

# Rural Development in Nagaland

A.L.AO

*Editor*

A C Sinha

The book is an exercise on complexity of Rural Development Programmes in general and Tribal Transformation in particular. After providing historical, methodological and social background of the study in the first three chapters, it examines emerging Agrarian Relation, Rural Social Structure, The Naga Authority Systems and the participation of the Tribesmen in rural development schemes in the Medziphema block in Kohima district of Nagaland. The last chapter proposes a Naga model of development strategy on the experience of multi ethnic experiment reported from Diphupar village. It is a first hand sociological analysis based on the field data collected by a Naga scholar from five representative villages. It is eminently rich in skillfully presented data through numerous tables, diagrams, graphs, maps and appendices and transparently sincere in conclusions.

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# RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NAGALAND

A. LANUNUNGSANG. AO

*Editor*

A.C. SINHA



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## FOREWORD

“It is a first-rate sociological and ethnographic account of economic and political life in Nagaland. I was struck by its high quality in presenting massive quantitative data, coupled with their pithy qualitative interpretation. Mr. Ao, has skillfully integrated his documentary research with his own fieldwork. He should be commended for combining historical ethnographic and sociological methods in collecting, collating and interpreting vast amounts of information he has presented in a jargon-free and lucid style.”

**Triloki N. Pandey,**  
*Professor of Anthropology,*  
*University of California,*  
*Santa Cruz. U.S.A.*

# PREFACE

Many books on rural development have been published and many are yet to be published by scholars. However, there is no book on Nagaland providing an authentic documentary research based on field work written by a Naga scholar. The book may be relevant to the scholars, students, planners and policy-makers, as it has grown out of more than ten years of teaching, research and extension work in the State.

The first chapter is an historical study of rural development in different periods covering relevant studies in India and abroad. Chapter two deals with methodological framework and parameters of the study, while the next chapter gives us background of study. This is followed by ethnographic, historical and sociological investigation regarding land relations in the region. Chapter five is a socio-economic analysis indicating various levels of development and change. A reformative phase has just begun in rural areas of Nagaland and this trend is taking place fast enough to demand proper management and supervision, which have been examined in this chapter. Chapter six deals with Naga system of village organisation, administration and authority system promoting rural development. A specific study on a multi-ethnic Naga village, Diphupar, is detailed in this chapter providing a model for future development and change in Naga society.

A number of rural development programmes with different nomenclature are operating in our country. Chapter seven details us how these programmes are operated in Nagaland, and how effective they are. In the concluding chapter, the author has examined the necessity of re-structuring the existing over-all system: calling for introduction of a Naga model of development strategy. Knowing well its limitations and controversial nature of

the issue, the author has suggested the model as a part of solution for the Nagas which may require further detailed studies.

The entire research work has been undertaken under the supervision of Prof. A.C. Sinha, Head of the Department of Sociology, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong. I express my sincere thanks to him for his constant encouragement and suggestions throughout the work. I am indebted to him especially for taking pain in editing the book. My gratitudes are due to my teachers and colleagues; Prof. M.N. Karna, Dr. V. Xaxa, Dr. Nikhlesh Kumar, Dr. C. Lima Imchen, Dr. I Lanu Aier, Department of Sociology, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, who trained me in the discipline. I am also thankful to Prof. T.N. Pandey, University of California, Santa Cruz, U.S.A. who happened to be a visiting Professor at NEHU for his kind advice and encouragement particularly for developing a model for a multi-ethnic Naga village of Diphupar.

I extend my sincere thanks to all the residents of the five villages selected for the study in general and the village elders in particular and numerous respondents who provided me with the data. I also record my thanks to all other friends and colleagues who helped in so many ways. My thanks are due to the authorities of the North-Eastern Hill University for rendering all possible helps to me for the success of this work. In particular, I sincerely acknowledge my obligations to all my dear colleagues, staff and students of the School of Agricultural Sciences and Rural Development, North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU) Medziphema, Nagaland for their kind cooperation and helps. I extend my thanks to Mr. John Joseph and Mr. A. Dkhar, for typing the final draft for publication.

