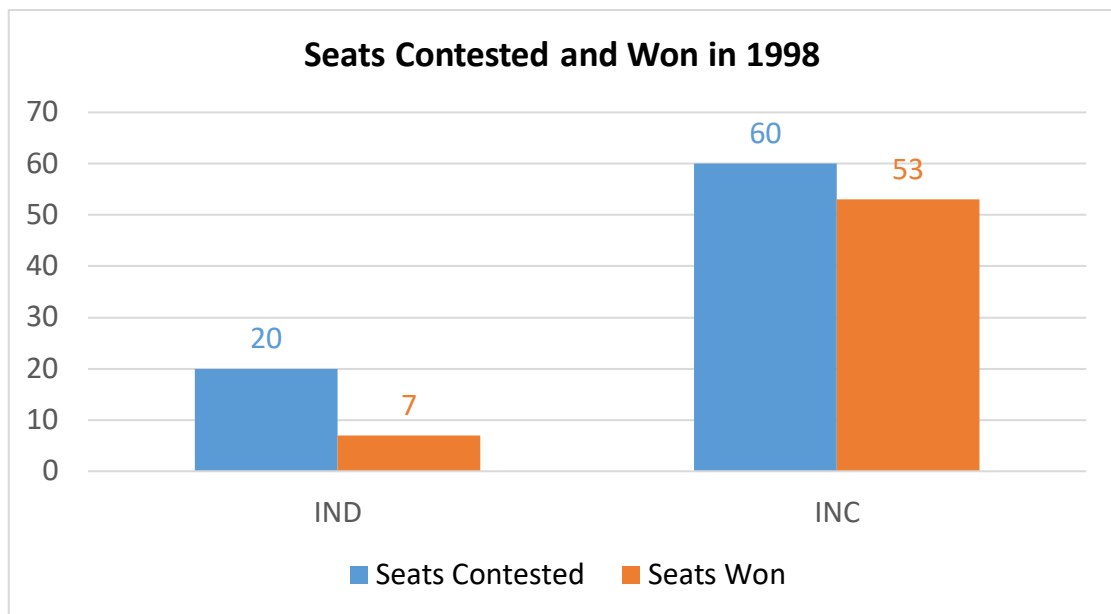
¹⁰⁶ Chandrika Singh, *Naga Politics: A Critical Account*, op. cit. p.165.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p.166.

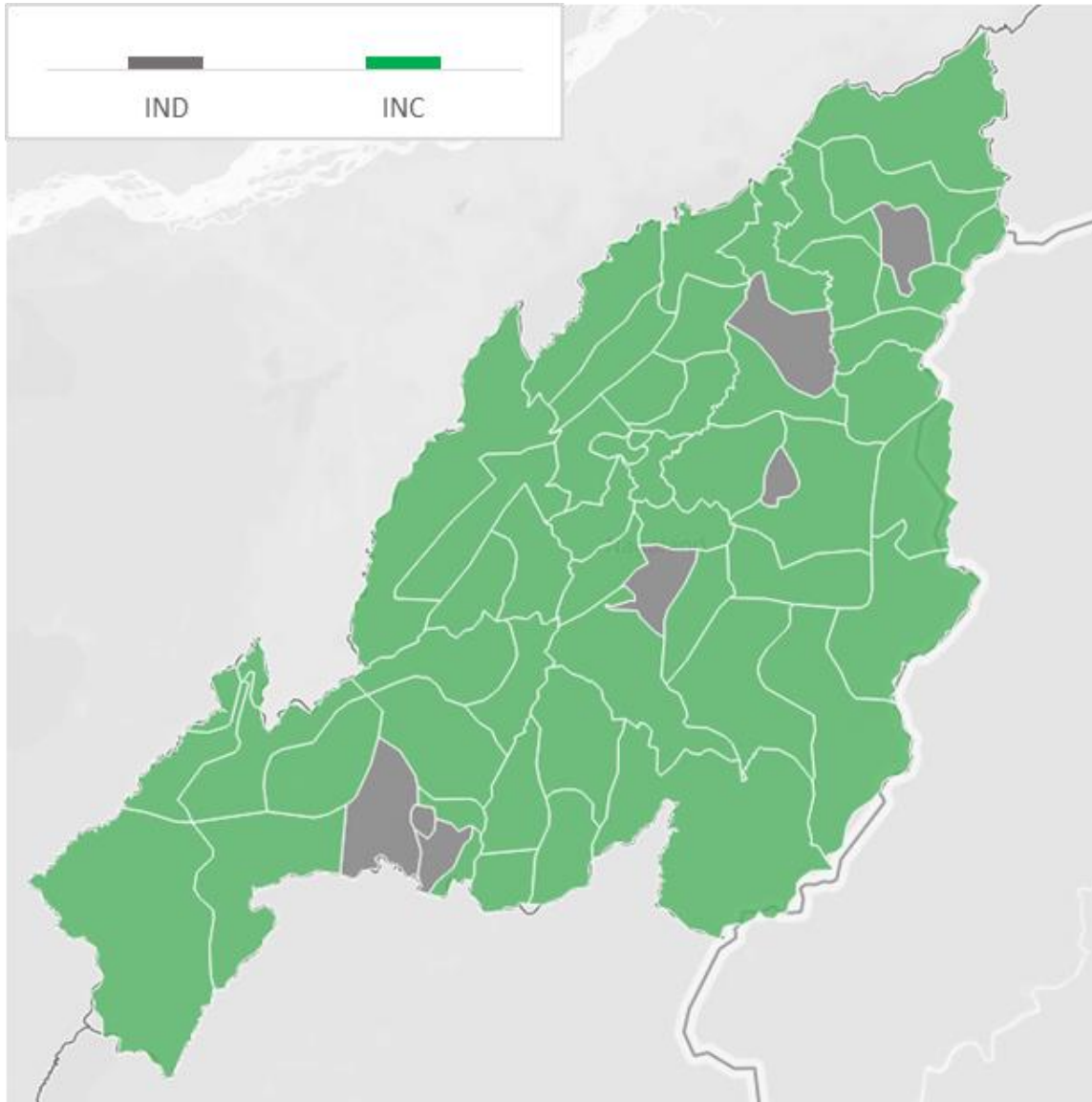
¹⁰⁸ 'Lull Before the Talks,' *Nagaland Post*, 2nd February, 1998, p.4.

¹⁰⁹ 'Manifesto of the 1990 Elections,' NPCC, Kohima, p.8.

Charts 4.11 & 4.12: Results of Ninth General Assembly Election, 1998



Map 4.6: Seat Share of Different Parties in 1998



Total Electorates = 9,25,821
Polling Percentage = 22%

Votes Polled = 2,03,422

SOURCE: Government of Nagaland, *'Report on the Simultaneous Election, 1998 for 9th General Elections to the Nagaland Legislative Assembly & 12th General Elections to the Nagaland Parliamentary Constituency,'* Chief Electoral Officer, Kohima, 1998.

Despite all efforts to postpone the election, it was held on February 23, 1998, with only Congress (I) candidates and a small number of independents competing. For the first time in the state's political history, regional parties did not participate in the election. On the other side, the few independent candidates were Congress members who were refused party nominations (I). Campaigning for the election was impeded by the groups who opposed the election. Some voting stations were looted, two people were killed, and many instances of abduction were also recorded. Just prior to the beginning of the real voting process, the NSCN (IM) retracted their demand for a boycott. With the exception of a few independent candidates, only the Congress (I) was represented.¹¹⁰

In the election, the Congress (I) fielded 60 candidates in each of the 60 seats, while 20 independent candidates ran in 17 constituencies. The Congress (I) won 43 uncontested seats, while in the 17 constituencies where elections were held, the Congress (I) won 10 seats and independent candidates won the remaining 7 seats.¹¹¹ The Congress (I) won 53 out of a total of 60 parliamentary seats. In the seventeenth contested seat, the total number of electorates was 2,60,638, the total number of votes cast was 2,03,422. Therefore, the voter turnout in these 17th districts was 78.96%.¹¹²

On March 5, 1998, the Congress (I) earned an absolute majority and established a government with elation, with S.C. Jamir as the chief minister, in a circumstance where other political parties declined to participate in contestation.¹¹³ The administration was deemed "unselected and unmandated." When individuals who opposed the election filed a lawsuit with the Election Commission's court, the matter was dismissed. The Commission supported the necessity of an election following the expiration of its entire mandate.¹¹⁴ What transpired during the 1998 election in Nagaland was a complete farce of democracy. According to the observation of Vikheho Swu, despite all security

¹¹⁰ B. Pakem, *Coalition Politics in North-East India*, p.120.

¹¹¹ Government of Nagaland, *Road to Progress*, op. cit. p.10.

¹¹² Government of Nagaland, *Kohima Report on the Simultaneous Election, 1998 for 9th General Elections to the Nagaland Legislative Assembly & 12th General Elections to the Nagaland Parliamentary Constituency*, Chief Electoral Officer, 1998, p.107.

¹¹³ Government of Nagaland, *Road to Progress*, op. cit. p.10.

¹¹⁴ Chandrika Singh, *Naga Politics: A Critical Account*, op. cit. pp.166-167

measures, the Nagas abstained from voting. Undoubtedly, elections were held, but Congress (I) employees and polling officials "manning the booths had a field day proxy voting or orchestrating proxies: votes were cast on behalf of those who abstained from voting and were recorded even in polling booths where voter turnout was absolutely zero." Chankiza has correctly stated, "The political dramas now being performed in Nagaland are terrible, reflecting the malignancy of the Naga society's attitudes, values, and tendencies."¹¹⁵

The initiative by NGOs and the Naga Hoho to postpone the 1998 election was a form of pressure technique on the Indian government to resolve the issue. The trump card was held by the Naga Congress (I), but it did not approve of a solution enacted without its approval. Mr. Jamir opined that no truce or solution to the Naga problem would be successful and long-lasting until all segments of the population were consulted. The move begun by NGOs and the Naga Hoho in 1998 suggests that the Naga people's desire for sustainable peace and resolution of the Naga problem must be given top priority. The Government created under the leadership of S.C. Jamir successfully completed its full term despite harsh criticism. Despite significant opposition to the election, the government operates without incident. Similarly, the regional party in Nagaland was not particularly effective because political leadership was defective. The ministers likewise approached their tasks in a disorganized manner. Some ministers abuse their positions to financially benefit themselves or their political party. They failed because they were unqualified for their roles owing to a lack of administrative skills, a reluctance to learn, and hunger for power.¹¹⁶

The decision of S.C Jamir to hold the election despite opposition from the Naga masses did not go well with them and people began to question his intentions. Regional took this opportunity and tactfully oriented people against Jamir and infuse doubt and suspicions in their minds. They start to question if he is really for the Nagas or just for his own vested

¹¹⁵ Monalisa Chankiza, 'Nagaland Politics with Hopes and Disgusts,' op. cit. p. 26/XII.

¹¹⁶ L. S. Gassah, *Regional Political Parties in North East India*, Omsons Publications, New Delhi, 1992, p. 8

interest. Line like this is debatable because this period does not necessarily have any great leaderships in regional parties as well.

An interaction with an elder¹¹⁷ in the community gives us almost a balanced view on the political landscapes during that time through his personal experiences and awareness of the situation then.

In his words:

“Politics is politics- anyone could say anything about his oppositions and exaggerate their intentions be it good or bad. During this time, I was 50 years old when all these political mess was happening. I was quite active in the community and politics. But it was my personal choice and conscious attempt to be fair in my judgements and my opinions regarding anything in life in general and politics in particular which was at its peak during that time. Yes, many were unhappy with Jamir’s decision at that point for going against the boycotting of election by the Naga masses. On that line, although I am not a great fan of Jamir myself, I believe that his decision was a well-thought one as he was/is a man of vision. But as I mentioned earlier, it is all politics, and I feel that this was unfortunately a negative turning point in his political career within the state. You know better how it all played out eventually, Jamir losing the confidence of the people, and thus to the downfall of his leadership. But one has to remember that, these are all political play of one party against the other party. At the end of the day, every single political leader has his or her own vested interest- to be in power- their goal to work for the welfare of the masses is usually overshadowed by their ambitions and hunger for power and status”

¹¹⁷ 68-year-old elder from Angami community who had had long association and engagements in politics of the state- interaction on 19th February 2016 at Kohima.

The writing of H. Kughaka argues that the call for election boycotting by the masses with the slogan "No Solution, No Election" was a political game played by Shurhozelie who was then the party president, misled the party for his own selfish interest as he was aware of his poor electoral position. He was well aware that his poor situation would inevitably lead him to a crushing defeat at the hands of his opponent. Keeping this mind, he strategically deceived the Naga People's Council party into boycotting the election under the fallacious slogan "No Solution, No Election."¹¹⁸

One takeaway from the above narrative and observations is that it is true that a political party's downfall does not necessarily indicate that it did something wrong or made poor judgments. Changing public opinions, alterations in the political environment, and rivalry within the parties may all lead to the downfall of any political party. At the end, the success or failure of a political party depends on a variety of circumstances as in the case with the electoral politics of the Nagas.

This chapter outlined how the national party (Congress) gained a foothold in the state politics despite the presence of strong regional parties, bringing a decade of political stability in the state for the first time. It had highlighted how regional political party's prominence in the state took a backseat with the arrival of the Congress party that strategically established its hold in the state electoral politics with advanced political strategies and central's providence in terms of funding and related privileges to the state unit. It also illustrated how, the Congress party, not only altered the political equation of the state, but also polarized the national and regional parties. The period of political instability and the politics of defections have been highlighted in this chapter.

The following Chapter will discuss various factors that brought about the downfall of the Congress party and the re-emergence of the regional parties with formation of new power blocs. It will also discuss the formation of the new regional party and the dynamics of the current state politics.

¹¹⁸ H. Kughaka Sumi, '*A study of Emergence and Role of Regional Political Parties in Nagaland*', Unpublished Thesis 2015, Nagaland University, P. 143.

CHAPTER- 5

RE-EMERGENCE OF THE REGIONAL PARTY: THE COALITION PHASE (2003-2018)

The phase starting with the 2003 elections presents an interesting development wherein, new power alignments were forged to overthrow the Congress party under the leadership of S.C. Jamir. This period saw the re-emergence of the old regional party in the state along with the entry of national parties and several other regional political parties from other states. The Congress party in Nagaland went against the boycott of 1998 election in the state and was faced with strong resentment from the Naga masses, civil society organisations, and leaders of other political parties. This phase provided a golden opportunity to the regional party to take full advantage of the situation and created a solid foundation for the newly formed Naga People's Front (NPF) party in the state. Eventually, it paved way for the NPF to form a coalition government with other non-Congress parties, aiming to dethrone the decade old dominance of the Congress party under the leadership of S.C. Jamir. The political trend of the Congress was overthrown by various regional and national political parties under the leadership of Neiphiu Rio and other defected Congress and veteran regional leaders under the NPF party. This resulted in the formation of a coalition government called the Democratic Alliance of Nagaland (DAN).

This chapter will delineate the political events that took place before the election of 2003 that eventually created the conditions for the re-emergence of the regional party in the state. The important factors that culminated in the political development after the signing of the Ceasefire Agreement with the NSCN- IM faction in 1997, had created a new opportunity for the political parties to take shape and initiate new power blocs. The stability and the continuity of the coalition of parties under the two-alliance formation, the Democratic Alliance of Nagaland (DAN) and the current United Democratic Alliance (UDA) till the present context under the strong political leadership of Neiphiu Rio will be presented in the following sections. This chapter will also highlight the shift of political leadership and how the issue of the Naga political solution resulted in changing the political prospects of the different parties that are at play in the state electoral politics in the 21st century.

Sound leadership plays a significant role in establishing direction and vision to any political party. It not only impacts decisions and policies that are adopted, but also inspires and motivate people to strive towards a common objective, and can contribute

to the development of public trust and confidence, and thus keep the support of the public. The context of Nagaland can be a bit tricky to comment because of its political instability. Nevertheless, sound leadership qualities continue to be one of the key aspects that Naga people seek and look up to in the leader they choose to extend their support.

In my informal interaction with group of men, they talked about the significance of good leadership and the role they play in the success of political parties or government and expressed that it has significant impact on the direction and destiny of a nation.

In their¹ words:

"In a political environment such as Nagaland, effective leadership plays an important role in retaining the support of the populace, in addition to other factors. Despite the presence of several tribes in Nagas' situation, strong leadership is necessary to maintain the support of the populace. The politics of Naga are in disarray, there is no final or acceptable solution to the state's long-standing crisis, and the populace is unhappy with its leaders. Despite this, we cannot ignore the leadership of S.C. Jamir, whose charm propelled him to the forefront and kept him in power despite the fact that he was removed by regional parties citing a number of activities he performed that were manifestly unpopular with the Naga populace. The same is true of our current Chief Minister, Mr. Neiphiu Rio. His personality and leadership enable him to argue against Jamir's rule and overthrow it. By emphasizing on the Naga political solution, larger Nagalim, and the development of eastern Nagas, he cleverly garnered public support and remained in power till today."

¹ A group of men in their early 60's, an information group interaction on 25th April 2018 at Kohima Village

Nagaland People's Front (NPF)

The Nagaland People's Front was the offshoot of the Nagaland People's Council. In view of the new developments taking place in various spheres, and in deference to the popular wish for a change in the political leadership in the state, the NPC had decided to widen its horizon of activities by modifying its name. As a result of this, the party was renamed on 18th October, 2002, in its Ninth General Convention and came to be known as the Nagaland People's Front.² As far as NPF is concerned, it is considered to be one of the oldest regional political parties in the country, formed way back in 1963. It is identified with its symbol the 'Cock', which signifies heralding of the dawn of a new era of peace, reconciliation, prosperity and human understanding with a message to forgive and forget, to heal all past wounds. The party, though in existence for more than five decades, still upholds the principle of non-violence and to strive for resolution of all conflicts through peaceful means which can be seen in its motto "Fide Non Armis" meaning "By Faith, Not Arms."

In its election manifestoes, the party stood for commitment to preserve the unique history, honour and identity of the Nagas. The party claimed to play a mediatory role for any peace talk with the Centre and to pave the way for an alternative arrangement in case an honourable and acceptable settlement of the Naga political issue is to be found. Senior members of the NPF and the former Home Minister Neiphiu Rio pointed out that one of the primary objectives of the NPF party would be to bridge the gap in finalising the Indo-Naga political problem.³ It also promised to pursue the movement for the recognition of Eastern Nagaland People's organisation for their legitimate rights including the recognition of Nagas in Myanmar with defined territories. In order to have a good governance system, the NPF promised to strive for the creation of Nagaland Legislative Council to accommodate elders and eminent Nagas so that their advice is taken and imbibed in the process of governance. The party also promised to

² Nagaland People's Front, *The Constitution (Fifth Amendment, 2005)*, The Eagle Press, Dimapur, 2006.

³ 'Neiphiu Spells out NPF's Objective,' *Northeast Herald*, 28 January, Kohima, 2003.

increase the number of seats in the Nagaland Legislative Assembly and to both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.⁴

The need to respond to the changing times, situations and circumstances and to keep pace with the emerging conditions and the contemporary requirements, the NPF made certain changes to its constitution. Accordingly, the constitution (Fifth) amendment had been adopted during the last General Convention held on 14th January, 2005. The party's main aims and objects stand as follows:

- (i) To work and assist in every possible manner on any approach for a peaceful solution of the Indo-Naga political issue, simultaneously keeping alive the fire of relentless endeavour to stand against any force to further divide the Nagas. To move towards a renaissance of Naga brotherhood by making constant appeal to Naga conscience within and outside.
- (ii) To strive to bring about electoral reforms suited to Nagas way of life, aimed at a national resurgence in the society towards whom the party is duty bound and thereby to liberate the Naga society from the unhealthy clutches of degeneration.
- (iii) To work for unity and integrity of the people by integrating all contiguous Naga inhabited areas under one administrative roof and also to provide protection to all the ethnic groups who are indigenous inhabitants of the State.
- (iv) To restore the good name and clean image which the Nagas enjoyed in the past by taking the fight against all forms of corruption at all levels of government.
- (v) To restore to the people the self-discipline and the spirit of self-reliance, which the Nagas had in abundance in the past.
- (vi) To work for the economic advancement of the people with special emphasis on rural development, with a view of removing economic disparity in the society.
- (vii) To strive for a clean and an efficient administration.

