



Preservation of Naga Cultural Heritage

Jessymol MV

Department of History, Research Scholar, St. Joseph University, Dimapur

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Dr. Avinuo Chupuo

Assistant Professor and Head Department of History St. Joseph University, Dimapur

Abstract

Nagaland is a state inhabited by 16 hospitable tribes and other sub-tribes. Nagas are the tribal people, belong to Mongoloid ethnic group. Nagas lived a life, centered on agriculture and headhunting. Each tribe is distinctively different from the other in terms of tradition, customary practices, language and attires are preserved. The word culture has varied meanings and it is inseparable from human life. According to Oxford Dictionary, Culture is defined as the arts and other manifestation of human intellectual achievements of a particular time or people. Naga Culture is associated with the ways of living and therefore it can mean the way they eat, the way they dress, the way they speak or the way they work to earn their livelihoods. It includes the norms, customs, traditions and beliefs that are related with the mountain dwelling people i.e. the Naga community. Culture is the common heritage of the society and passed on from one generation to the next. The modern ignition of information and new desires should not break up the Structure of the Naga society but it should protect its culture. The history and traditions of the Nagas are preserved in the memories of the people and handed down to generation to generation. It includes everything under the sun that can be communicated to the next generation. It is both specific and conceptual that is expressed in tangible objects as well as in ideas and philosophy. The rich heritage is the patrimony and it speaks volumes about its culture and customs of the tribe. It has been decaying because of the modernization .This paper aims, to preserve and promote the rich cultural heritage of the Nagas while they are still relatively intact.

Keywords: Naga, Culture, Preservation, Heritage, Tribes, Tradition

Culture derives from French word “Cultura” and in Latin “Colere” meaning “tend” or “cultivate” the idea of cultivation of mind, faculties or manners has risen. It also meant “to honour” and “protect”. In cultural studies, culture is mode of generating meaning and ideas. Popular culture is the set of practices, and beliefs shared by the people, and are constituted by the everyday life of the peoples. Such as the food habits, fashion, forms of Transport, the music, and the reading habits, the spaces they occupy and traverse. The wave of the modern culture is hard on Naga society and if it is not prepared to face it by the Naga society then the Naga culture will be engulf by the waves of cultural aggression. If the Naga society has to keep its identity, then it has to preserve its culture. Culture must be resolved, developed and improved. It should be protected from the alien invasion and refined. According to John Martin says “Our Educational institutions should not only to transmit the heritage but also prepare the youth for future occupations, develop sound character, promote physical health, and teach the ways of the culture.” Without culture there is no identity of community. There is no society on earth without an identity and it is one of the most crucial attributes of the society.

According to the modern definition of UNESCO, which state that culture is a “set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of a society or a social group and it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs”. Culture defines our ethnic identity and not simply something mysterious or incomprehensible. We often question ourselves about parenting our Naga Culture, which we have inherited from our ancestors a lot of traditional and cultural heritage. Today it is sad to say that we are losing them while looking out at the outside world either to imitate or to learn. The Nagas actively engaged in blind aping of western culture, while most of their original cultural values disappear. Today the culture among the modern generations is deviating from the sanctity of traditions, customs and practices with science and technology. Some of the Traditional cultural practices of Nagas are given below;

1. The Housing and Household Articles

The traditional Naga house is made up of wood, bamboo, mud and thatches. Walls are made of bamboo splits, wooden poles and plastered with mud, and roofed with thatches. Traditional Naga house architecture was erected on the basis of a frame of bamboo poles and the roofs were covered with bundles of thatch but such buildings are fire prone, often whole villages are burnt down and had to rebuild. At the top of the post was tied to the thatch with the cane thongs. On the top many small woods were erected and the side of the house was used bamboo matting. The front wall was made with big broad woods and the rooms are made with planks, and kept in place by cross pieces formed beams with two different sides. Front side of the house is carved with the heads of men, Mithun, etc. An important step in house construction is erecting the main post. It is cut in the forest and the branches are sawn off on the spot. A large group of people is needed to drag the log from the forest to the village using ropes or long bamboos fixed to it, and they do so while singing in rhythm in which they pull it along. The middle post of the house was erected, and all necessary parts of the later building process are ready and start the bamboo pole frame work. The house comprises of three compartments, front room for storing the paddy and for rice pounding, the second room if separated