Lastly, but not the least, my sincere appreciations are due to my dear wife and children for their patiently bearing with me and halping me day and night throughout the busy days of this work.

Medziphema

**A. Lanunungsang Ao**

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## Editor's Foreword

Dr. A. Lanunungang Ao's painstaking, penetrating and authentic study on rural development in Nagaland is a welcome addition to increasing corpus of literature on the theme and the region. There are many reasons to welcome the publication. Firstly, the author proceeds in a systematic manner to trace out the historical background of rural development ventures in India and elsewhere. Secondly, he takes his readers in confidence on the social profile of the locale of the study and the reasons for selecting five villages to generate first hand empirical data from the grass-root level. Thirdly, he delineates inter-tribal, intra-tribal, inter-clan, village, inter-village, and other aspects of Naga social structure, and authority systems in the next three chapters. Fourthly, he provides the minutest details of the various rural development schemes introduced at the instance of the Government, their actual performance at the village level, and the quality of Naga participation in such dispensations. Fifthly, the concluding chapter on the Naga model of development presents an ingenious, pioneering and audacious proposal to restructure the Naga social and political structures with a view to achieving what he calls Naga tribal socialism. And he is resourceful enough to garner support for his proposed dispensation from the traditional practices, the Indian constitutional provisions and the various agreements signed between the Nagas and the Indian Central Government authority.

The locale of the study is the Medziphema Development Block near the gateway of Nagaland, Dimapur, which is endowed with ideal ecological niche, institutional support and infrastructural amenities available to no other Block in the State. This is the most urbanized, industrialized, politically conscious and ethnically heterogenous region in Nagaland. Keeping them in mind, he drew the list of the recognised and revenue paying villages and unrecognized settlements and selected five villages from among them—an Angami, a Kachari, a Kuki, a Sema and a mixed tribal one—for intensive study. As a Naga, as a teacher and as a social activist he

knows the locale of his study like the back of his palm. The amount of empirical data he could collect was no massive that they posed a daunting problem to present them to the readers in a reasonable form. The presentation points towards the potential problem areas for the Naga society, which demand urgent attention from the concerned citizens.

Chapter seven of the book details the various schemes introduced for the rural development, their functioning, achievements and the nature of the people's participation in them. The analysis exposes the hallowness of the claim of the rural development on the part of the state and uncovers the naked reality of callousness, corruption, inefficiency and inappropriateness. The author successfully blends his various roles as a researcher as an extension expert, as a social worker and as a church activist into a concerned citizen to focus on the plight of the under-dog. He feels for the students drop-outs and Nagas' non-concern for a work culture; he is worried of Naga idleness and propensity to consumerism beyond their means; he is upset because of the emergence of landless labour, share cropping, rural inequality; and he is concerned for increased rate of inter-ethnic marriages as potential signal of future conflict.

All these led him, rather provoked him, to think aloud for a possible solution. It is instructive to know that he turned back to Naga tradition and found the Naga model of inter-ethnic co-existence at Diphupar village, one of the five units of his study. Unlike the mono-tribal villages elsewhere in the state, it is a multi-tribal village with about a dozen of tribes and some non-tribals residing together and evolving an inter-ethnic village level effective authority structure. For the Nagas, who are governed by their own traditional practices and usages in everyday life, it is a unique experience to accommodate the similar and, at times, varied demands of the Nagas, who also claim to follow their own traditions. The author took the lead, examined the prospect of the experience from the village and elevated it at the state level as a projection of the future inter-tribal co-existence. He found encouragement in his endeavour as he felt that it was in this way only to preserve the Naga identity in the fast changing world, and the agreements signed between the Naga representatives and the Central Government and the Indian Constitution guaranteed special dispensation for the Nagas. Thus, the Naga model of development strategy was proposed with all confidence and seriousness.