⁴ *Nagaland People's Front Manifesto 2008*, The Eagle Press, Dimapur, 2008. p.2.

(viii) To strictly abide by the Rule of Law in the dispensation of justice.⁵

The NPF had veteran regional party leaders like Vizol and Shiirhozelie that provided a strong base to the party. They were also joined by Neiphiu Rio who was a strong and charismatic leader in the Congress party. He defected from the party revolting against the NPCC-I publication of a booklet called ‘The Bedrock of Naga Society’ which questioned the realities of the claim that “Nagas were an independent nation since time immemorial” and emphasised the fact that it was the 16-point agreement that laid the foundation of a ‘collective Naga’ society and identity. The NPF, by questioning the actual status and role of statehood, subtly injected the issue of self-determination into the political agenda.⁶ It also aligned with the emotional chord among the Nagas when it innocuously emphasised its commitment to the integration of the Nagas.

In 2003 state assembly election, the NPF won only 19 seats, but managed to hold the reins of power by heading a coalition government together with other national parties. According to the President of the NPF, Vizol Angami, the victory of his party was “a triumph of truth over evil through divine intervention,” and the election was unique in itself because the electorate had to make a hard choice “between the power of money and human dignity.” He assured the people that the NPF-led government would “restore democracy to the people, provide a stable government and help to restore permanent peace to the people.”⁷ Before the 2008 election, the party again proclaimed that it vows to strive for unity and integrity of all contiguous Naga inhabited areas and to remain vigilant in tackling illegal immigration. While stating that their manifesto was not just a set of mere promises but a covenant with the people with full commitment, the NPF said they would make continued efforts to protect and preserve the ethnic, traditional and cultural identity of Nagas by strengthening the traditional village institutions and heritage by amending relevant acts.⁸ Neiphiu Rio, the party

⁵ *The Constitution (Fifth Amendment, 2005)*, Nagaland People’s Front. Op. cit. p. 2-3.

⁶ Rajesh Dev, ‘Nagaland; More Space for Democratic Politics,’ *Economic and Political Weekly*, April 26, 2003. p.1637.

⁷ Chandrika Singh, *Naga Politics: A Critical Account*, op. cit. p.204.

⁸ ‘NPF for increase in NLA seats,’ *Eastern Mirror*, 21 February, 2008.

leader also reiterated that the NPF would continue to follow the same policy and stand of the Naga regional party since its inception in 1963 as envisaged by past leaders.⁹

Nationalist Democratic Movement (NDM)

Another powerful regional outfit that emerged during the new millennium was the Nationalist Democratic Movement (NDM) under the renowned leadership of K.L. Chishi, former Chief Minister of Nagaland. One of the main agendas of NDM is to highlight the “mis-rule” of the Congress Government in Nagaland. Like NPF, the NDM also put its strong resentment against the Congress party under the leadership of S.C. Jamir for deterring socio-economic development in the state. It fought corruption and misgovernment. In a press release statement, the NDM Youth Wing President N. Yhome, had levelled corruption charges against the Jamir government saying dilapidated roads, hospitals, schools and poor performance of every department bore the testimony of the Congress’ much touted slogan of making Nagaland a “model state” in the country.¹⁰ Thus, the NDM was formed to fight against the leadership of S.C. Jamir and his Congress government in the state.

Like the other political parties, the NDM in its election manifesto, promised that the party’s top most priority would be to find a solution to the Naga political problem if it came to power. Another commitment promised by the party, was to fight against unemployment in the state. It made its first appearance in the 10th Assembly Election in 2003, by fielding 25 candidates. Out of this, only 5 of its candidates were elected. The NDM extended its support to other likeminded political parties and joined the Democratic Alliance of Nagaland under the leadership of Neiphiu Rio.

10th State Assembly Election (2003)

The 2003 election was fought under a different terrain where all the non-Congress parties came together to overthrow the ruling Congress (I) regime in the state. A new alignment of political forces took place in the state. The Ninth Assembly election witnessed the largest number of political parties in the state’s electoral politics. There

⁹ ‘Nagas can stand on their own: Rio,’ *Eastern Mirror*, 24th February, 2008.

¹⁰ ‘Political parties gearing up campaigns in Nagaland,’ *Northeast Herald*, 20 January, 2003. p.10.

were ten political parties out of which: three national parties (INC, BJP, NCP), four regional parties from other states (SP, JDU, RLD, AITC) and three regional parties from within the state (NPF, NDM, NLDP) participated. Besides the Congress (I) and the BJP, other parties like the NCP, JDU, SP, RLD, and AITC, made their maiden entry in the state's electoral politics.¹¹ The Congress (I) and the NPF were the two main contenders in this election. With the intention of setting a strong base in the state, many leaders of Indian political parties visited Nagaland and addressed the public meetings at different places, including remote areas.¹²

With sole intention to oust the Jamir led INC government, the likeminded political parties under the leadership of a newly formed Nagaland People's Front (NPF), joined hands with the slogan 'Elections for Solution',¹³ and formed an alliance under the name of "Democratic Alliance of Nagaland".¹⁴ They unanimously decided upon a Common Minimum Programme with a vision to work towards achieving an honourable settlement of the Naga political problem, acceptable to the people and to bring about significant change to the state with the support of the NDA government at the centre.¹⁵ The alliance appealed to the over 10 lakh electorate to "vote for a change", but on the other hand, the Congress (I) termed the conglomerate as a "ragtag combination" of parties that have nothing in common.¹⁶

¹¹ Government of Nagaland, *Report on the General Elections to the 10th Nagaland Legislative Assembly, 2003*, Chief Electoral Officer, Kohima, 2003, p.56.

¹² Chandrika Singh, *Naga Politics: A Critical Account*, op. cit. p.200.

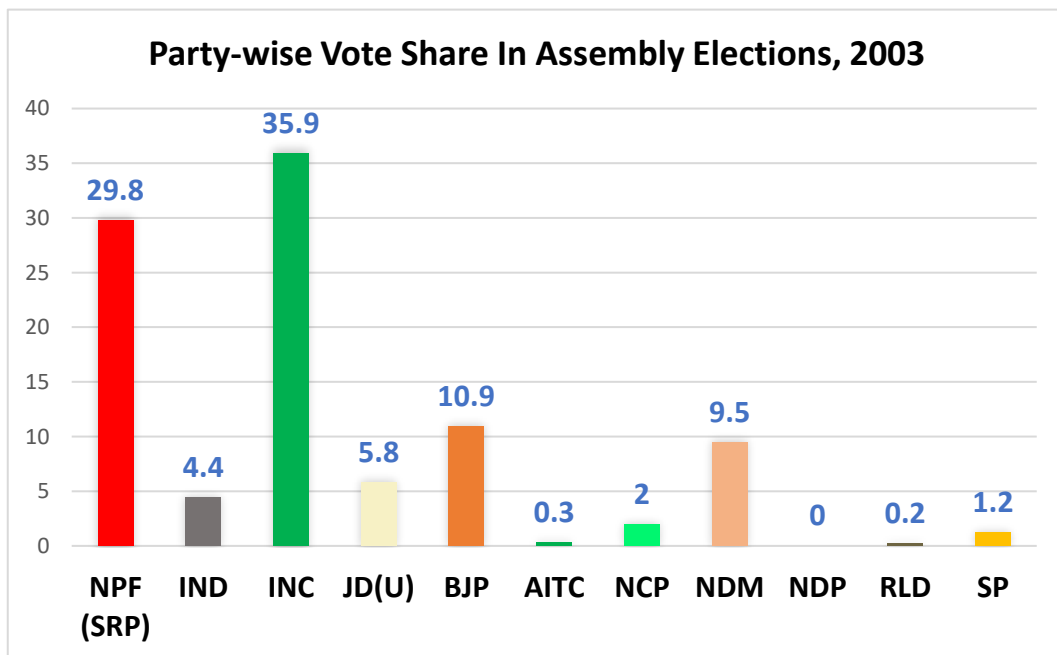
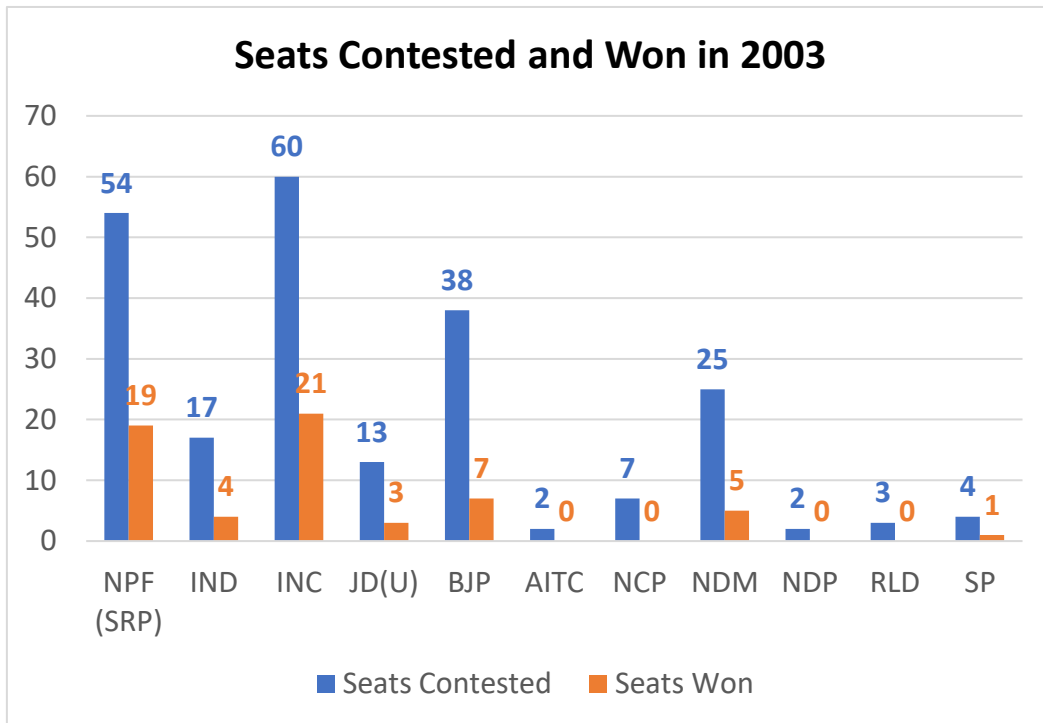
¹³ Rajesh Dev, 'Nagaland; More Space for Democratic Politics,' *Economic and Political Weekly*, April 26, 2003. p. 1638.

¹⁴ The alliance has NPF, BJP, NDM, JD (U), and SP. See Chandrika Singh, *Naga Politics: A Critical Account*, op. cit. p.205.

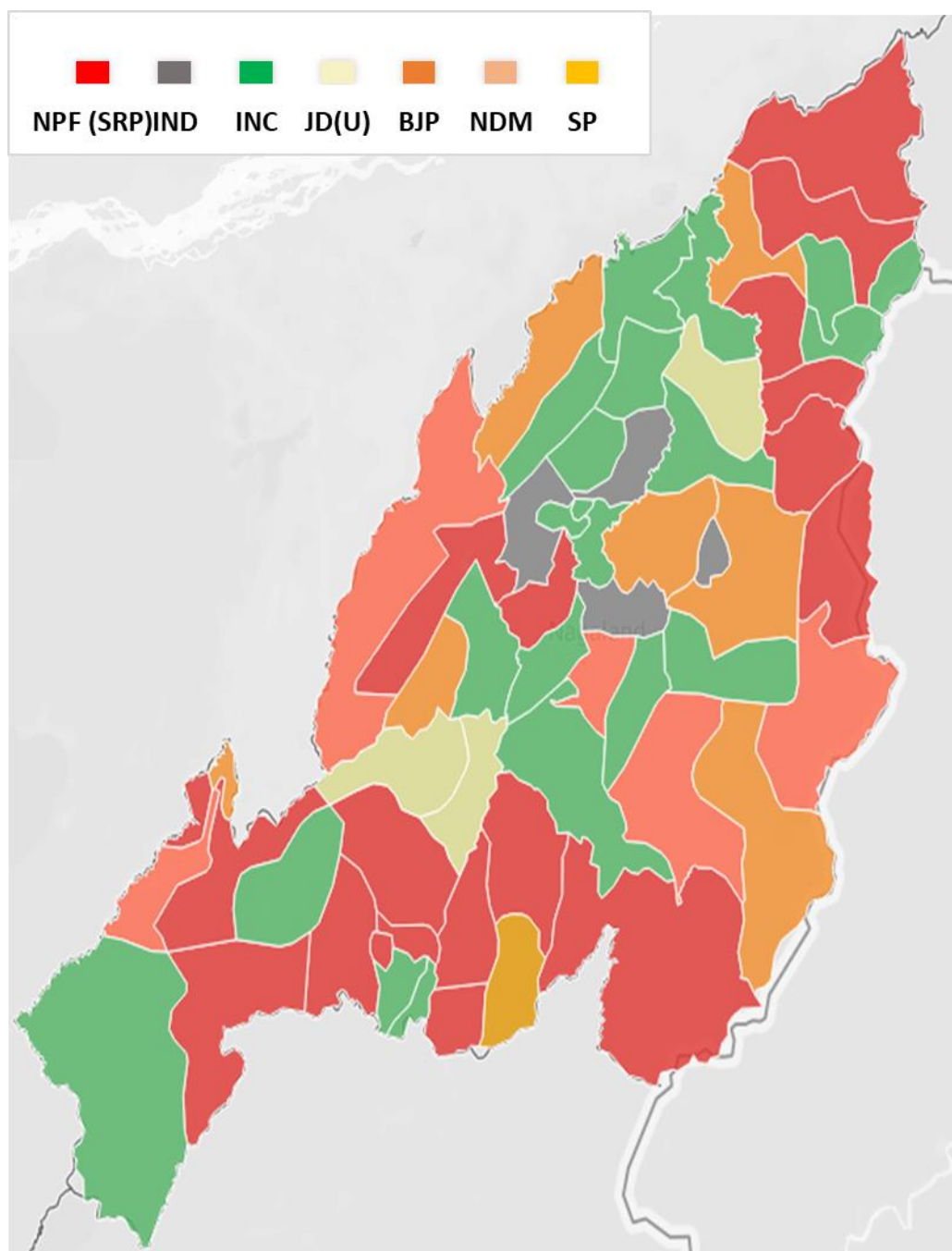
¹⁵ 'Political Developments for Feb 26 Polls.' *Northeast Herald*, 2nd February, Kohima, 2003.

¹⁶ 'Battle Line Drawn Up, 225 Candidates in Fray,' *Northeast Herald*, 11th February, Kohima, 2003.

Charts 5.1 & 5.2: Results of Tenth General Assembly Election, 2003



Map 5.1: Seat Share of Different Parties in 2003



Total Electorates = 10,14,880
Polling Percentage = 87.6%

Votes Polled = 8,88,761

SOURCE: Government of Nagaland, '*Report on the 10th General Elections to the Nagaland Legislative Assembly, 2003*,' Chief Electoral Officer, Kohima, 2003.

On February 26, 2003, elections were held to determine the members of the Tenth Nagaland Legislative Assembly. This election took place as peace negotiations between the leaders of the NSCN (IM) and the government of India were taking place in New Delhi.¹⁷ The total number of candidates in the fray was 225, in which the parties from outside the state fielded 127 candidates and the parties from within the state fielded 81 candidates. There were 17 independent candidates in the fray. The polling percentage of this election was 87.6%. Out of the 60 seats, the INC secured 21 seats with 35.9% of votes polled, the NPF won 19 seats securing 29.8% of vote share, the BJP won 7 seats with 10.9% of vote share, NDM won 5 seats with 9.5% of votes polled, independents won 4 seats with 4.4% of votes polled, JD (U) secured 3 seats with 5.8% of vote share and finally the SAP won 1 seat with only 1.2% of vote share. In spite of the efforts during election, parties like NCP, AITC, RLD and NDP could not secure even a single seat in the assembly.¹⁸ After almost two decades, the state again headed for a 'hung assembly' as no party secured a clear majority in the Assembly.

The election result went quite contrary to the expectation of the ruling Congress (I) party, which secured only 21 seats out of the total 60 seats. Besides becoming the single largest party in the assembly, it could not garner support from the other parties to form a government. The NPF which secured 19 seats in the Assembly was raised to 21 when the NDM, before the formation of the government left their parent party and joined the NPF.¹⁹ The winning of the BJP in seven constituencies enabled them to 'prove' the party's stand that BJP is not a pro-Hindu political party. One notable feature of this election was that it brought a decade rule of the Congress (I) regime in the state to an end, paving the way to power for the opposition parties. NPF, although lacking the clear majority, managed to mobilize other opposition parties including the independents and successfully dethroned the Jamir government. Play of politics on tribal line was also seen in this election. Looking at the candidates from various

¹⁷ Chandrika Singh, *Naga Politics: A Critical Account*, op. cit. p.199.

¹⁸ Government of Nagaland, *Report on the 10th General Elections to the Nagaland Legislative Assembly, 2003*, Chief Electoral Officer, Kohima, 2003. pp.241-243

¹⁹ Chandrika Singh, *Naga Politics: A Critical Account*, p.203.

constituencies, one could see that members of the dominant tribes of the area were the contestants and winners, especially the regions where there are mixed tribal compositions. These patterns also demonstrated that it was significantly tribal affiliation and not party affiliation that determined the outcome of the elections.²⁰

The DAN government, a conglomeration of various national and regional political parties was formed under the leadership of Neiphiu Rio, who was sworn in at Raj Bhavan on 6th March 2003. The government, which had the support of 38 members out of a total of 60 members in the house, was made up of all of the DAN constituents, including the NPF, BJP, NDM, JD (U), and the Samata party, in addition to four members who were independent. There were 22 ministers of Cabinet rank and 6 ministers of state working under Mr. Rio's leadership in the ministry.²¹

Nationalist Democratic Movement (NDM)

Another powerful regional outfit that emerged during the new millennium was the Nationalist Democratic Movement (NDM) under the renowned leadership of K.L. Chishi, former Chief Minister of Nagaland. One of the main agendas of NDM is to highlight the “mis-rule” of the Congress Government in Nagaland. Like NPF, the NDM also puts its strong resentment against the Congress party under the leadership of S.C. Jamir for deferring developments in the state. It fought corruption and misgovernment. In a press release statement, the NDM Youth Wing President N. Yhome, had levelled corruption charges against the Jamir government saying dilapidated roads, hospitals, schools and poor performance of every department bore the testimony of the Congress much touted slogan of making Nagaland a “model state” in the country.²² Thus, the NDM was formed to fight against the leadership of S.C. Jamir and his Congress government in the state.

Like the other political parties, the NDM in its election manifesto, promised that the party's top most priority would be to find a solution to the Naga political problem if it comes to power. Another promising commitment made by the party, was to fight

²⁰ Apuba K. Baruah and Rajesh Dev, *Ethnic Identities and Democracy: Electoral Politics in North East India*, op. cit. p.85.

²¹ Chandrika Singh, *Naga Politics: A Critical Account*, op. cit. pp.205-206.

²² ‘Political parties gearing up campaigns in Nagaland,’ *Northeast Herald*, 20 January, 2003. p.10.

against unemployment in the state. It made its first appearance in the 10th Assembly Election in 2003, by fielding 25 candidates. Out of this, only 5 of its candidates were elected. The NDM extended its support to other likeminded political parties and joined the Democratic Alliance of Nagaland under the leadership of Neiphiu Rio.

During the election, both the Congress (I) and the alliances of the DAN had given much preference to the solution of the Naga problem. The peaceful solution of the prolonged Naga issue through negotiations that was going on remained the central issue to attract the voters,²³ as it was the burning issue of the state. The leaders of the NSCN (IM) stayed away from the Congress leaders but their inclination was towards the leaders of the NPF and more recently towards the BJP. On the other hand, the leaders of the NSCN (K) have been sympathetic to the Congress under the leadership of S.C. Jamir.²⁴ The interference of the underground movements in the Tenth general election in Nagaland cannot be overlooked. Despite the vigilance and awareness of the Government, these forces worked to assist the candidates of their choice wherever they received opportunity.²⁵ More importantly, this election was taken as a show of revenge against the Congress party for its participation in the last election of 1998 and also the booklet published by the Congress leader S.C. Jamir, 'distorting Nagas history' as alleged by the NSCN-IM and the various other civil and non-political actors in the state. Another crucial political tactic employed by the NPF party was the highlighting of 'Greater Nagalim' and the backwardness of the Eastern region of the state. As argued by Amongla N Jamir, these two issues constituted the emotional dimension of electoral politics that came to dominate the state since the early parts of the decade.²⁶

²³ The Congress (I) claimed that it was their leaders who had taken the initiative to start negotiation with the underground leaders while the BJP along with the Janata Dal (U) and the Samata also claimed that it was their leaders who played vital role in giving push to the peace process and persuaded the leaders of the NSCN (IM) to have dialogue at New Delhi. See Chandrika Singh, *Naga Politics: A Critical Account*, op. cit. pp. 210-211.

²⁴ During the elections both the groups played their roles to assist the parties of their favour, which raised several controversial issues later on. S.C. Jamir, the leader of the Congress ((I) attributed the set back to interference in the election by the NSCN (IM) while the leaders of the NPF blamed the NSCN (K) of its interference in the elections. See *Ibid.*, p. 211.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

²⁶ Amongla N. Jamir, "Nagaland: Electoral Politics Amidst Insurgency," in *Party Competition in India States: Electoral Politics in Post-Congress Polity*, ed. Suhas Palshikar, K.C. Suri and Yogendra Yadav (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014), 338-339

This election would best be analysed in the background of the peace negotiation between the Government of India and one of the dominant underground groups, the NSCN (IM).²⁷ Muivah claimed that the former Chief Minister S.C. Jamir and the ruling Congress (I) were the two most significant impediments to the establishment of an enduring peace in Nagaland.²⁸ The image of the Congress (I) government as a corrupt one by opposition parties was another significant factor that contributed significantly to the party's defeat.²⁹ The misuse of large central funds poured in the state and the slow developments added to its unpopularity. This shows the subtle truth that Jamir was not favoured by the Naga masses. As mentioned elsewhere, one of the main reasons for the downfall of the Congress (I) was its participation in the 1998 election where the party went to the poll against the will of the Naga Hoho and the various NGOs. In addition to this, the publication of the booklet entitled 'Bedrock of Naga Society',³⁰ authored by S.C. Jamir, which was released in the name of the NPCC without consultation with fellow party men evoked wide public ridicule.³¹ It caused widespread criticism from the major players in Naga society like the Naga Hoho, student bodies, insurgent groups, and sections of the intelligentsia. This not only damaged the party's popularity among the Naga masses, but also led to the resignation of its strong party member and Home Minister, Neiphiu Rio from the ministry. Neiphiu described Jamir's style of functioning as "autocratic" and "one-family rule" and expressed his lack of confidence in his leadership.³² The resignation of Higher and Technical Education minister Prof. T. Chuba and NPCC vice president Imkong L. Imchen, and also the expelling of Power Minister, Therie for his anti-party activities from the ministry, further weakened the party's position.³³ Adding to everything, the decision of Jamir to give tickets to 18 new

²⁷ This has bearing not only as a political issue determining the future path of Naga politics and society but also because these 'underground elements' play significant roles in determining electoral outcomes. See Rajesh Dev, 'Nagaland; More Space for Democratic Politics,' op. cit. p.1637.

²⁸ Kalyan Chaudhari, 'Territory Tussles,' *Frontline*, Chennai, 28th February, 2003, p.19.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.19.

³⁰ The booklet sought to question the reality of the claim that "Nagas were an independent nation since time immemorial" and emphasised the fact that it was the 16th-point agreement that laid the foundation of a 'collective Naga' society and identity. Rajesh Dev, 'Nagaland; More Space for Democratic Politics,' op. cit. p. 1639.

³¹ Kops Krome, 'Rio Quits. Who is Next?,' *North-East Sun*, Guwahati, October, 2002, p.11.

³² *Ibid.*, p.11.

³³ 'Minister, Cong Vice-President, MLAs Resign,' *Northeast Herald*, 20th January, Kohima, 2003.

faces who had no political background did not go well with other political leaders and the public. Jamir was accused of nepotism and most of Jamir's choices were rejected.³⁴

In the midst of the blame game amongst political leaders, effective leadership within political parties took a back seat, as leaders accused one another of corruption and other unethical conduct, and negating the populace idea of Nagas' history. This period is distinguished by the leadership crisis of S.C Jamir in the eyes of the Naga masses, and had significant effects on the electoral politics of the state. This led to the loss of faith and confidence in the leadership of S. C Jamir, making people seek and anticipate a change in their leader and a new government. Other political leaders in general and Neiphiu Rio in particular saw this as golden opportunity to topple Jamir's decade long reign in the state electoral politics. They worked tirelessly, campaigning against Jamir's leadership, questioning his loyalties towards Naga problem when his book 'Bedrock of Naga Society,' was published, and eventually succeeded in overthrowing him and formed a new coalition government.

An informal interaction was with an elder at Kohima district

In his³⁵ words:

"I must say that despite my support for Nagas' fight for independence, bringing electoral politics to Nagaland was good to some extent- it stopped the waging war between Indian armies and Naga armies and we could get some normalcy with democratic system of government. Since then, the political affairs of our state have been rocky and bit messy. Congress, a national party set its foot in the electoral politics of Nagaland during the peak of regional reign. In my personal opinion, the reason why Congress was able to win the confidence of the people and held power for more than a decade, was because of

1. Affiliation with the centre, 2. the charismatic leadership of S. C Jamir and how he, with the help and advice from the centre, was able to

³⁴ 'Congress Regime Ends After Ten Years,' *Northeast Herald*, 3rd March, Kohima, 2003.

³⁵ 85-year-old male, Village elder who has lived to witness the changing in the patterns of elections over the years- an informal interaction on 25th May 2018

tactfully play his role. But of course, as was expected in politics, many differences were cropping up between party leaders from our observations. Jamir's shortcomings began to crop up- he was accused of negating Nagas' history. This was also the time when people start to lose their hope and faith in the leadership of Jamir, which unfortunately led to his downfall."

Another informal conversation with an individual who claimed to have closely followed all political happenings in the state provided insight into how the people of Nagaland viewed the entire political drama in Nagas' election politics.

In his³⁶ words:

"I've always been interested in politics in general, but I've chosen not to become personally involved. The Naga political landscape has always been extremely chaotic, leaving little room for anything but disappointments. Too many things to say, but no words to express them. I would want to remark briefly that all the political games our state's political leaders continue to play are for their own self-interest. I concur that politics are often filthy, but the muck our Naga political leaders create is obscene. On the one hand, one cannot help but admire S.C. Jamir's charismatic leadership, which enabled him to remain in power for so long, yet, like other political leaders, he is not without flaws. Politics of defection, excessive use of money, and other sorts of corruption have become the defining characteristics of Nagas electoral politics. From the beginning till the present – even recent election this year March 2018- no change, just words"

From the narrative, one might discern the public's discontent with the political leadership's political maneuvering. In spite of this, it will never allow political parties or leaders to cease their efforts to overthrow their opponent, and they will employ all means necessary to seize power for themselves.

³⁶ 60-year-old male who closely follows political developments at the state- an informal interaction on 25th May 2018 at Kohima

Neiphiu Rio and the other opposition leaders were responsible for the NPF's victory against the Congress (I) through their leadership of the DAN coalition. Numerous associates of S.C. Jamir, such as Neiphiu Rio, and other veterans of Naga politics, such as Vizol, joined the NPF, which resulted in its enormous power. By challenging the real existence and function of statehood, the NPF gradually introduced self-determination to the political agenda. While asking for unity among the different Naga tribes, the NPF emphasized the role of the INC and Jamir in sowing discord among the tribes.³⁷

Despite successfully dethroning SC Jamir's government, Neiphiu Rio government (DAN) could not complete its full term of office. Just before the completion of its term, a no confidence motion was passed against the DAN government by the opposition party Congress-led Nagaland Progressive Alliance on 13th December 2007, in the Assembly session. The political upheaval was kicked off on May 30, 2007, when 22 MLAs from the DAN handed a letter to the Governor informing him that they had decided to withdraw their support to the Neiphiu Rio government.

The very next day, ten of Neiphiu Rio's 22 MLAs expressed their recommitment to supporting his leadership of the party.³⁸ The crisis worsened in September when four NPF MLAs, Z. Obed, K. Therie, Vatsu Meru and Yeangphong, resigned from the Assembly, bringing the effective strength of the House of Representatives down to 60 members from its previous level. Consequently, a series of resignations and defections followed.³⁹ Another six NPF MLAs submitted their resignations just a day before the 'no-trust' motion was taken up. The senior legislator of the ruling DAN, Huska Sumi, withdrew his support for the Neiphiu-led DAN government and claimed that the alliance had failed on all fronts, that the regular factional clashes were political issues, and that the policy of "equi-closeness" had led to fratricides and the destruction of properties in the state. Huska Sumi was a member of the DAN. In addition to this, he blamed the state's Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio for the failure of political negotiations

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.1639.

³⁸ Sushanta Talukdar, 'Unrest in the Hills,' www.hinduonnet.com. Page Viewed on 26/02/09.

³⁹ *Ibid.*,

and the Common Minimum Programme in the state, as well as for the misappropriation of finances.⁴⁰

All these reduced the house to a minority where the political stability of the Nagaland government was put under a cloud. As a result of the legislators' resignations, the Congress tabled a motion of no confidence against the government of Rio. However, the Speaker of the Congress ruled in favour of the government and pointed out that the votes of the legislators who resigned could not be counted. Commenting on the situation, the Governor said that "All these actions pointed to growing instability in the Assembly. This situation reflected that the members elected by people were going by self-interest rather than interest of the people they represent."⁴¹ It was made abundantly evident that the Assembly, which has as many as 13 vacant seats as a result of a series of defections and resignations that have been prevalent, is incapable of forming a stable government. In response to this, the Governor of Nagaland, K. Shankara Narayanan, stated that there was no other choice but to impose President's Rule in accordance with the terms of Article 356 and allow the state to have new elections for the legislature.⁴²

As a direct result of these happenings, on January 3, 2008, the state of Nagaland was placed under the President's Rule for the fourth time. This occurred after the seven-month-long political drama reached its peak in the Legislative Assembly.⁴³ After President Pratibha Patil signed the proclamation for the installation of central authority in the state of Nagaland, the Niephiu Rio government in Nagaland was removed from office, and the assembly was placed in a state of suspended animation. Rio, who survived a 'controversial no-confidence motion'⁴⁴, said that "such move will be illegal and unconstitutional as I have come to power only after being elected democratically

⁴⁰ 'Another DAN MLA withdraws support,' www.webindia123.com. Page viewed on 14/02/09.

⁴¹ Sushanta Talukdar, 'Unrest in the Hills,' op.cit.

⁴² *President's Rule was necessary for Nagaland: Governor,* www.topnews.in. Page viewed on 03/04/08.

⁴³ *Ibid.*,

⁴⁴ The motion was defeated by 23-19 in the 60-member House on December 13 after the speaker barred three independents from taking part in the voting and held that the votes of nine dissidents were invalid as they went against the party whip. See Onkar Singh, 'Centre recommends President's rule in Nagaland,' New Delhi, www.rediffnews.com Page viewed on 04/02/09.

and my government has won the trust vote in Nagaland assembly on December 13.”⁴⁵ The spokesman of BJP said that the President’s Rule was done “to manipulate and influence the forthcoming elections where the Congress is in disarray,”⁴⁶

In Nagaland, the period of the Emergency was the first time that President's Rule was imposed. After the Congress government, led by Hokishe Sema, was reduced to a minority in 1987, the President Rule again took command. In 1992, the Nagaland People's Council government was toppled by the central government led by Rajiv Gandhi.⁴⁷ Many political leaders were not happy with the imposition of President's Rule so close to the Assembly election, seeing it as yet another example of the Congress' attempts to seize power in Nagaland by toppling elected governments. For the 2008 Assembly elections, the NPF and the BJP made the imposition of President's Rule a central platform of their campaign, emphasizing that the partnership will campaign with Rio as the alliance leader.⁴⁸ The President’s Rule imposed continued for two months till the next Assembly election was held.

In many of my casual conversations, frustrations and disappointments may be heard. One of my below exchanges is a reflection of several others.

In his⁴⁹ words:

“Consider our political leaders! Who, in your opinion, is truly concerned with the public's wellbeing, given that all they care about is their own power, position, and wealth, and that the genuine purpose of the state and the meaning of their leadership have been discarded? The politics of defection in the state is such a disgrace - three terms of President's reign is no laughing matter - and yet these politicians continue to believe they are the sole saviors of the state. Same promises they employ to deceive the people during elections; too chaotic and corrupt. The public is similarly naive and naïve, continually falling into

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*,

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*,

⁴⁷ ‘Nagaland Government Under Siege,’ www.assamtimes.org Page viewed on 01/07/08.

⁴⁸ Sushanta Talukdar, ‘Unrest in the Hills,’ op. cit.

⁴⁹ 70 year old Male from Kohima Village- informal interaction on 18th February 2016 at Kohima

the leaders' traps for the money, of course. There are no positives in this political game"

The political climate appears to be dominated by blame games, with nothing to learn from this election.

Eleventh State Assembly Election (2008)

The Eleventh Assembly election to the Nagaland Legislative Assembly was scheduled on 3rd January, 2008, to elect 60 legislators, as declared by the Election Commission of India.⁵⁰ However, the election took place on 5th March, 2008. Like the previous election, the main contest was between the Congress (I) and the strong regional party NPF led DAN. The poll run up in this election witnessed some turbulence due to the fall of the Neiphiu Rio-led DAN government.⁵¹ Before the poll, the NPF formally declared that the party's first and foremost agenda in the election will be to find a solution to the Naga problem.⁵² Rio assured the people that the regional party will address local problems and issues and further stated that NPF was fighting the elections on three main issues – Naga political issue, the imposition of President's Rule, and developmental activities. The NPF, BJP, NCP and JD (U) forged a pre-poll alliance under Democratic Alliance of Nagaland to contest the 11th general elections to Nagaland Legislative Assembly and also to form the DAN government.⁵³ Like every election, this time too, all political parties tried to cash in on the unresolved Naga political conflict and promised to exert pressure on the centre for a peaceful resolution of the problem. Another notable feature was the presence of four women candidates in the fray. However, none of the women contestants won the election. A total of 31 election Observers, 20 General Observers and eleven Expenditure Observers had overseen the election process in various districts. A total of 43,000 security force personnel had been deployed, including those from the Assam Rifles, CRPF, BSF,

⁵⁰ www.jeetegakaun.in/nagalandelections2008. Page viewed on 05/06/08.

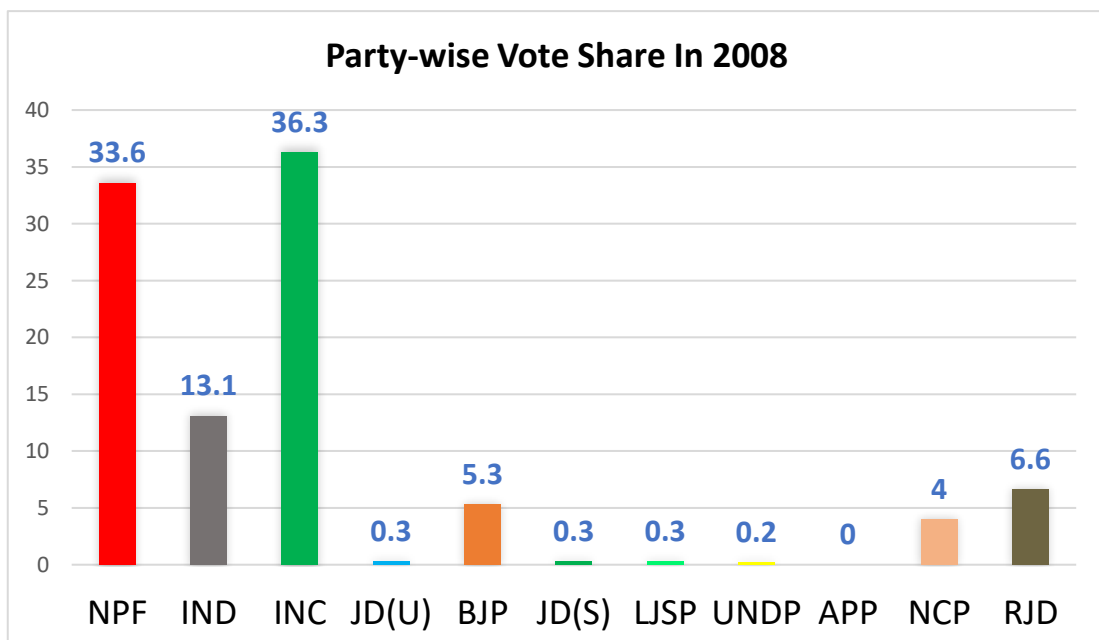
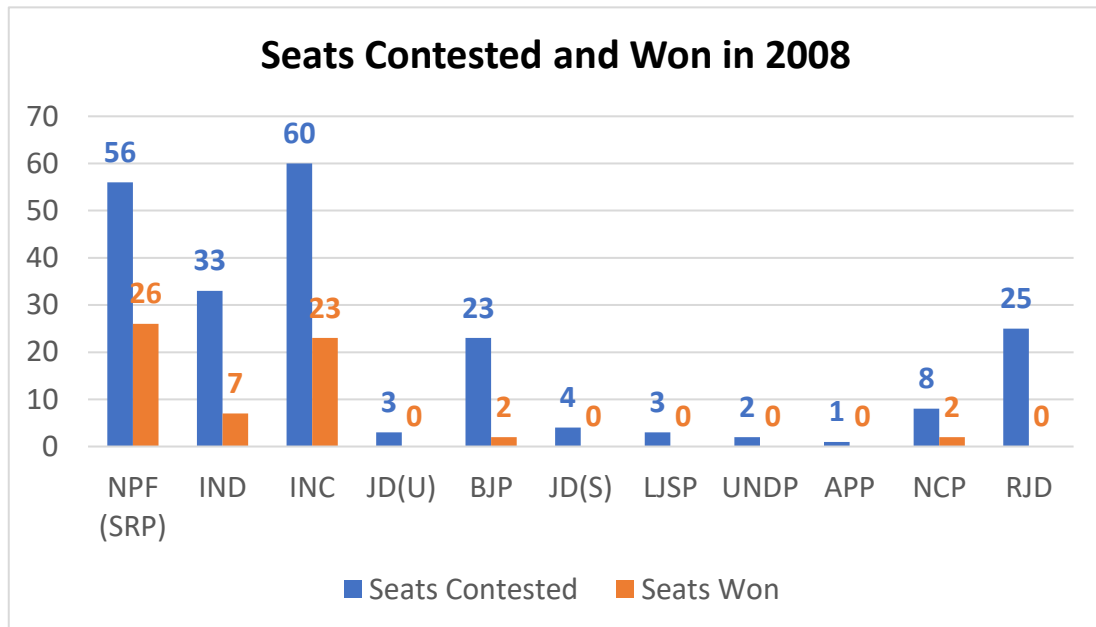
⁵¹ Sahil Nagpal, 'Nagaland gears up for Assembly elections,' www.topnews.in Page viewed on 23/08/08

⁵² *Ibid.*,

⁵³ 'NPF, BJP, NCP, JD (U), forge pre-poll alliance,' *Eastern Mirror*, 25th February, 2008.