The study refers to the phenomena of Naga social transition. The Nagas have changed and are changing fast. They have reluctantly chosen to enlarge their world through religion and politics. They have one of the highest literacy rates in the country and they are coming up for the higher and professional education. At the local level, their economy has been monetised and inexpensive factory produced consumer goods have found an extensive market. In the process, the Nagas are effectively integrated to the world (Christian) religious system, Indian political culture and the world-wide urban-industrial market economy. And for the concerned Nagas, there lies the danger, as the diacritical marks of the Naga identity are increasingly being questioned. Konyak, Kuki and Sema have all powerful village chiefs; Ao, Lotha, Sangtam, etc. have democratically governed village republics and in between there are tribes, which are near authoritarians or almost democratic in their orientations. These authority systems are intimately linked with the control over economic resources. As the modern forces have strongly influenced the Naga World view, the traditional communal solidarity has slipped off to a lower priority. That's why private property, landless agriculture labour, share-cropping, economic inequality, profiteering, etc. have become common among the Nagas. In such a situation, inspite of all the legal and constitutional provisions what type of rural development can one visualize in the state of Nagaland?

The author reacts to the above issues in right earnest. His readings in rural development inform him that there is almost a concensus that a meaningful rural development will not be possible without structural changes in the land relations. Thus, he takes a bold step and proposes the Naga model of the rural development strategy. For which he provides some details inspite of the fact that these details will be tentative. He concedes the point that once the need for acceptance of an indigenous model is acknowledged, further details may be worked out by the experts. However, there are problems with the model. It is a fact that the state of Nagaland was created on an ethnic plank and the Indian Constitution guarantees the age-old tribal practices and usages. But author's plea to restructure the formal elective bodies exclusively on ethnic criterion instead of the present universal adult franchise may lead ethnic particularism and in the process the intended common wealth of Naga socialism may not be achieved. Secondly, there have been a number of Naga practices, which were antagonistic to the

democratic ethos. Emphasis on distinct ethnic identity may be counter productive for the claimed objectives. Thirdly, the author sets his objective to examine the issue of rural development in a tribal hinterland and provides some possible solution to the problems. But he has come out with a proposal to re-structure the entire Naga polity. It is a very serious exercise, which need to be taken up by the policy-makers, Naga leaders, intellectuals, legal experts, constitutional specialists, and the Nagas as a whole, which are a tall demand. Even if these demands are conceded, the only agency to enact the laws is the Indian Parliament. The Constitutional amendments are serious exercises; they are time consuming and combursome. By the time the Parliament enacts appropriate laws to incorporate Dr. Ao's stipulations, what will be the fate of the rural development?

One of the merits of the book is its transparent sincerity. This is one of the rare exercises, in which a scholar belonging to a scheduled tribe provides a thorough and dispassionate analysis of the rural transformation. He has done sufficient background readings on the topic, knows the tribal institutions supportive of the schemes and collected adequate data to support his conclusions. There are occasions, when social activist appears to take over the sociologist in his presentation. But in our opinion this is not the weakness, rather it is the strength of Dr. Aos' analysis and over all commitment to the course of the Nagas. This is one of the rare books in which the author does not stay in the background of objectivity, rather he has chosen to act as the guide to the readers. We hope the book will be an invaluable addition to the analytical literature on rural sociology of North-East India.

A.C. SINHA

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AH	-	Area Hoho
AV	-	Ao Village
ANV	-	Angmi Village
BDO	-	Block Development Officer
CADP	-	Compact Area Development Programme
DPB	-	District Planning Board
DWCRA	-	Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas
GB	-	Gaon-Bora
GRV	-	Garo Village
HH	-	Household
IRDP	-	Integrated Rural Development Programme
JRY	-	Jawahar Rozgar Yojana
KKV	-	Kuki Village
KRV	-	Kachari Village
LH	-	Lower House
MV	-	Mized Village
NREP	-	National Rural Employment Programme
NV	-	Nepali Village
NIRD	-	National Institute of Rural Development
PVSSA	-	Promotion of Voluntary Schemes for Social Action
RLEGP	-	Rural Landless Employment Guarantees Programme
RD	-	Rural Development
SRDA	-	State Rural Development Agency
STV	-	Sangtam Village
SV	-	Sema Village
SMF	-	Small Marginal Farmers
TRYSEM	-	Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment
UR	-	Upper Hoho
VC	-	Village Council
VCM	-	Village Council Member
VBD	-	Village Development Board
HHV	-	Household Having

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