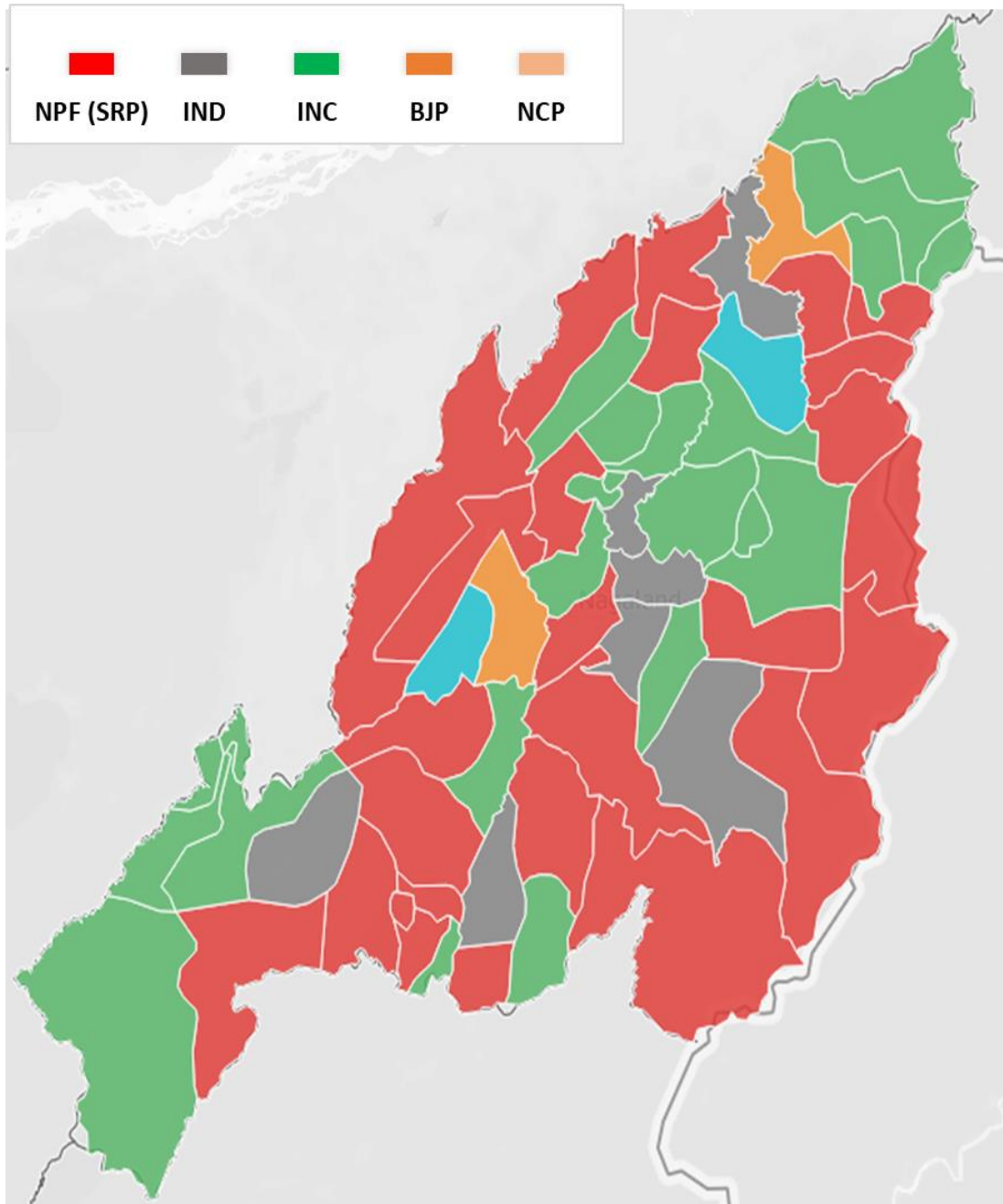
Indian Reserve Battalion, besides over 10,000 state police, 500 Home Guards and 5,800 village guards.⁵⁴

Charts 5.3 & 5.4: Results of Eleventh General Assembly Election, 2008



⁵⁴ 'Nagaland polls: Cong leads with 19 seats; Dan 23 seats,' www.oneindia.com Page viewed on 03/01/09.

Map 5.2: Seat Share of Different Parties in 2008



Total Electorates = 13,02,266
Polling Percentage = 87%

Votes Polled = 11,33,221

SOURCE: Government of Nagaland, *'Report on the 11th General Elections to the Nagaland Legislative Assembly, 2008'*, Chief Electoral Officer, Kohima, 2008.

Like the previous 2003 election, there were 10 political parties that contested the election. Out of these, three national parties INC, BJP, NCP and seven regional parties two (NPF, UNDP) from within the state and five (RJD, JD (U), JD (S), LJP, APP) from outside the state. There were a total number of 218 candidates in the fray and the total number of voters in the electorate was 13,02,266. The number of candidates fielded by the different parties in the election fray were as follows; INC – 60, BJP – 23, NCP – 8, RJD – 25, JD (U) – 3, JD (S)- 4, LJP – 3, APP – 1, NPF – 56, UNDP – 2.

Altogether, there were 33 independent candidates in the fray. The peoples mandate went to the regional party NPF when the result of the 60 constituencies to constitute the Nagaland Assembly was declared. The NPF bettered its result of 2003 of 19 by winning 26 seats in March 5 polls and became the single largest party with 33.6% of votes polled. It was followed by the Congress (I) with 23 seats having the largest percentage of vote share at 36.3%. The BJP and the NCP had to be satisfied with two seats each with the former gaining 5.3% of the vote share and the latter with 4% of vote share. The seven remaining seats were taken by the independent candidates with 13.1% of votes polled.⁵⁵ The parties who have made their maiden entry in the state's election like the JD (S), RJD, APP and LJP could not garner even a single seat in the assembly. Most constituencies witnessed direct fights between Congress and the NPF. As no party could get a clear majority, the state again witnessed a hung assembly.

The NPF-led DAN alliance came together to form the government with their pre-poll commitments. The DAN had the support of four independents and two members each from the BJP and NCP. The union cabinet revoked the President's Rule on 12th March 2008, to pave way for the formation of the new government.⁵⁶ On the same day, the Governor K. Sankaranarayanan administered the oath of office and secrecy to Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio and eleven other cabinet ministers in the presence of opposition members, bureaucrats and other government officials at the Darbar Hall, Raj Bhavan.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Government of Nagaland, '*Report on the 11th General Elections to the Nagaland Legislative Assembly, 2008*', Chief Electoral Officer, Kohima, 2008.

⁵⁶ '*President's Rule in Nagaland revoked*', www.thaindia.com Page viewed on 20/01/09.

⁵⁷ '*Resurgent DAN takes office*', *Eastern Mirror*, 12th March, 2008.

Of the 12 ministers, eight belonged to NPF, one each to NCP and BJP and one independent. Besides these, 13 Parliamentary Secretaries were also appointed to assist the Chief Minister in various departments.⁵⁸

The use of money and muscle power played no less a role in the 2008 election. Heavy proxy voting was reported from many areas around the state with votes carrying varying rates. It made democracy a mockery through rampant rigging, voter impersonation, booth capturing and even coups taking place in some polling booths.⁵⁹ It was observed that proxy votes were worth the maximum this time round. In the state capital Kohima, it was learnt that a proxy vote cost Rs 100 in the early part of the day which doubled up by noon. It later went up to Rs 500 and reached the Rs 1000 mark by late afternoon. The commercial hub of the state Dimapur saw heavy trading in votes with each costing Rs 1000 plus, according to reports. However, the costliest transactions took place in Mokokchung Town, where every proxy vote was reportedly paid Rs 10,000 in the latter part of the polling day.⁶⁰ Harsh reality of the election in Nagaland was the role of money in different assembly constituencies, damaging the image of democracy. These patterns have been present since the beginning of electoral politics in Nagaland. Both the major contenders INC and the NPF shared that the election was not a free and fair and which were reflected the allegations made against each other. Sanjib Buruah mentioned that: "...in Nagaland, it is said that during elections when political parties distribute money to buy votes, acceptance of that money is seen as legitimate since it involves only 'Indian Toka' (Indian money) not 'Naga Toka' (Naga money)."⁶¹

It was expected that the election would be free and fair, but the picture was different when the use of money and muscle power dominated the electioneering process. Almost all political parties and their candidates practiced dishonest means to obtain power. Even the underground factions NSCN (IM) and NSCN (K) despite publicly announcing not to intervene in the election process, still influenced the electioneering

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*,

⁵⁹ 'Latest buzz: 'How much did you earn?' *Eastern Mirror*, 6th March, 2008.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*,

⁶¹ U.A. Shimray, '*Elections in Naga Hills: Some Reflections*,' www.kanglaonline.com Page viewed on 11/03/09.

process by using their force.⁶² The Nationalist Democratic Movement (NDM) described the overall election scenario as “gross and total violation of the established law and justice.”⁶³ According to the editorial of the Nagaland Post (February 27, 2003) “elections have once again proved that along with money and muscle or gun power, other elements such as inter-village feuds, communal inter-tribal prejudices and a rebellious spirit, has turned the democratic process into a farcical exercise.” On the growing higher percentage of poll, the editorial of Nagaland Post further remarked that “such high voters' turnout was mainly due to booth capturing or voter impersonation, the practice which all political parties engaged during this election and the claim to be clean in this regard....is rather shameful. All the appeals made during the election rallies and the manifestos of various political parties disappeared into thin air or into the dustbin while monocracy rules during election....no manifesto or poll pledge is worth even listening to unless the political parties make a commitment to curb the menace of money, 'gunda' or gun power.”⁶⁴

Although the use of money to influence elections in any nation or state is unethical and forbidden by law of the country, the data shows the rampant use of money during Nagaland elections. Political leaders, in their quest to get hold their spot in power indiscriminately use money on their supporters to assure themselves of their positions. An informal conversation with a party member in the village shed light on Nagaland's political politics and how the use of money, rather than brute force, is becoming increasingly accepted as part of the election system.

In his⁶⁵ words:

“It is mind-boggling how much money is spent during elections; nowadays, with social media and newspapers, people are becoming more conscious, but the manner in which politicians spend money during elections is astounding. The leaders of political parties amass funds throughout their terms in office, which they subsequently

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 212.

⁶³ *Nagaland Post*, 3rd March, Kohima, 2003.

⁶⁴ *Nagaland Post*, 27th February, 2003.

⁶⁵ 50 years old Male, party member- an interaction regarding use of money during elections. Interaction date: 25th February 2016 at Kohima Village

employ during the subsequent election. In Nagaland, money drives politics more than anything else. As a former member of many political parties, I can now assert that the public is as corrupt as politicians. What I hear most often from them is, "These political leaders have stolen from us and used our money, so at least during elections, let us obtain as much money as possible" - the public is fed up with false promises and frustrated, yet unable to refrain from engaging in dirty electoral games. As party members, we witness the true faces of the people during elections; some seek to take advantage of the political leaders who are indiscriminately throwing money to buy their way back into power. The election in Nagaland resembles 'Money election'."

Because of the election irregularities, re-polling was done in 43 booths across the state. On the other hand, despite the declaration of the underground factions not to be involved in the state election, they still played a significant role in the electoral process. The use of brute force in one form or the other appears to be one of the most important platforms and agents for attaining the aims of political parties and party leaders in general in the history of Nagas electoral politics. Every political party leader has a connection to at least one insurgent organization, and they utilize their presence and support during elections. During my casual and informal encounters with the public, I have heard several accounts of individuals' negative experiences with the underground during elections.

In their⁶⁶ words:

"In Nagaland, political parties are usually associated with the underground in some way or the other. Based on our prior experiences, the undergrounds would be present during elections to ensure that the politicians they favor receive the most votes possible. During this session, we had even observed clashes and arguments, but everyone is

⁶⁶ A group of men in their mid-50s whom I had discussion regarding elections in their village- 25th February 2016 at Kohima Village

terrified of guns and few would have the courage to speak out against them, even if they are wrong. In the contemporary political climate, money talks louder than muscle during elections, although in the past, political parties were often backed by a certain group and managed to maintain their position in power struggles. It is not as obvious, but we cannot dispute its continued existence in some form or another.”

The imposition of the President's Rule in the state proved to be a great setback for the Congress (I) as many supporters turned their heads against the party. Nagas were apprehensive of the four times imposition of the President's Rule in the state. This in a way gave an opportunity to regional party NPF to take hold of the situation and lambast the Congress (I) party which imposed President's Rule at the behest of the centre. Terming the imposition of President's Rule as a shock to the people, Neiphiu Rio said, “We all know who brought President's Rule to Nagaland”. India claims to be the biggest democracy in the world but it failed to apply justice to the people of Nagaland, adding that the Nagas have a unique history and identity and NPF, as a regional party, had always stood for and will continue to fight for the rights of the Nagas. He also reminded that Nagas had suffered so much at the hands of Army Rule in the past and that Naga people will not take kindly to the Congress for imposition of President's Rule for their narrow political gains at the cost of the Naga people.⁶⁷ The NPCC president Hokheto Sumi also admitted that the party's main debacle was because of the imposition of the President's Rule in the state. He also disclosed that the Congress could not “capitalise certain issues under certain circumstances.”⁶⁸ Rokonicha, a former Congressman, also resigned from the party, holding it responsible for bringing President's Rule in the state. Many political leaders took a major hit when President's Rule was imposed just months before Assembly elections. The scenario and the Congress's goal to overturn elected government in Nagaland were seen as anti-people and a ruse to seize power in the state.

⁶⁷ ‘Rio castigates Congress for targeting minorities’, *Eastern Mirror*, 5th February, 2008.

⁶⁸ ‘PR affected Congress in polls: NPCC’, *Nagaland Post*, 14th March, 2008.

On the other hand, the distribution of party tickets had left several Congress stalwarts out in the limbo. The resentment was felt across the rank and file of the party with several aspirants either deciding to contest on NPF, BJP, JD (U), RJD, independent tickets and disillusioned party workers, joining other parties etc. The initial wave in favour of the Congress appears to have diminished to some extent in view of disgruntlement within. Most Congress workers seemed disappointed when the party decided to field several former NPF members.⁶⁹ The distribution of party tickets had boomeranged on the party.

Another important factor for the Congress (I) party's debacle was the leadership crisis from within. The tussle for leadership among the Congress party leaders, indirectly gave an upper hand to the regional party NPF. The party was having four to five ministerial candidates. To this, the former Parliamentary Secretary and official NPF candidate from 20 Meluri A.C. Yitachu pointed out that "Congress is today, campaigning in different districts projecting different persons as their next chief ministerial candidate. In Phek, the Congress is saying that K. Therie will be the next CM, in Zunheboto, Tokheho, Dimapur - K.L. Chishi, Mon, Chingwang, Kohima - Z. Obed and in Mokokchung - I. Imkong".⁷⁰ The Congress party was also accused for being a puppet of the central government taking each and every decision from the central high command. The lack of coordination in the Congress camp was also evident from the poll campaign as candidates were left to fight the battle on their own.⁷¹ The NPF on the other hand proclaimed that the regional party NPF, is the only ideal party for the state in identifying the local issues and problems. The advantages of regional parties, especially in taking decisions which did not seek any approval from the central high command, got the attention of the people. Lohe,⁷² while addressing media persons mentioned that the infighting among the Congress party leaders and the arbitrary decision of the central high command will surely give other political parties a better

⁶⁹ 'Parties gears up for polls', *Nagaland Post*, 9th February, 2008.

⁷⁰ S. Daiho Mao, 'Cong has forgotten the Naga issue once again: Rio', *Eastern Mirror*, 19th February, 2008.

⁷¹ Xavier Rutsa, 'Speculations of Hung house', *Nagaland Post*, 6th March, 2008.

⁷² A heavy weight Congress member and one of the senior party leader, was denied party tickets for the assembly election 2008 from his hometown Chizami A/C and the same was given to Deo Nukhu who defected from the JD (U). See. 'Crisis in Cong will give NPF upper hand: Z. Lohe', *Eastern Mirror*, 4th February, 2008.

position in the election.⁷³ Many non-Congress leaders shared that the regional party NPF suits the people best as it identifies with the Naga people and all decisions pertaining to the state can be taken by themselves rather than approaching the centre. Reminding the voters of Nagaland that regionalism and coalition has come to stay, Neiphiu Rio maintained that due to over centralisation of power by the party high command and due to the large presence of sycophants and opportunists in the party hierarchy, the Congress party has degenerated.⁷⁴ The NPF's ability to hold the coalition partners strong and the successful tenure of the 2003 election, incited a new era of hope and faith among the Naga people that enabled it to get the popular support in the 2008 election.

Nagaland Assembly Elections 2013

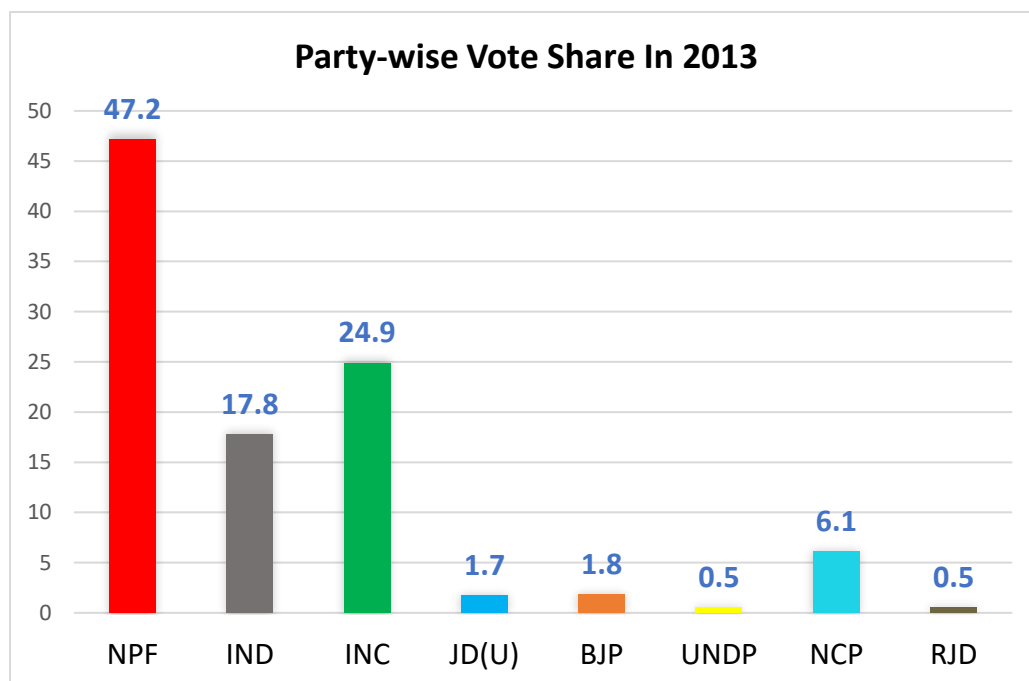
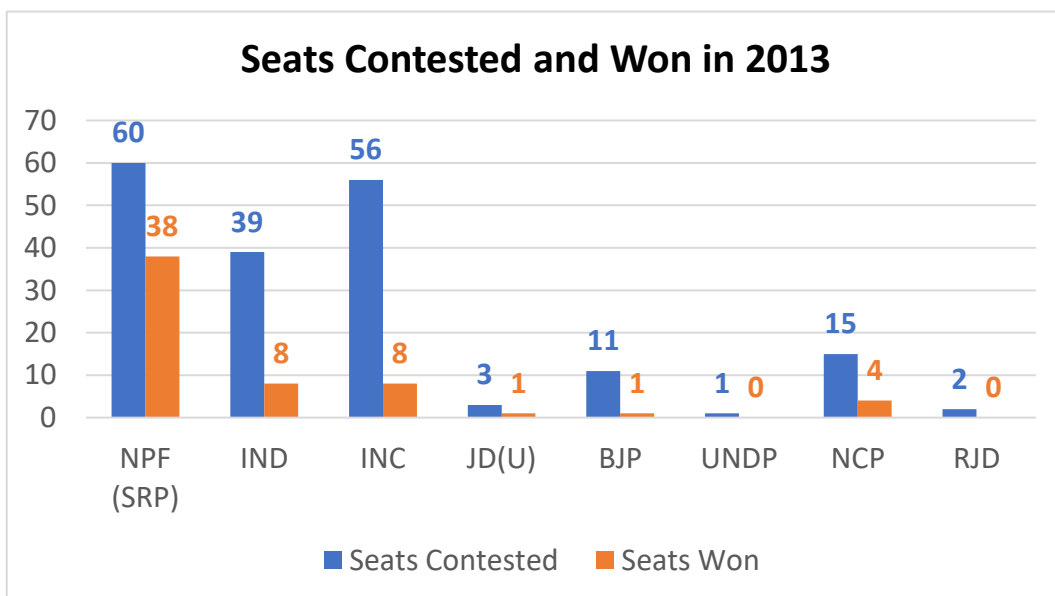
With the authority of the 11th Nagaland Legislative Assembly, formed as a result of the February 2008 elections, terminating on 10 March 2013, the Election Commission of India (ECI) called for a fresh election from all the 60 Assembly Constituencies in Nagaland on 23 February 2013. This led to the election of the Members of the 12th Nagaland Legislative Assembly through the one-day election. The polls witnessed the contest of 187 candidates across the 60 assembly seats. With close to 91 percent turnout the 2013 elections saw an increase in turnout by 4 percent over the previous 2008 elections⁷⁵.

⁷³ *Ibid.*,

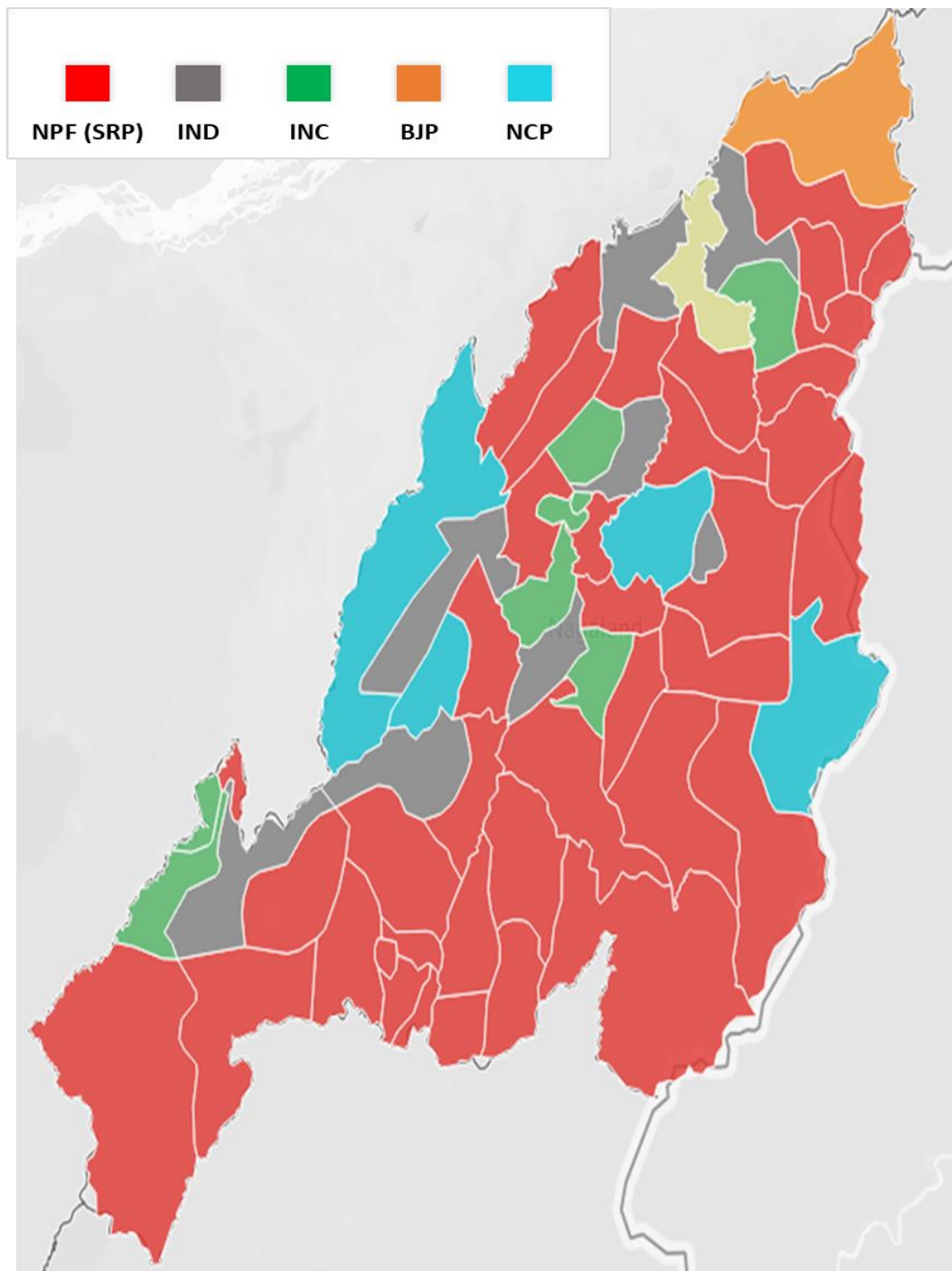
⁷⁴ 'Give befitting reply to Cong: Rio', *Eastern Mirror*, 27th February, 2008.

⁷⁵ ECI, Election Commission of India, *Statistical Report on General Election, 2013 to the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland*, 2013, New Delhi
https://eci.gov.in/eci_main/StatisticalReports/AE2013/StatisticalReport_2013_NL.pdf

Charts 5.5 & 5.6: Results of Twelfth General Assembly Election, 2013



Map 5.3: Map of Seats Won by Different Parties, 2013



Total Electorates = 11,93,384

Votes Polled = 10,92,294

Polling Percentage = 91.5%

SOURCE: Government of Nagaland, *'Report on the 12th General Elections to the Nagaland Legislative Assembly, 2013'*, Chief Electoral Officer, Kohima, 2013.

Results – Vote share and Representativeness

The elections to the 60-member state assembly saw the ruling coalition the Democratic Alliance of Nagaland (DAN) led by its major constituent the Nagaland People's Front (NPF) retain its hold at the state level for a third consecutive term with a majority of 65 percent of the assembly seats. The NPF increased its tally by 11 seats from the 2008 elections by securing a total of 38 assembly seats⁷⁶. It also managed to secure a clear majority with the assembly requiring 31 seats for a majority to stake claim to form the government. The other major national parties that are part of the DAN, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Janata Dal-United (JD-U) won one seat each.

The opposition Indian National Congress (INC) managed to retain only eight of the 23 seats it had won in the 2008 elections, reducing its strength by nearly two-thirds from the outgoing assembly. The INC's ally the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) bettered its previous position of two seats from the 2008 elections to a total of four seats in 2013⁷⁷. Altogether, the NPF obtained 47.2 percent of the popular vote, while the INC managed to secure nearly 24.9 percent of the votes cast. Independents who also witnessed a rise in their gains at the 2013 election compared to the 2008 election, took nearly 17.8 percent of the vote, securing 8 seats. The balance 10 percent was divided among the NCP, BJP, JD-U, (in that order)⁷⁸. The Rashtriya Janata Dal and the United Naga Democratic Party (UNDP) while managing to secure 1 percent of the popular vote did not secure any seat in the 2013 election.

In terms of the individual popular leaders in Nagaland, the incumbent Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio won the Northern Angami II seat by defeating the Congress candidate Kevise Sogotsu by 12,671 votes, which was also the highest margin in the 2013 Nagaland elections⁷⁹.

⁷⁶ ECI, Election Commission of India, '*Statistical Report on General Election, 2013 to the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland*', 2013.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*,

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*,

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*,

Campaign Issues – The Naga Issue

Through the period leading to the elections, the NPF positioned itself as the party devoted to finding a just and reasonable resolution to the Naga issue. In the process, it gained the implicit support of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Isak Muivah (NSCN-IM). The Naga peace process was the key issue in the 2013 Nagaland Assembly Elections⁸⁰. The risk of depending on the plank of politics of development was avoided by the incumbent party, the NPF, since such an agenda would have caused a furore among the electorate. Instead, it aimed its campaign on projecting itself as the party that would deliver on the Naga issue, since it was in alliance with the central authority- the BJP. In a well calculated move to divert from issues of social and economic development the NPF raked up the several decades running Naga issue by campaigning with the slogan of “Naga Solution before Election”. This has been a constant theme to bring down the legitimacy of the Congress which was seen to put the issue on the backburner, despite its many terms as the majority in the Nagaland Assembly.

The risk of betting on the politics of development was avoided by the ruling party, the NPF, as such an agenda would have been a keen topic of discussion among the electorate. Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphu Rio had also deftly toyed with the sentiment of the Naga people by branding Okram Ibobi Singh, the Chief Minister of Manipur as "one of the biggest enemies of the Naga people." It was also a clever ruse to pressure Congress into making a decision regarding the alleged Alternative Arrangement for the Nagas. As expected, on the eve of the elections, the majority of political parties engaged in mud-slinging.

Former Chief Minister and leader of the Congress party S.C. Jamir questioned if the Nagaland Assembly Elections or the peace negotiations were more important to the NSCN-IM. He claimed that Neiphu Rio and the chairman of the NSCN-IM, Thuingaleng Muivah, collaborated to deceive the Naga people by utilising the

⁸⁰ Pukhrem, Shristi, The 2013 Assembly Elections in the North-East, IDSA COMMENT, Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (MP-IDSA), March 22, 2013.
https://idsa.in/idsacomments/The2013AssemblyElectionsintheNorthEast_spukhrem_220313

campaign slogan "Naga Solution before Election" as the cornerstone of their platform. Neiphu Rio, for his part, accused the Congress party high command of collaborating with Central organisations and forces — including bringing in the Assam Rifles — against the NPF.

The Simmering Naga Issue and Views from Neighbouring States

The NPF government would now face increased pressure to further the "Greater Nagaland" or "Nagalim" agenda in the aftermath of its victory. The "solution of the Naga problem" was another strategy the Congress employed to win over voters. However, a cross-section of Manipur's population, including the majority Meiteis, Muslims, and Kukis, as well as to a lesser extent Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, whose territorial interests are also at stake, have expressed opposition to the NSCN-IM's concept of "one people to live under one political roof."

The United Naga Council's (UNC) demand for an alternative administrative arrangement for the Nagas in Manipur outside the purview of the state government would be tough to achieve, and any Naga solution should not be at the expense of Manipur's territorial integrity and interest, the government of Manipur reiterated its position when Chief Minister Okram Ibobi Singh informed the Union Home Minister and other central leaders. When starting the conversation on the demand for an "Alternative Arrangement outside the Government of Manipur," the UNC, in turn, has argued in favour of severing political connections with that entity.

The Kuki Inpi Manipur (KIM), the top organisation of Kuki civil society, has asked the Centre to use restraint and stated that "any alternative arrangement for the Nagas of Manipur before any political settlement for the Kukis of Manipur will not be acceptable," and implied it could further aggravate the current situation. The Eastern Naga People's Organisation (ENPO) has called for the division of the four eastern districts of the current Nagaland State to form a "Frontier Nagaland" state, adding another layer of complexity to the divisive Naga political issue.

While Sonia Gandhi, the president of the Congress, spoke extensively about the rising corruption, unemployment, and fund-diversion under NPF rule when the party

launched its election campaign in Nagaland, she also stated that the Congress was committed to doing everything possible to ensure that peace returned to the state in a way that was honourable and acceptable to all sections of the population. However, it is difficult to see how this can be achieved. With the completion of the elections the attention will now turn to New Delhi, where the Naga issue will prove to be a major test for the Centre on keeping its commitment to the Naga people.

Campaign Expenditure

In Nagaland's state assembly elections on February 23, 184 contestants spent a total of Rs 937.82 crore⁸¹. This was nearly twice the amount spent in the previous elections conducted in 2008. According to the postelection report prepared by 'YouthNet's, an independent youth organisation, the NPF, the party in power, spent the most money in 2013 — Rs 486.08 crore — having fielded candidates in all 60 seats, compared to Rs 195.85 crore in 2008. Despite being the single-largest party after winning 38 seats, the NPF formed the government alongside the BJP and JD (U), as it had a pre-poll alliance with the aforementioned parties.

The opposition Congress, which contested with 55 candidates, spent Rs 217.26 crore, compared to Rs 183.66 in the 2008 assembly elections. In the February 2013 assembly elections, Congress picked up 8 seats. While the NCP spent Rs 40.08 crore for its 15 candidates and managed to win five seats, the BJP spent Rs 11.91 crore with 11 candidates and only managed to win one seat. RJD spent Rs 3.80 crore and fielded two candidates. The United Naga Democratic Party, which had just one candidate, spent Rs. 4.20 crore, compared to JDU, which had three candidates and spent Rs. 8.07 crore to win one seat. The report also stated that a total of Rs 180.59 crore was spent by the 37 Independent candidates. The 2013 assembly election had 147 candidates from six political parties in addition to 37 independents. The key districts of Mokokchung, which had 29 candidates running for 10 seats, spent the most money overall (Rs 230.60

⁸¹ YouthNet, "Post-Election Report on Campaign Funds, 2013" *Campaigns, Electoral Reform*, 03/05/2016, <https://www.youthnet.org.in/youthnets-studies-show-almost-1000-crores-spent-in-2013-assembly-elections/>

crore), followed by Dimapur (Rs 154.80 crore), which had 17 candidates running for five seats.

From these figures it is easy to decipher that while money remains a central feature of election campaigns all across India, Nagaland is not an outlier. It further cements the key role of campaign funds and the results that can be a direct outcome of the amount of money pumped into campaigning, especially by the bigger parties. Going by the campaign funds deployed even by the smaller parties and Independents gives a clear idea of the amount of wealth attained by certain people. This further leads one to question the nature of corruption in the state and also highlights the vast inequalities seen between the haves and the have-nots in Nagaland.

Aftermath and Conclusion

The 12th Nagaland State Assembly elections brought to the fore that the Nagaland Issue continued to be a key issue as it resonated with the people. With the NPF retaining majority, the Naga population might have considered the fact that a party in alliance with the majority party at the Centre might be able to better negotiate the peace accord. This was however not to be as the issue continues to hang fire before the central administration. In the follow up to the elections, at the debate on a motion of thanks to the governor's address in March 2014, Nagaland Chief Minister, Neiphiu Rio claimed that the most crucial issue facing the people of was indeed the Nagaland Political Issue⁸². Since the ruling DAN alliance took office for a third time on March 6, 2013, they have been actively working to find an early resolution to the political settlement including the Naga people. He added that the state government was unable to directly participate in the negotiations and that the political dispute was between the Centre and underground forces. Thus, the 12th Nagaland State Elections can be seen as one fought over the Naga Issue without a systematic understanding of the complex issues that underlie it. The elections were more or less fought on high sounding ideals in terms of coming with a solution that would be amenable to all parties involved, but

⁸² "Naga issue most important for Nagaland", *Times of India (ToI)*, March 13, 2014. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/guwahati/naga-issue-most-important-for-nagaland/articleshow/32599581.cms?from=mdr>

eventually passed off as a mix of the amount of campaign money that could be afforded and, in this case, the major party NPF supported by the BJP and the JD-U.

Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP)

Founded on 17 May 2017, and headquartered in Chümoukedima, Nagaland, the Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP) is a regional political party from the Indian state of Nagaland. Chingwang Konyak is the current president of NDPP. The symbol of the party is a globe. The party's slogan is "Facta non verba" (Facts, not deeds).⁸³ The NDPP came into being as a result of a split within the Naga People's Front (NPF). The rebels who backed the former chief minister of Nagaland, Neiphiu Rio were key to causing the split within the NPF which eventually led to the formation of the NDPP.

At the 4th general convention conducted in November 2021, the party president stated the NDPP was formed in response to the need for change in the governance structure and viewpoints on development, and in response to the public's desire for a political party that will represent the interests and ambitions of the general public⁸⁴.

2018 Election Manifesto

In the 2018 Nagaland state assembly elections the NDPP released its manifesto⁸⁵ with the slogan "Change is coming", calling for three major issues – decisive leadership, stable government and visionary policies. It also states that the party is dedicated to bringing about constructive change, forward-thinking development, and inclusive growth on all fronts. In the manifesto it made its stand clear on the Naga issue. It affirms that an honourable, reasonable, and lasting solution must be found as soon as possible to the Indo-Naga conflict by a negotiated political settlement. On the NDPP's vision for a prosperous Nagaland, it proposed various administrative and socio-

⁸³ Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP), 2017, Party Website- <https://ndpp.co.in/about-us/>

⁸⁴ "Chingwang Konyak re-elected as NDPP President", *The Morung Express*, November 23, 2021. <https://morungexpress.com/chingwang-konyak-re-elected-as-ndpp-president>

⁸⁵ "Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP)", 2018, https://issuu.com/ndppofficial/docs/manifesto_e-copy-1?utm_medium=referral&utm_source=ndpp.co.in

economic reforms including a number of areas covering – good governance and transparency, good roads and connectivity, power sector reforms, smart villages and towns, anti VIP culture and austerity drives, thrust for sports and tourism, masterplan for uplifting Eastern Nagaland, promotion of better education, healthcare and indigenous culture including music, food and other traditional crafts and practices, and protection of biodiversity and natural resources.

Strength in Nagaland Assembly

After the Naga People's Front severed its connections with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in preparation for the 2018 Nagaland Legislative Assembly election, former chief minister Neiphiu Rio joined the NDPP in January 2018. The NDPP and BJP subsequently formed an electoral alliance. Ten NPF MLAs left the party in the same month and started negotiating with the NDPP. In the aftermath, with 2,54,192 votes and a 25.4 percent vote share in the 2018 Nagaland Legislative Assembly election, the NDPP won 18 seats⁸⁶. Together with a few other smaller parties, the NDPP and the BJP, with a combined strength of 30 MLAs, formed the state government. As the leader of the alliance, Rio continues to currently serve as the chief minister since 8 March 2018. At present, the Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party has 42 MLAs after 21 NPF MLAs switched parties on April 29, 2022. The 21 NPF MLAs who joined the NDPP were led by another former chief minister T. R. Zeliang⁸⁷. The party purportedly joined the administration in order to present a unified front in an effort to resolve the "Naga political crisis." As a result, currently, Nagaland's 60-member assembly has no opposition.

Nagaland Assembly Elections 2018

On February 27, 2018, the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland's 60 constituencies contested the 2018 Nagaland Legislative Assembly election, the 13th state elections. Due to the lack of nominations for the Northern Angami II seat election, incumbent

⁸⁶ "Association of Democratic Reforms, Nagaland Assembly Elections 2018 Analysis of Vote Share and Representativeness of Winners", 2018, <https://adrindia.org/content/nagaland-assembly-elections-2018-analysis-vote-share-and-representativeness-winners>

⁸⁷ "NDPP welcomes 21 NPF MLAs led by TR Zeliang", *Eastern Mirror*, May 2, 2022 <https://easternmirrornagaland.com/ndpp-welcomes-21-npf-mlas-led-by-tr-zeliang/>

MLA Neiphiu Rio was declared the winner without any opposition. Vote tallying occurred on March 3, 2018. In the elections, 11 independent candidates joined the list of 191 registered candidates, which were fielded by nine parties.⁸⁸

On March 13, 2018, the Nagaland Legislative Assembly's term came to an end. However, in a turn of political events, at a gathering in Dimapur on January 22, 2018, former chief minister KL Chishi and 12 other leaders and former politicians, including former Independent MP Jacob Zhimomi, joined the BJP. As a result, 11 parties issued a statement that these polls should be delayed. Prior to the election, the National Democratic Alliance, led by the BJP, and the incumbent Naga Peoples' Front ended their electoral partnership. Instead, the BJP decided to join forces with the recently founded Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP), which is headed by the former chief minister Neiphiu Rio.

This change in political arrangements led to a call for boycotting the elections among the people. The events in Nagaland, including the call for a "solution before election," mobilised a larger call for a mass boycott of the elections. It was issued by civil society organisations and the 14 tribal *Hohos* (local administrative councils in Nagaland) that was initially backed by all political parties. The Election Commission of India's (ECI) decision to proceed with the elections despite opposition from the Naga public, and finally the series of twists and turns that led to support for the elections, had all raised more concerns about the state of democracy in Nagaland. Pradip Phanjoubam, a senior analyst of politics in Northeast India stated that, "Nagaland politics is probably at its nadir at this moment".⁸⁹ However, on the other side just before the elections the Core Committee of Nagaland Tribal Hohos and Civil Organizations (CCNTHCO) led another protest, and its one unambiguous finding was that the people of Nagaland were more interested in the substance of the solution than in the halting of the electoral

⁸⁸ ECI, Election Commission of India, "Statistical Report on General Election, 2018 to the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland", 2018.

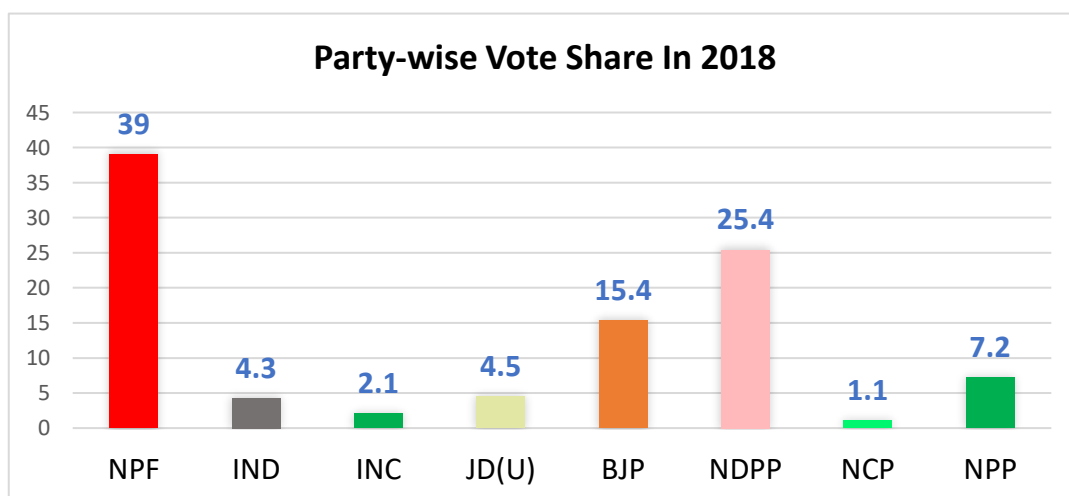
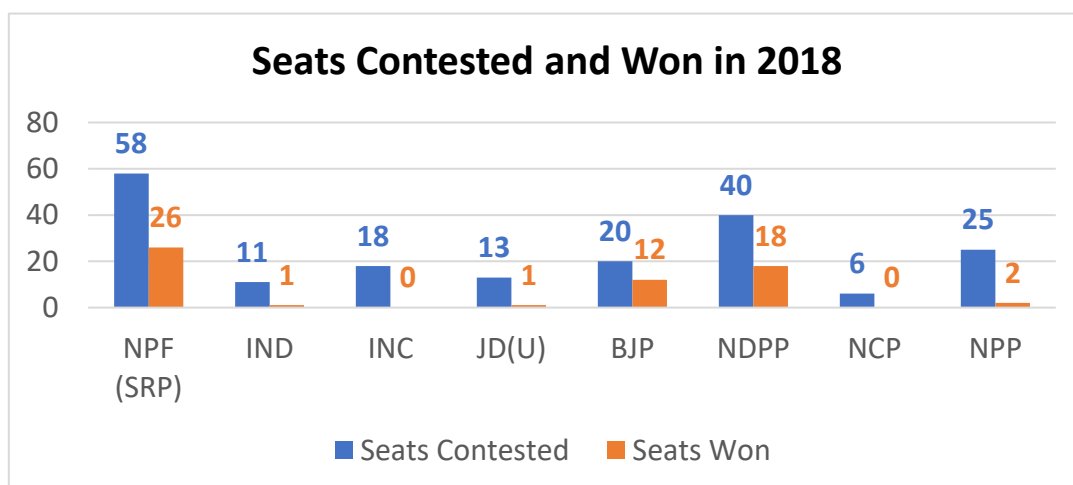
https://web.archive.org/web/20180118181017/http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/current/PN3_18012018.pdf

⁸⁹ Phanjoubam, Pradip, "How BJP Won Without Winning in Nagaland" *Economic and Political Weekly*, (Engage), Vol. 53, Issue No. 10, 10 Mar, 2018. <https://www.epw.in/engage/article/bjp-won-without-winning-nagaland>

process. As a result, it was shown that the local communities were eager to vote and participate in democracy at the grassroots level.

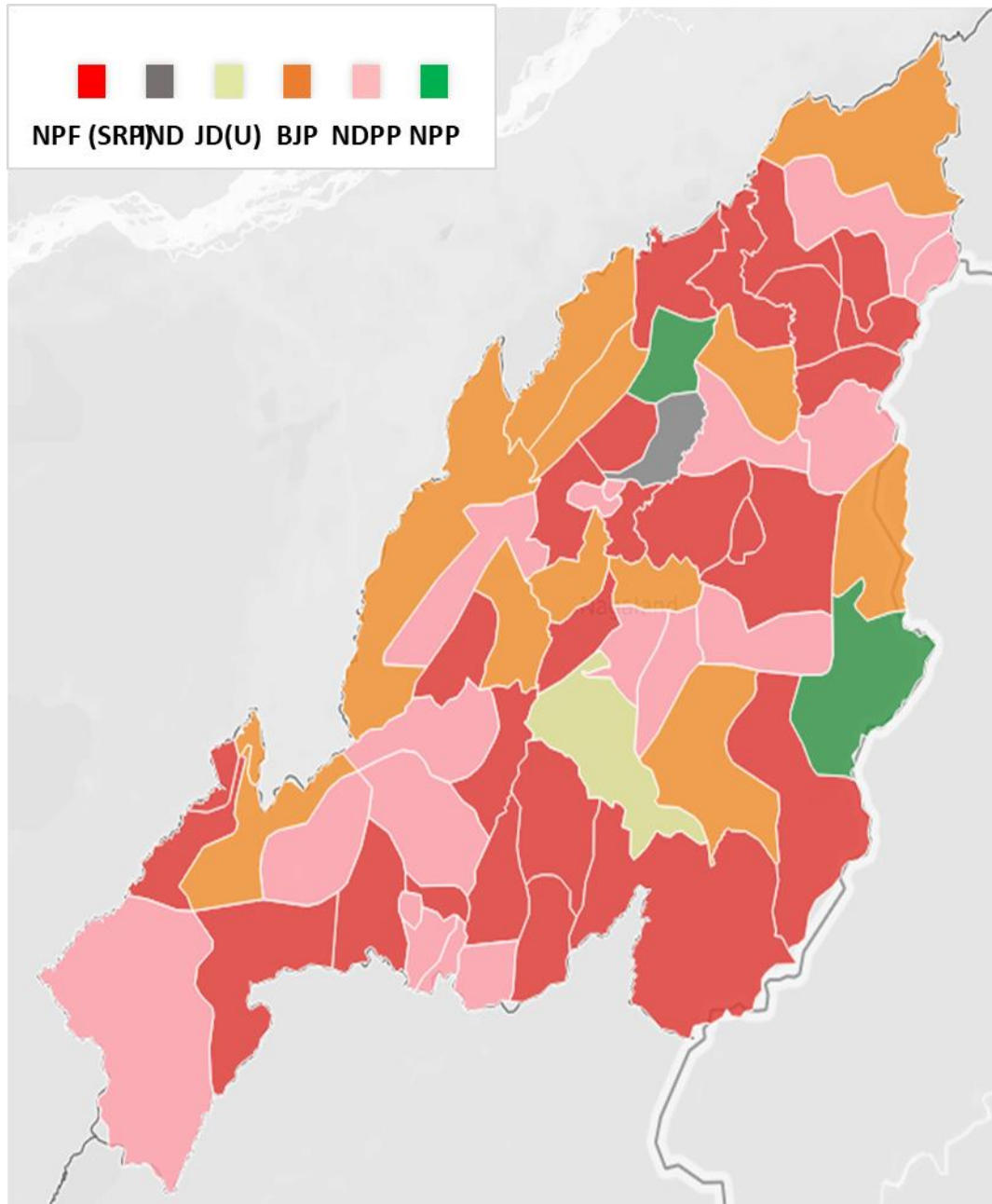
The call for an election boycott ultimately failed, despite the fact that popular opinion in Nagaland was still in favour of a swift and all-encompassing resolution to the Naga Issue, because it appeared that residents of Nagaland were unwilling to stake their futures on an unproven solution.⁹⁰ The paucity of trustworthy information about the Framework Agreement's content and the lack of any convincing evidence that it actually existed were reasons enough to not allay people's rising scepticism.

Charts 5.7 & 5.8: Results of Thirteenth General Assembly Election, 2018



⁹⁰ Lokniti-Centre for Studying Developing Societies (CSDS), Pre-Poll Report, 2018.

Map 5.4: Seat Share of Different Parties in 2018



Total Electorates = 11,64,215

Votes Polled = 9,99,04

Polling Percentage = 85.8%

SOURCE: Government of Nagaland, '*Report on the 13th General Elections to the Nagaland Legislative Assembly, 2018*', Chief Electoral Officer, Kohima, 2018.

Results – Vote share and Representativeness

After examining the vote distribution for each of the 60 Constituencies in the 2018 Nagaland Assembly Elections, one can see that there were 9 political parties apart from independents running in the 2018 Nagaland Assembly Elections.⁹¹ Of these, two were registered unrecognised parties, five were state political parties, and three were national political parties. In contrast, seven political parties competed in the 2013 Nagaland State Assembly elections. These included three political parties at the central, state, and local levels as well as one registered unrecognised party. This indicated a 43% rise in the number of political parties that ran in 2018 compared to 2013.⁹² The candidate from the Northern Angami-II constituency, former chief minister Neiphiu Rio and chief of the Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP) won without any opposition.⁹³ The BJP, the majority national political party, secured 12 of the 60 seats. 29 seats were obtained by state political parties, with the NPF winning 26 and JD (U) securing one. Between the two officially registered but unrecognised political parties, NDPP won 18 seats while the NPP won 2. Finally, one seat was won by a single independent candidate, a drop of seven seats for independents from the previous elections in 2013. In terms of the popular vote the NPF led the table with nearly 39 percent, followed by the NDPP at 25.4 percent, and the BJP with 15.4 percent.⁹⁴ The balance of nearly 20 percent was shared by the NPP, JD (U), Independents, INC, NCP, Aam Admi Party (AAP) and Lok Janshakti (LJP) (in that order). The Congress lost all 8 seats from its previous campaign in the 2013 elections and did not win any seat this time around. The voter turnout as a result of the various calls for boycott of elections was also lower at 85.8 percent compared to the 91.5 percent witnessed in 2013.

⁹¹ ECI, Election Commission of India, “Statistical Report on General Election, 2018 to the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland”, 2018. https://www.lokniti.org/media/PDF-upload/1537787518_50185800_download_report.pdf

⁹² “Nagaland Assembly Elections 2018 Analysis of Vote Share and Representativeness of Winners”, Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), 2 May 2018. https://adrindia.org/sites/default/files/Analysis_of_Vote_Share_and_Representativeness_of_Winners_Nagaland_Assembly_Elections_2018.pdf

⁹³ *Ibid.*,

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*,

BJP's Regionalisation in Nagaland

Despite not having enough votes to win a majority, the BJP cleverly and strategically manoeuvred itself into a position where it would not lose. The Naga People's Front (NPF), led by outgoing chief minister T. R. Zeliang, and the Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP), led by Zeliang's bitter rival and former chief minister, Neiphiu Rio, had emerged as the two political parties at the top of the table, with the NPF winning 26 seats (four short of a majority in the house of 60) and the NDPP winning 18 seats. Rio split from the NPF in the final weeks before the elections and founded the NDPP, a completely new political party. The National People's Party (two seats), Janata Dal (United) (one seat), and Independent (one seat) split the remaining four seats, giving the BJP a respectable return of 12 seats.

Thus, the BJP's backing became essential for the NDPP. The BJP was unnecessary for the single largest party, the NPF, but none of the smaller parties were willing to work with it. Even after the BJP offered its 12 seats for a post-election alliance, the NDPP still lacked the necessary numbers. But considering that every smaller party decided to support the party in power at the centre after the BJP made this decision, their support almost immediately followed. With Rio serving as chief minister, the state finally prepared for his third term at the helm of affairs as chief minister of the state.

There was nevertheless one important question. How did the BJP pull off such a respectable show of numbers? Many would have found it difficult to think that the BJP would have won 12 seats in the firmly Christian Nagaland before the results were announced on March 3. This was particularly true given the powerful Nagaland Baptist Church Council's calls to ban any incursions by the party in the state.⁹⁵ The party only managed to win one seat in the previous elections in 2013. However, not long after, three members of the Nationalist Congress Party agreed to combine with it, increasing its representation in the legislature to four.

⁹⁵ Phanjoubam, Pradip, "How BJP Won Without Winning in Nagaland", *Economic and Political Weekly* (Engage), Vol. 53, Issue No. 10, 10 Mar, 2018. <https://www.epw.in/engage/article/bjp-won-without-winning-nagaland>

Struggle for Control

The answer to this topic is heavily influenced by how the ruling NPF damaged its reputation with the Naga people, particularly once the assembly election countdown started. The party experienced an existential crisis as a result of a contentious power battle among three of its top figures: Zeliang, Rio, and another seasoned politician Shurhozelie Liezietsu (all previous chief ministers). Party Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) were irreconcilably divided, and frequent and massive floor crossings became the norm. The position of the North East's state governor, P. B. Acharya, a former BJP secretary, had also been drawn to attention as a result of these frequent floor crossings.

Rio founded the NDPP in the midst of this conflict, severing the NPF's vertical support base. The BJP then made cunning and expert manoeuvres. The party maintained its 15-year alliance with the NPF in the Nagaland Assembly despite internal strife, effectively pushing the Congress, who had previously controlled the state, out of power. It is important to note here that the NPF also participates in the central NDA government. However, the BJP made a deal with the NDPP before the nomination process began without rejecting the NPF. The two were equal in strength, according to its calculations, so it didn't want to put all of its eggs in one basket. Considering the balance of power, neither the NDPP nor the NPF could generate the courage to demand that the BJP break its links with the NPF. This made sure that the power struggle's uncertainty persisted long after the results of the election were made public. Both the NPF and NDPP profusely pledged their commitment to the BJP up until the very last second before the BJP made a decision.

Rio made a greater sacrifice in order to win the BJP's support, and for the time being, this move has proven to be more politically astute.⁹⁶ He approved a pre-election seat-sharing agreement with the BJP that limited his party's participation to 40 seats while agreeing to support the BJP's candidates in the other 20. This should explain why the BJP's representation increased from one seat in the previous election to 12 in the

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*,

current one.⁹⁷ What was observed was not a sharp increase in the BJP's popularity in the state, but rather the result of the party riding on Rio's party's support base, which is about equal to one-half of the support base of the original NPF. This balance should be illustrated by the fact that the NPF, which fielded candidates for all 60 seats, took home 27 seats, while the NDPP and BJP won a combined 29 seats. Without the NPF split, the BJP's performance in the elections would almost certainly have been no different than it was in the 2013 assembly election.⁹⁸

Role of Neighbouring States

However, there were still some complications. The NPF, which has four MLAs in neighbouring Manipur, is a supporter of the BJP administration there. The Nagaland NPF sought in vain to persuade the BJP to support them by playing this card. Himanta Biswa Sarma of Assam, the BJP's North East strategist, much to the dismay of the Nagaland NPF, claimed at a press conference that since the Manipur NPF and the Nagaland NPF are two different registered political parties, there is no contradiction in the BJP being the party's ally in one state but not the other. It is unknown how much of this assertion is accurate, but it probably won't matter anymore. Additionally, the Manipur NPF has been very silent on this issue.

The expectation in the national media that the BJP will be a sole competitor for the sole Lok Sabha seat from Nagaland in the 2019 general elections is far-fetched if the electorate equation in Nagaland remains as it is. It is likely that the BJP will still need to rely on its deft alliance-building abilities in order to be a part of the victorious team because it would be very ambitious for the party to consider running for this seat on its own merits. However, things could drastically shift in the days to come and change this equation.⁹⁹ For example, it's not entirely implausible to think that the NPF, which

⁹⁷ Longkumer, Along, Nagaland's Cycle of Slogans, Elections, and Elusive Solutions, The Arena, *The Hindu Centre for Politics and Public Policy*, February 26, 2018. <https://www.thehinducentre.com/the-arena/current-issues/nagalands-cycle-of-slogans-elections-and-elusive-solutions/article64931434.ece>

⁹⁸ Phanjoubam, Pradip, "How BJP Won Without Winning in Nagaland", *Economic and Political Weekly* (Engage), Vol. 53, Issue No. 10, 10 Mar, 2018. <https://www.epw.in/engage/article/bjp-won-without-winning-nagaland>

⁹⁹ Longkumer, Along, "Nagaland's Cycle of Slogans, Elections, and Elusive Solutions, The Arena", *The Hindu Centre for Politics and Public Policy*, February 26, 2018. <https://www.thehinducentre.com/the-arena/current-issues/nagalands-cycle-of-slogans-elections-and-elusive-solutions/article64931434.ece>

is currently sitting on the opposition benches, might not be able to keep its flock together in order to prevent a complete breakup of the assembly.

Currently, the Rio government only has a narrow 33-seat majority, and this is even with the backing of MLAs from four different parties. The NPF's MLAs joining Rio's ranks will only serve to strengthen his position as he looks to further divide the NPF in the days to come. This is prohibited by the Tenth Schedule, but if the situation in neighbouring Manipur is any indication, this won't be a problem. The Congress had 28 seats in the 60-seat House of Representatives in the Manipur election almost exactly one year prior, and the BJP had 21. However, the BJP was able to secure the backing of all the smaller parties to put together a coalition with a slender majority. However, it was able to win over the support of eight Congress MLAs within a short period of time. The anti-defection rule is still in effect, thus the renegade MLAs are theoretically still members of the Congress but are supporting the BJP.

In order to draw attention away from the appalling state of domestic politics, it is anticipated that Rio would soon revert to the tried-and-true strategies of flagging loftier concerns to New Delhi, particularly that of a long-term solution to the "Indo-Naga Problem".¹⁰⁰ While everyone wants to find a solution to the Naga problem, everyone is aware that a hurried agreement could have significant negative effects on both Nagaland and the neighbouring North East states. The risk is that when facing domestic criticism, politicians frequently attempt to preserve face by bringing up images of these greater threats and issues in front of a larger audience.

Conclusion and possible resolution to the Naga Issue?

Despite umpteen elections taking place, the Naga Issue remains unresolved. Chief Minister Rio prior to elections, made a commitment to implement a "solution" after taking office. In fact, he returned to power for three successive terms while harping on the unresolved Naga political issue after winning the election. The Naga people have now been waiting for a solution for 15 years. Elections in Nagaland could be won with

¹⁰⁰ Phanjoubam, Pradip, "How BJP Won Without Winning in Nagaland", *Economic and Political Weekly* (Engage), Vol. 53, Issue No. 10, 10 Mar, 2018. <https://www.epw.in/engage/article/bjp-won-without-winning-nagaland>

a populist slogan on the "Naga solution." The essential point is that no such remedy has been implemented as a result of winning an election.

With its most recent campaign slogan, "election for solution," created by BJP leader and National General Secretary Ram Madhav, who is also in charge of the North East elections, even the "party with a difference," the BJP, has added a new perspective to the ongoing debate over whether to hold elections or find a solution. The BJP claims that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's election will result in a resolution to the Naga political crisis. Madhav went so far as to say that a "new and helpful State government would offer the answer faster" in order to defend the conduct of elections (over a solution).¹⁰¹ He so quickly tends to forget that the BJP was a member of the NPF Alliance, which ruled for 15 of those years. The BJP had formed a pre-election coalition with former Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio, who oversaw the NPF-led DAN government for just over ten years.

However, even the BJP appears to be a party that is unsure of the significance of the proposals it is making.¹⁰² And it's possible to sum up the uncertainty surrounding the Naga peace effort rather well. During a press conference in Guwahati on February 3, 2018, to announce the BJP's pre-election alliance with the Nationalist Democratic People's Party (NDPP), Kiren Rijiju, the BJP's Minister of State for Home, was questioned about how soon the problem would likely be resolved while "favouring an early solution." The BJP Minister stated that "the subject is quite complex" and declined to provide a timeline. So much for the BJP's campaign slogan, "Election for Solution." More than 20 years have passed since the beginning of the peace process, and two years have passed since Prime Minister Modi announced the Framework Agreement. It is very obvious that the Indo-Naga peace talks have not produced the intended outcomes after 20 years of political sloganeering. This sums up the Indo-Naga peace process in a nutshell: Every prime minister since the 1990s has highlighted

¹⁰¹ "Helpful Govt to Bring Solution Faster: Ram Madhav in Nagaland", *Northeast Today*, January 23 2018. <https://www.northeasttoday.in/helpful-govt-to-bring-solution-faster-ram-madhav-in-nagaland/>

¹⁰² Longkumer, Along, "Nagaland's Cycle of Slogans, Elections, and Elusive Solutions", *The Hindu Centre for Politics and Public Policy* (The Arena), February 26, 2018. <https://www.thehinducentre.com/the-arena/current-issues/nagalands-cycle-of-slogans-elections-and-elusive-solutions/article64931434.ece>

it frequently and it has generated a lot of media attention, but the results and execution have fallen far short of the Naga expectations.

Path forward to 2023 Elections

In July 2022, allies BJP and NDPP announced that they would jointly contest in the 2023 Nagaland Assembly elections. According to the joint statement made by the two parties, the NDPP will run for 40 seats while the BJP will run for 20 in the 60-member House. There will be no "friendly" competition in any of the seats, the statement continued. According to the statement, "a Core Committee of NDPP and BJP members will develop the election plan and, at the proper moment, it will decide which seat each party will compete, respectively"¹⁰³. In August 2022, the incumbent chief minister, Neiphiu Rio stated that he will not be campaigning in the upcoming 2023 assembly elections and would focus his attention on the "Naga political issue"¹⁰⁴. However, on the ground the scepticism is growing as the slogan of "Solution not election" has been doing the rounds since 1998 and local community bodies are getting restive of hearing the same slogan without any movement forward. A senior journalist observed that despite the protests from local communities, the 2023 elections will continue to be held in line with the previous elections in 2008, 2013 and 2018¹⁰⁵. The only cause of concern would be if six of the eastern districts falling within the current state of Nagaland, who are demanding for a separate state called "Frontier Nagaland" decide to boycott the elections. As per the Eastern Nagaland Peoples' Organisation, elections will be boycotted until the demand for a breakaway state is granted. One third, that is 20 of the state's 60 assembly seats are distributed among these six eastern districts.

¹⁰³ "Nagaland: NDPP, BJP to Jointly Contest 2023 Polls", *The Indian Express*, July 26, 2022, <https://indianexpress.com/article/north-east-india/nagaland/nagaland-ndpp-bjp-to-jointly-contest-2023-polls-8053415/>

¹⁰⁴ Zaman, Rokibuz, "Will the 'Naga Political Issue' Hold up Nagaland Elections?", *Scroll.in*, <https://scroll.in/article/1037585/will-the-naga-political-issue-hold-up-nagaland-elections>

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*,

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Political parties, especially in developing countries, are undergoing profound changes as a result of urbanization, industrialization, literacy, participatory institutions, and the emergence of new socio-economic groups. Political parties play a crucial role in such societies by welcoming and incorporating them into political developments that educate, represent, and safeguard the interests of the people they represent. Well-known political scientists such as Sigmund Neumann, Lord Bryce, Maurice Duverger, and others have detailed and discussed the crucial function of political parties, regardless of their size or level of commitment, in their writings. Mackenzie agrees with his contemporaries that political parties play an important role in balancing governance, representing and becoming the voice of the mass-citizen in decision-making bodies, and reaching a common consensus for the welfare of the people of the nation.

Several factors contributed to the emergence of political parties, but the Glorious Revolution of 1688 in England, also known as the Bloodless Revolution, is considered the watershed moment at which the modern political party was conceived and developed. The role of political parties in a well-functioning democracy is crucial and fundamental. The existence of political parties is undeniably a global phenomenon, and it is deeply entwined with democratic institutions. In the framework of our nation's democratic institutions, they serve as both preconditions and ambassadors, fostering cooperation and mutual understanding. In a democratic age, political parties not only play an essential role, but also have the responsibility of ensuring that these connections and conversations are long-lasting and stable.

India is pleased with its reputation as the world's most populous democracy. In the midst of India's bewildering social diversity, the realm of political parties has undergone a remarkable transformation since independence. Approximately twenty years after India's independence, the era of multi-party democracy began. As the Congress party's hegemony in India has eroded, many new parties have emerged, and established ones have undergone transformations to compete. Some people see these changes as desirable and natural democratic processes that reflect the dynamics of democracy in a country with rich diversities, while others see them as a sign of fragmentation and decay that poses a threat

to democracy, national unity, and governmental stability. While countries like India would likely struggle to function democratically in the absence of political parties, there has been mounting evidence of low or declining public confidence in political parties across the globe in recent years.

Since India's independence, the country's political party system has undergone significant change, and its operation over the past seven decades has shown both success and decline. The Congress party, a broad political umbrella that led India's fight for independence in 1947 and ruled the country for a long time afterward, is no longer the dominant force in Indian politics. It's easier than ever to win elections with the help of a political party that appeals to a specific religious or ethnic group. Several new national and regional parties emerged as India's federal polity began to assert itself in the party sphere. One way in which political parties serve as a bridge between citizens and their government is as an institutionalized form of mediation.

In keeping with the rest of India's states, Nagaland's government is based on popular vote. Since its inception in 1963 and the subsequent general assembly election in 1964, political parties have played a significant role in the state's democratic process, actively competing and contesting for power.

As the political climate of Nagaland has shifted, so too has the makeup of the political parties operating there. After the Naga National Council split into a moderate and extremist faction as a result of the Naga nationalist movement, new political parties emerged in Nagaland. The first state-wide election in the state was held in 1964, and the Naga Nationalist Organisation (NNO) was the first party to emerge and contest in the election. The first stage of Nagaland's modern party system can be traced back to two regional parties: the Democratic Party of Nagaland and the Naga Nationalist Organization (NNO). Unlike the DPN, the NNO supported the Congress, a national political party that merged with the Indian National Congress in 1976 and fielded candidates in the fourth assembly general election that same year.

The two-party system emerged in the form of an electoral contest between a powerful national party (Congress) and a powerful regional party (variously known as the DPN, UFN, UDF, NNDP, NPC, and NPF) with the fourth assembly election. From 1964 until 1993, there were only two major political parties in the state, one at the regional level (the Regional Party) and the other at the national level (the Congress Party). There are only two major political parties in Nagaland, and they both share equal power in forming the government. Because they are formed primarily through defections and only exist for a short period of time or only during election time, other minor parties had little impact on the final tally.

From 1998 to 2003, a transition from a two-party system to complete one-party dominance took place. Congress was the dominant political party in Nagaland at the time. Despite receiving only 51% of the vote, the party won an overwhelming majority of assembly seats. The opposition party was rendered virtually powerless and could no longer play a significant role as it did not participate in the election of 1998 because of election boycott.

A two-plus/multi-party party system, or moderate pluralism, emerged in Nagaland's most recent elections beginning in 2003 and continuing through 2018. Other national and state parties entered Nagaland state politics alongside the Indian National Congress, the BJP, the regional party NPF, and the more recent one NDPP that took its form after breaking off from the NPF. Some new parties entered the election fray and made an impact on government formation, including the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), the National People's Party (NPP), the Janata Dal United (JDU). This shift marked the phase of coalition politics in Nagaland.

A strong nationalist movement had prevented any national political parties from gaining traction in the state up until the fourth general assembly election. It wasn't until 1975 that the two major regional parties emerged. By running in the state's fourth assembly election, the Congress planted the seeds necessary to remain a political force in the state for the foreseeable future. Since then, the national party Congress has risen to prominence, becoming the state's most popular political force. The last four elections have resulted in

a coalition government, which was formed by a number of different political parties. Except for the most recent three elections, the Congress party has consistently dominated electoral outcomes, garnering the most votes and the majority of seats in state assemblies. This creates a fascinating opportunity to investigate decline of the Congress party (INC) and the ascent of the regional party (NPF) in recent years in the state of Nagaland.

Up until the election of 2003, the Congress party was the dominant political party in Nagaland, contributing to the state's perception as a two-party system. After the NPF and a few other parties formed the government in 2003, the era of coalition government began. In the state election of 2013, the regional party NPF won an overwhelming majority of the seats despite working in coalition with several other smaller parties. After losing all but eight seats in the State Assembly in the 2013 elections, the once-dominant Indian National Congress suffered an even greater rout in the 2018 elections, leaving it without a single representative in the legislature.

Chapter one is dedicated to set the stage for the thesis. The essentiality of political parties to run the machine of democracy is highlighted and discussed. The origin of the political parties was possible due to the presence of the supporting democratic institutions. Though scholars tried to trace the origin of the political parties way back to the Roman Empire, the modern political parties in its present form started to emerge in the US. Parties generally holds to a core ideology, structure, leader, active followers and funding. Political parties exist because they perform certain functions including representing group interests, organizing and mobilizing voters, influencing public opinion and policy, facilitating communication and cooperation among elected officials etc. There are different types of political parties around the world, of which, Max Weber distinguished mainly two types of political parties i.e., mass based political parties and cadre parties. Over the period of time different type of political parties emerged as a response to some of the biggest events in the history such as revolutions and their associated cleavages. D. Lepadatu proposed that there are three big revolutions that have created cleavages and respective political parties i.e., the national revolution, the industrial revolution and the international revolution.

The review of literature covered various aspects related to political parties including their growth and evolution, party and ideology, role of political party in democracy for agenda setting and policy making, different activities in election ranging from motivating voters to the contesting in the elections and forming the government. Some of the key takeaways from the review include: 1. The necessity to have political parties in a democracy which act as a powerful means of public expression, 2. The emergence of political parties can have various reasons, most importantly, in the post-war / post-conflict world, its emergence is often for securing peace. 3. Electoral campaigning is a power tool to woo voters, mobilization of voters is a dynamic activity: campaigns, media, money and muscle-power are some of the methods besides election manifesto.

In the light of observations made in the review of literature a statement of research problem was formulated it reads as the following. “Nagaland politics have been undergoing several changes and the party system has also taken different forms. Political parties in Nagaland developed as a result of the Naga nationalist movement. In the process, both regional and national political parties assumed their space in the state’s democratic process.

Based on the observations made in the literature reviews, an attempt is made to examine the political phenomenon on how political parties emerged and operates in the changing political context of Nagaland notwithstanding the sentiments of the people still attached to Naga sovereignty.

Chapter two made an attempt to analyze the various socio-political factors that have propelled and conditioned the transition from traditional base political institutions to an era of modern competitive democratic politics in Nagaland. This chapter brings attention to the many political developments and historical contingencies that have occurred. It is crucial to appreciate the political history of the Nagas in order to comprehend the formation and growth of political parties in the state, both of which are integrally connected to the Naga national struggle. This chapter examined the creation of political consciousness and the emergence of the Naga identity as a result of British rule, which

ultimately led to the foundation of numerous sociopolitical groups and the subsequent development of political parties. The many organizations that arose first served as a sort of political expression of the Nagas' collective desire. This ultimately served as the foundation for the Naga national movement against the Indian government. In accordance with a shift in the Nagas' political demands and aspirations, the movement evolved over time into full-fledged political parties. This chapter provided a detailed and chronological analysis of these changes.

In this context, we have addressed the consequences of British administration on the development of Naga nationalism, as indicated by the founding of the first social organization, the Naga Club, and the Naga National Council. The events leading up to the establishment of the Naga People's Convention and the subsequent formation of the state of Nagaland, including the split between the Naga extremists and the moderates in the NNC house and the infamous "Hydari Agreement" regarding the future political position of the Nagas, were included. This section primarily analyzed the efforts of various groups involved in the project of defining Naga identity and Naga nationalism facilitating the formation of political parties in Nagaland.

The British authorities noted the old Nagas as thoroughly democratic communities with customs that were deeply and exceedingly democratic, and they almost seemed in awe of the 'democratic nature of tribal arrangements. It may be argued that these portrayed a too dramatic a picture of traditional Naga political life, making them seem unlikely and unbelievable. As Wouters rightly pointed out, the image of the traditional Naga democracies has "crept a tint of romanticism" in light of recalling the past of the Nagas through records, reports, monographs, and tales by the British administrators. Strictly speaking, the Nagas' involvement in formal democracy and elections is not only recent, but also varied and nuanced. The Nagas' first experience and engagement in the 'formal democracy' came in the first state Assembly election in Nagaland in 1964, contradicting the rather 'reckless' judgments and generalizations about the traditional Nagas as totally and truly democratic. The people of Nagaland, India's 16th state, cast their first votes in the state's first Assembly election the very next year (1964) after becoming a state on

December 1, 1963. During this time, the state of Nagaland was experiencing political turmoil brought on by the Naga National movement, which resulted in infinite chaos, confusion, and the horror of bloodshed.

The chapter three examines the functioning of the first democratic experiment, the emergence of the first two political parties in the context of the Nagas' aspiration for independence, and the political transformation that occurred in this difficult state. This section analyzes and discusses the political battle between the two regional political parties that foresaw competitive party politics in the state's first three assembly elections prior to the arrival of national parties. The elections from 1964 to 1974 were included in order to have a better knowledge of the political parties and electorates that influenced the beginning and success of the electoral process in the newly formed state. It addresses how political parties were able to participate in the democratic process despite the increasing presence and influence of the Naga nationalism movement, which was opposed to this form of governance and 'subjugation'.

Democratization has been a notable feature of post-conflict scenarios, and is sometimes viewed as the nation's primary political foundation for its rehabilitation. In the case of Nagaland, political parties were founded in reaction to political uprisings by the Nagas as a post-conflict peacebuilding initiative between the two sides (Indian government and Naga nationalist group). This is one of the necessary political stages for ending a violent war peacefully. As a result of pre- and post-statehood political unrest and conflict, Nagaland's first two political parties, the Nationalist Naga Organization (NNO) and the Democratic Party of Nagaland (DPN), were formed with the stated goals of promoting peaceful coexistence and resolving the Naga political issue, acting as mediators between the extremist nationalist and the Indian Government.

With the creation of the state and the first assembly election, people began to take more interest in political affairs and activities. With their increasing interest in party politics, the attention of the people declined towards the movement of insurgency and turn towards progress and prosperity. As a result, political dimension of Naga politics began to expand

unexpectedly. With the introduction of modern democratic electoral system, political parties in the form of regional parties gradually got institutionalized with the development of representative form of government in the newly created state.

The fourth chapter discussed the political dynamics under which the Congress party made its way into the political space of the Nagaland. The NNO was the regional party who always had the support and leanings with the Congress party at the centre and eventually got merged with the Congress party. It was felt prudent that the time had come for the Nagas to take full responsibility and share in the running of their affairs by floating along the national mainstream and yet preserving their own identities and cultural diversities. It was with this end in view that the NNO party decided to merge with the Indian National Congress. The decision to merge the NNO with the Congress party was promoted by the fact that it was the Congress party which gave the political freedom to the nation and that its policy has always been to give full autonomy and opportunity of self-development to the tribals specially to the Nagas. The Congress government has provided the constitutional safeguards to the Naga to run their own internal affairs, to maintain their own way of life-social, cultural, religious customary practices, usages, traditional distinctives, ownership, transfer of land, the land and its resources. The Congress party is therefore not only a protecting force but also a liberating one as much.

The Congress party formed in the state with a political vision centered on democracy, socialism, and secularism; its principles are "national in name but regional in content." It was decided that the regional unit will have complete autonomy and would have its own constitution inside the larger national party's framework. It's worth noting that "preserving the Naga identity and developing the Naga way of life" was a central tenet of the Congress's platform in its successful bid to sway this politically unstable electorate. The party's rise to power in the state is a direct result of the central party's support, which manifested itself in the form of financial resources and carefully crafted strategies.

The phase of Congress prominence is much attributed to the charismatic leadership of Hokishe Sema and S.C. Jamir, both belonging to the two major tribes in Nagaland. This

can be ascertain with the election results of the 80's and the 90's in which constituencies belonging to this two leaders tribal regionas, namely Mokokchung district and the Zunheboto district consecutively wins the elections for the Congress party. The study also found that the social base of the Congress party since the beginning of electoral politics is mainly concentrated on the Sema and Ao tribal regions.

This section also discussed the genesis of political defection, the forming of new alliances and transformed parties, and the ascent to power of various party leaders. The desire for power, wealth, and status that permeated state politics at the time is also portrayed. The section analyzes the elections held between 1977 and 1998 to shed light on the prevailing political climate of the time, a period in which the Congress party effectively and gradually supplanted the regional party and kept power for ten years. It demonstrates how, during this time, Naga politics came to be characterized by a strong emphasis on money culture.

The Chapter five deals on the period of the regional party re-emergence and it prominence since the election of 2003. The election of 2003 marked a watershed moment in Nagaland's state politics. With the new political leadership and the new presentation of alignments that created the fortune of various political parties that came into the state electoral politics, especially the regional party, the existing political discourse was altered. The long-standing Naga political problem and the new regionalist formation under an alliance were the primary aim of this chapter, along with the issues and factors that led to the re-emergence of the regional front under Neiphiu Rio's leadership. In the state's six-decade-long democratic process, this era marked the beginning of coalition politics.

Never in the state's political history, this multiplicity of parties have ever run candidates in Nagaland elections before the 2003 election. This trend, in which political parties from outside the state have become established, has persisted through the elections of the last two decades. The regional party's alliance formula worked well, relegating the Congress party to a complete failure. The DAN government and currently the UDA government, under the leadership of Neiphiu Rio was able to bring down the Congress regime through effective leadership and alliance management. In the 2018 election, a new regional party,

the Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP), formed the government, going up against the party from which it broke away, the NPF.

The importance of the regional party that grew from the last two decades cannot be overlooked. With their dependency on the coalition partners triggering their success to maintain power or retain their power in the state, the regional party has proved again to be a formidable force. This led to a phase where it becomes an alternative to the Congress party along with the growing number of smaller parties and most importantly the influence of national party BJP, in sharing power in the state. The period from 2003 to 2013, no single party could get the required number to form the government. However, this era ushered in the success of a coalition government in the state and depicted its applicability in the state. The 2013 saw the regional party NPF making it to more than half of the total seat for the first time, marking the regional party prominence. This was attributed to the leadership of the party under Neiphiu Rio and also its incumbency factor in providing resources for its electoral gain, taking into account the states electoral mal-practices of rampant use of money power besides several other factors contributing to its success.

The NPF's political mileage in the state was rocked when its leader Neiphiu Rio decided to contest for the Lok Sabha elections. The political vacuum created a leadership-crisis in the party which eventually led to the formation of a new party under the name NDPP in 2018. This personality clash among the former NPF leaders has resulted in the fight for the 2018 elections on two regional camps. The success of the present NDPP party is all attributed to the leadership qualities of Rio and his skills and ability to conform to a strict coalition management.

Major Findings of the Study

Political parties emerged as an outcome of the Naga national movement in its search for peace.

In the aftermath of a significant political, social, or military war, democracy can play a vital role in the reconstruction and reconciliation of a society. In order to increase political involvement and representation in a post-conflict setting such as Nagaland, whose political parties have a long and complicated history, it was crucial to build a democratic government. This was necessary so that civil society organizations could participate in the democratic process. Started as a social organisation and gradually turning into political parties, Naga political parties have played a significant role in Nagaland's political journey. Since the early 1960s, the "democratization" process has become an increasingly significant component of post-conflict situations in Nagaland. It is essential to recognize that the democratic process in a post-conflict setting like Nagaland, can be complicated and may require time to completely materialize. It frequently necessitates the engagement and dedication of several parties, including the government, civil society groups, and community-based organizations.

Strong leaders from major tribes could influence the outcome of political parties.

It is typical for political parties in many nations/states to be influenced by opposing strong leaders from major tribes or ethnic groupings. In certain instances, these leaders may be the party's founders or important players; their leadership and influence may affect the philosophy and policies of the party. In the political context of Nagaland, political leaders like S.C Jamir and K. L Chishi who belong to major tribes, were able to garner loyalties and supports of their own tribes and thus, were able to hold power for considerable amount of time. The influence of tribe or ethnic leaders who represent political parties may be both advantageous and detrimental. On the one hand, these leaders may be able to generate support for the party inside their own community, and party members and supporters may value their leadership and direction. On the other side, the prominence of tribal or ethnic

leaders can also lead to divisive politics in which one group's interests are emphasized above those of others, so posing obstacles to the development of a more inclusive and varied society.

Congress has found its niche with the aid of its inherent advantage as a national party able to fund political operations in the state, its strong organizational structure, and most crucially, its political strategy to enter state electoral politics worked to their advantage and thus their reign over state's electoral politics for a considerable amount of time.

Due to the fear of desertion, personality conflicts, and lust for power, the local political parties frequently attempted to adopt a new identity.

As with any other organization, Nagaland's political parties face a variety of problems and impediments that threaten its stability and success. Fear of desertion, which refers to the concern that party members would leave or defect to another party, is one of the hurdles. This may be a significant issue for political parties, as it can lead to a loss of support and resources and reduce the party's status on the political stage.

Personality conflicts among the political leaders of Nagaland also pose significant hurdles to the survival of political parties. When there are disagreements or disputes among party members or leaders, it can result in internal diversions and divisions that impair the party's ability to efficiently pursue its goals and priorities.

The thirst for power has an impact on political parties as well. In many cases, individuals inside a party may be more interested in pursuing their personal interests and agendas than working for the party as a whole. This can lead to internal disagreements and power struggles, which can harm the unity and effectiveness of the party.

It was found that the political parties in Nagaland adopt a new identity or rebrand themselves in an effort to gather more support and appeal to a larger audience in order to solve these and related challenges. This required changing their party's name, insignia, as well as adopting new policies and positions on significant issues. These initiatives occasionally aid a party in reviving itself and moving forward, but they can also be

troublesome, since they risk alienating long-standing supporters and causing public confusion.

Regional political parties attempted to portray themselves as mediators between the undergrounds and the Indian government in an effort to attain the ultimate objective of settling the Naga issue.

Regional political parties in the Indian state of Nagaland have frequently served as mediators between the undergrounds (Naga Nationalist organisations engaged in armed conflict with the Indian government) and the Indian government in an effort to resolve the Naga issue. In light of this, political parties in Nagaland have frequently attempted to position themselves as mediators or facilitators in the peace process between the Indian government and the Naga undergrounds. This has necessitated participation in discussions and peace talks, as well as efforts to create trust and mutual understanding between the two parties. It is also important to note that, on this specific issue, the regional political parties may employ a number of strategies to appeal to the emotional sensibilities of the Naga populace. This may involve making emotional declarations or pledges about their dedication to resolving the Naga problem- thus garnering and keeping the support of the Naga populace.

It is essential to highlight that the Naga issue is complicated and multifaceted, and that finding a solution has proven difficult. Although political parties in Nagaland and other stakeholders have made considerable efforts to support the peace process, progress has been gradual and there have been several setbacks along the road. Notwithstanding, the attempts of regional political parties to act as mediators between the undergrounds and the Indian government have been an integral part of the process of pursuing a permanent and peaceful resolution to the Naga issue.

In addition to proposing a peaceful resolution to the Naga political issue, the election manifestos of the majority of political parties in the state address the same degree of concerns.

It is typical for political parties in many nations to address a variety of topics in their election manifestos. Besides proposing to bring peaceful solution to the Naga political issue, a long-standing conflict between the Naga people and the Indian government, the election manifestoes of the political parties in Nagaland propose to address similar issues and concerns. They do propose a variety of approaches to resolving the Naga issue, including negotiating a settlement with the Indian government, advocating for greater autonomy or self-governance for the Naga people, and supporting efforts to address the underlying issues and grievances, but in general, more or less, remain similar and nothing unique.

Insurgency groups influence the outcome of political parties success.

The influence of insurgency groups on the political landscape of state electoral politics is substantial. It is essential to emphasize, however, that the effect of insurgent organizations on the success of political parties is frequently detrimental. They frequently employ violent methods to attain their objectives, which can lead to instability and strife in the country. In addition, they may not have widespread support among the general populace, and their actions may not reflect the beliefs or interests of the majority of citizens. In one of my casual conversations with one of the respondents, he discussed the involvement of the underground during elections, which reflects this idea. Despite their announcement that they would not participate in the state election, the subterranean groups had a key influence in the electoral process. The use of brutal force in one form or another appears to be one of the most important platforms and agents in the history of Nagas electoral politics for achieving the goals of political parties and party leaders in general. Every head of a political party has ties to at least one rebel group, and they use their presence and support during elections. During my casual and informal interactions with the public, I have heard several tales of individuals' bad election-related encounters with the underground.

Political leadership is an important factor in forming and bringing parties success.

Political leadership is essential for the success of parties. This has been mirrored in my informal interactions with Naga individuals and in the relevant literature. The significance of effective leadership and charm in political leaders has been highly emphasized. Due to their leadership and charm, several political leaders have maintained the loyalty of the Naga population and their political allies for an extended period of time. Even though he had the support of the center and his people, S.C. Jamir's charisma and leadership in Nagaland's political affairs must be acknowledged. He won the sympathy and compassion of the Naga community over a decade. Since 2003, Rio and other Naga political figures have been able to form coalition administrations and partnerships with other political parties because to their leadership and charisma.

In recent years, the use of money and muscle power appears to be the most influential element in determining the outcome of elections.

Money and resources may have a substantial impact on the result of Naga elections. The mind-boggling and unfathomable amounts of money spent during elections in Nagaland are detailed in the following paragraphs. Examining the news channel's report on the outrageous amount of money spent on Nagaland's elections would fuel such strong sentiments. Listed below are the total election expenditures for 2008, 2013, and 2018, according to an APN News report, with the highest spending candidate spending an average of 30 crores, the second highest spending candidate spending an average of 27 crores, and the third highest spending candidate spending an average of 23 crores. It is believed that the average cost per vote in Nagaland ranges between 5,000 and 10,000 rupees.

In the electoral politics of Nagaland, the use of money and muscle power has over the years diluted the democratic ideals. The rampant use of money power during the electioneering process have made the most unusual electoral outcome of political leaders and parties.

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ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE I

THE SIXTEEN-POINT AGREEMENT

THE SIXTEEN POINT AGREEMENT ARRIVED AT BETWEEN THE NAGA PEOPLE'S CONVENTION AND THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA IN JULY, 1960.

The point placed by the delegates of the Naga People's Convention before the Prime Minister on 26th July, 1960, as finally recast by the delegation in the light of discussion on 27th and 28th July, 1960 with the Foreign Secretary.

1. The Name:

The territories that were heretofore known as the Naga Hills-Tuensang area under the Naga Hills-Tuensang Area Act 1957 shall form a state within the Indian Union and be here-after known as Nagaland.

2. The Ministry Incharge:

The Nagaland shall be under the ministry of External Affairs of the Government of India.

3. The Governors of Nagaland:

- a) The President of India shall appoint a Governor for Nagaland and he will be vested with the Executive powers of the Government of Nagaland. He will have his Headquarters in Nagaland.
- b) His administrative secretariat will be headed by a Chief Secretary stationed at the Headquarters with order Secretariat Staff as necessary.
- c) The Governor shall have special responsibility with regard to Law and Order during the Transitional period and for so long as the Law-and-Order situation continues to remain disturbed on account of hostile activities. In exercising this special responsibility, the governor shall,

after consultation with the ministry act in his individual judgment. This special responsibility of the Governor will cease when normalcy returns.

4. Council of Ministers:

- a) There shall be a Council of Ministers with a Chief Minister at the head to assist and advise the Governor in the exercise of his functions.
- b) The Council of Ministers shall be responsible to the Naga Legislative Assembly.

5. The Legislature:

There shall be constituted a Legislative Assembly consisting of elected and nominated members as may be deemed necessary representing different Tribes.

6. Representation in Parliament:

Two elected members shall represent Nagaland in the Union Parliament, That is to say one for Lok Sabha and other for the Rajya Sabha.

7. Acts of Parliament:

No Act or Law passed by the Union Parliament affecting the following provisions shall have legal force in the Nagaland unless specifically applied to it by a majority vote of the Nagaland Legislative Assembly:

- a) The Religion or Social practices of Nagas.
- b) Naga Customary Laws and Procedure.
- c) Civil and Criminal Justice so far as these concern decisions according to Naga customary Law.
- d) The existing Laws relating to administration of Civil and Criminal Justice as provided in the rules for the administration of justice and police in the Naga Hills District shall continue to be in force.
- e) The ownership and transfer of land and its resources.

8. Local Self-Government:

Each Tribe shall have the following Units of rule-making and administrative local bodies to deal with matters concerning the respective tribes and areas:

- a) The Village Council;
- b) The Range Council; and
- c) The Tribal Council;

This Council will also deal with disputes and cases involving of customary Laws and usages.

9. Administration of Justice:

- a) The existing system of administration of civil and criminal Justice shall continue.
- b) Appellate Courts:
 - 1) The District Court-cum-session courts (for each district), High Court and Supreme Court of India.
 - 2) The Naga Tribunal (for the whole of the Nagaland) in respect of cases decided according to customary law.

10. Administration of Tuensang District.

- a) The Governor shall carry on the administration of the Tuensang District for a period of Ten years until such time when the tribes in the Tuensang District are capable of shouldering more responsibility of the advance system of administration. The commencement of the ten-year period of administration will start simultaneously with the enforcement of detailed working of the constitution in other parts of the Nagaland.
- b) Provided further that a regional Council shall be formed for Tuensang District by elected representatives from all the Tribes in Tuensang District, and the Government may nominate representatives to the Regional Council as well. The Deputy Commissioner will be the ex-officio Chairman of the council. The Regional Council will elect members to the Naga Legislative Assembly to represent Tuensang District.

- c) Provided further that on the advice of the regional council, steps will be taken to start various council and courts, in those areas where the people feel themselves capable of establishing such institutions.
- d) Provided further that no Act or Law passed by the Naga Legislative Assembly shall be applicable to Tuensang District unless specially recommended by the Regional Council.
- e) Provided further that the Regional Council shall supervise and guide the working of the various councils and tribal Courts within Tuensang District and whenever necessary the local-officers to act as chairman thereof.
- f) Provided further that Council of such areas inhabited by a mixed population or which have not as yet decided to which specific tribal Council to be affiliated to shall be directly under the regional council for the time being. And at the end of the years the situation will be reviewed and if the people so desire the period will be further extended.

11. Financial assistance from the government of India:

To supplement the revenues of the Nagaland, there will be need for the government of India to pay out of the consolidated Fund of Nagaland.

- a) A lump sum each year for the development programmes in the Nagaland; and
- b) A grant-in-aid towards meeting the cost of administration.

Proposals for the above grants shall be prepared and submitted by the Government of Nagaland to the Government of India for their approval. The Governor will have general responsibility for ensuring that the funds made available by the government of India are expended for purposes for which they have been approved.

12. Consolidation of Forest areas:

The delegation wished the following to be placed on record: “The Naga delegation discussed the question of the inclusion of the Reserve Forest and of contiguous areas inhabited by the Nagas, They, were referred to

the provision in Article 3 and Article 4 of the Constitution, prescribing the procedure for the transfer of areas from one state to another”.

13. Consolidation of Contiguous Naga Areas;

The delegation wished the following to be placed on record:

The Naga leaders expressed the wish for the contiguous areas to join the new state. It was pointed out to them on behalf of the Government of India the Articles 3 and 4 of the Constitution provided for increasing the area of any state, but that it was not possible for the government of India to make any commitment in this regard at this stage.

14. Formation of Separate Naga Regiment:

In order that the Naga people can fulfil their desire of playing a full role in the defence forces of India the question of raising a separate Naga Regiment should be duly examined for action.

15. Transition Period:

- a) On reaching the political settlement the Government of India will prepare a bill for such amendment of the Constitution, as may be necessary, in order to implement the decision. The Draft Bill, before representation to parliament, will be shown to the delegates of the NPC.
- b) There shall be constituted an Interim Body with elected representatives from every tribe, to assist and advice the Governor in the administration of the Nagaland during the transitional period. The tenure of office of the interim body will be three years subject to re-election.

16. Inner Line Regulation:

Rules embodied in the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873 shall remain in force in the Nagaland.

Source: R.Vashum and Others (eds), *Nagas at Work*, Naga Students Union, Delhi, 1996.

ANNEXURE II

ARTICLE 371 (A) OF THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE 371 (A) SPECIAL PROVISION WITH RESPECT TO THE STATE OF NAGALAND

Notwithstanding anything in this constitution:

- a) no act of parliament in respect of –
 - i) religious or social practices of Nagas,
 - ii) Naga customary law and procedure,
 - iii) Administration of civil and criminal justice involving decisions according to Naga customary law,
 - iv) Ownership and transfer of land and its resources, shall apply to the state of Nagaland unless the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland by a resolution so decides.
- b) The Governor of Nagaland shall have special responsibility with respect to law and order in the state of Nagaland for so long as in his opinion internal disturbances occurring in the Naga Hills-Tuensang Area immediately before the formation of that state continue therein or in any part thereof and in the discharge of his function in relation thereto the Governor shall, after consulting the council of Ministers, exercise his individual judgment as to the action to be taken.

Provided that if any question arises whether any matter is or is not a matter as respects which the Governor is under this sub-clause required to act in the exercise of his individual judgment, the decision of the Governor shall not be called in question on the ground that he ought or ought not to have acted in the exercise of his individual judgment;

Provided further that if the President on receipt of a report from the Governor or otherwise is satisfied that it is no longer necessary for the Governor to have

special responsibility with respect to Law and Order in the state of Nagaland, he may by order direct that the Governor shall cease to have such responsibility with effect from such date as may be specified in the order;

c) in making his recommendation with respect to any demand for a grant, the Governor of Nagaland shall ensure that any money provided by the Government of India out of the Consolidated Fund of India for any specific service or purpose is included in the demand for a grant relating to that service or purpose and not in any other demand.

SOURCE: Charles Chasie, *The Naga Imbroglio, A Personal Perspective*, Standard Printers and Publishers, Kohima, 2000. p.200.

ANNEXURE III
SHILLONG ACCORD OF 11TH NOVEMBER, 1975.

1. The following representatives of the underground Organisations met the Governor of Nagaland Shi.L.P. Singh, representing the Government of India at Shillong on 10th November, 1975.
 - a) Shri I.Temjenba
 - b) Shri S.Dahru
 - c) Shri Veniyi Rhakhu
 - d) Shri Z.Ramyo
 - e) Shri M.Assa
 - f) Shri Kevi Yally.
2. There was a series of discussions. Some of the discussions were held with the Governor alone, at others, the Governor was assisted by the two Advisors for Nagaland, Shri M.Ramunmy and Shri H.Zopianga, and by Shri M.L.Kampani, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs. All the five members of the Liaison Committee, namely, Rev.Longri Ao, Dr.M.Aram, Shri L.Lungaland, Shri Kenneth Kerhulo and Shri Lungshim Shaiza, participated in the discussion.
3. The following is the outcome of the discussions: -
 - i) The representatives of the underground Organisations conveyed their decision, of their own volition, to accept, without condition, the Constitution of India.
 - ii) It was agreed that the arms, now underground, would be brought out and deposited at appointed places. Details for giving effect to this agreement will be worked out between them and representatives of the government, the security forces, and members of the Liaison Committee.
 - iii) It was agreed that the representatives of the underground should have reasonable time to formulate other issues for discussion for final settlement.

Dated, Shillong.
11th November.1975.

Sd/- (I.Temjenba)

Sd/-(S.Dahru)

Sd/- (M.Assa)

Sd/- (Kevi Yally)

on behalf of the representatives of Underground Organisations.

Sd/- (L.P.Singh)

On behalf of the
Government of India

**SUPPLEMENTARY AGREEMENT TO THE SHILLONG ACCORD ON 5TH
JANUARY, 1976.**

Implementaion of Clause II of the Shillong Accord of 11th November, 1975.

1. It was decided that the collection of arms, initially at collection centres, would commence as early as possible, and will be completed by 25th January, 1976. Initial places of collection to be decided through discussion between Commissioner, representative of Underground Organisation and the members of the Liaison Committee.
2. Once all arms are collected, these will be handed over to peace Council team at the respective places of collection.
3. Peace Council team will arrange to transport the arms from collection centres to Chedema Peace camp and arrange guards etc, for safe custody of the arms.
4. Similar arrangement at agreed place/places will be made in Manipur with concurrence of the Manipur Government.
5. The Underground may stay at Peace Camp to be established at suitable places, and their maintenance will be arranged only by the Peace Council.

Any voluntary contribution from any source will be made to the Peace Council, who will utilize the fund according to necessity

1. Sd/- (Biseto Medom Keyho)

2. Sd/-(Pukuvi Nakru)

3. Sd/-(Z.Ramyo)

4. Sd/- (I.Temjenba)

Dated, Shillong

5th January, 1976.

Sd/- (L.P.Singh)

Governor

Source: Charles Chasie, *The Naga Imbroglia, A personal perspective*, Kohima standard Printers and Publishers, Kohima, 2000.

ANNEXURE IV

THE NAGA-AKBAR HYDARI ACCORD, 1947

*Tribes Represented at Discussions on the 26th, 27th and 28th
June, 1947 at Kohima*

Western Angamis

Eastern Angamis

Kukis

Kacha Nagas (Mzemi)

Rengmas

Semas

Lothas

Aos

Sangtams

Changs.

Heads of Proposed Understanding:

*That the right of the Nagas to develop themselves according to
their freely expressed wishes is recognized.*

1. Judicial – *All cases whether civil or criminal arising between
Nagas in the Naga Hills will be disposed of by duly constituted
Naga Courts according to Naga customary law or such law as may
be introduced with the consent of duly recognized Naga
representative organizations: save that where a sentence of
transportation or death has been passed there will be a right of
appeal to the Governor.*

In cases arising between Nagas and non-Nagas in (a) Kohima and Mokokchung town areas, and (b) in the neighbouring plains districts, the judge if not a Naga will be assisted by a Naga assessor.

2. Executive – The general principle is accepted that what the Naga Council is prepared to pay for, the Naga Council should control. This principle will apply equally to the work done as well as the staff employed.

While the District Officer will be appointed at the discretion of the Governor, Subdivisions of the Naga Hills should be administered by a Subdivisional Council with a full time executive President paid by Naga Council who would be responsible to the District Officer for all matters falling within the latter's responsibility, and to the Naga Council for all matters falling within their responsibility.

In regard to: (a) Agriculture – the Naga Council will exercise all the powers now vested in the District Officer.

(b) C.W.D. – The Naga Council would take over full control.

(c) Education and Forest Department – The Naga Council is prepared to pay for all the services and staff.

3. Legislative – That no laws passed by the Provincial or Central Legislature which would materially affect the terms of this agreement or the religious practices of the Nagas shall have legal force in the Naga Hills without the consent of the Naga Council. In cases of dispute as to whether any law did so affect this agreement the matter would be referred by the Naga Council to the Governor

who would then direct that the law in question should not have legal force in the Naga Hills pending the decision of the Central Government.

4. Land – That land with all its resources in the Naga Hills should not be alienated to a non-Naga without the consent of the Naga Council.

5. Taxation – That the Naga Council will be responsible for the imposition, collection, and expenditure of land revenue and house tax and of such other taxes as may be imposed by the Naga Council.

6. Boundaries – That present administrative divisions should be modified so as (1) to bring back into the Naga Hills District all the forests transferred to the Sibsagar and Nowgong Districts in the past, and (2) to bring under one unified administrative unit as far as possible all Nagas. All the areas so included would be within the scope of the present proposed agreement. No areas should be transferred out of the Naga Hills without the consent of the Naga Council.

7. Arms Act – The Deputy Commissioner will act on the advice of the Naga Council in accordance with the provisions of the Arms Act.

8. Regulations – The Chin Hills regulations and the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulations will remain in force.

9. Period of Agreement – The Governor of Assam as the Agent of the Government of the Indian Union will have a special responsibility for a period of 10 years to ensure the observance of the agreement, at the end of this period the Naga Council will be asked whether they require the above agreement to be extended for a further period or a new agreement regarding the future of Naga people arrived at.

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by Keviyu John Bosco Sote

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