with the planks contains the fireplace, composed of three stones for cooking food. The third room is often made with bamboo door which is entrance and exit to the house. The front door is made with wood and the outside is made with large number of bamboo sticks crossed. The roof of the house is ready with the thatch. They use only fire wood and the house will not have a chimney and the smoke will have to find out its own way to go out. In the kitchen, the torches were made of bundle of splited bamboo and tin used for kerosene lamps. The surrounding of the house is neatly maintained.

After the Second World War people changed the pattern of making the house, they started to use corrugated and galvanized iron sheet. Most of the people have the modern electronic goods like radio, television, tape recorders, compact disc players, sewing machines and all sorts of home purposes which make life easier and comfortable. Population increased, Christianity has removed all kinds of superstitions, and people build their houses where there is fresh air and a clean surrounding. The house designs changed and huge amount of expenses were involved. Earlier, the houses were constructed by the relatives and clan members but now they hire laborers, architects and contractors from outside, who took months and years to complete a house with bricks or timbers. Gradually, several rooms for different purposes have been made and floors are plastered with mud or wooden floorings and houses have been electrified. Today, the Nagas started building various types of modern brick houses and even local architects and builders are also available. Kitchen will have chimney, windows with glasses, rooms attached bathrooms and toilets and drainage systems are maintained around the house. After the completion of the house the family invites the pastor, deacons and the church elders, relatives to pray for the new house, during which food is prepared for them. When they have blessed the house, the family members will start living in the new house.

The early utensils were; i) Earthen pot for making rice, cooking meat, boiling water, making liquor etc. ii) Basket and Vat made with woven having four legs to make the liquor, iii) Gourds were used for carrying and storing liquor. iv) Horns of the mithuns and the buffalo were used for drinking purposes, v) Wooden spoons, bamboo cups and drinking vessels in different shapes were made for various purpose. vi) Large basket was used for storing the clothes and other things vii) Earthen jars were used for storing water. Bamboo baskets are used for carrying rice, wheat, maize, millets and smaller corns. Barns are made with bamboos for storing rice and other food crops but some use wooden box to store the paddy inside the living room. They use curved long table for pounding paddy, tray shape flat bamboos basket for winnowing rice and other things, and bamboo mats for drying rice and corns. Today most of the household articles have been replaced by the modern articles; people started, for cooking purpose people use various types of pots made of aluminum, steel, pressure cookers etc. and the use of LPG gas stoves came to exist.

2. Language

The Nagas had no written literature of their own. Language is inseparably interrelated with art and culture, different language to 'see' the world differently, and the structure of language determines a native speaker's insight of experience. Tradition says that Nagas at one time had their own written literature recorded on some animal skin. Through the careless use of the scroll by a scribe the skin was devoured by a

dog. So Nagas lost their literature. The English alphabet was first introduced in Nagaland by the missionaries. To promote and preserve culture, one must preserve and promote a language of culture. Culture is enclosed in our languages, and to promote and preserve culture, one must preserve and promote cultural language through education. To promote and to preserve art and culture, it needs to develop high-quality materials in various languages, preserve artifacts, and develop extremely qualified individuals to run museums and heritage. Language, as an element of culture, is undergoing deprivation rather than growing. To leave any legacy worthwhile for the younger generation, culture-oriented language study and its promotion in the school is necessary. The use of mother-tongue and the ethos of the people will be imbibed by the young generation which will shape their native culture to a great extent.

3. Family

The Naga family consists of father, mother and their unmarried children. A family is a unit made up of two or more people who are related by blood, marriage or by adoption, who live together to form an economic unit and bear and raise children. A family is a social and economic unit consisting minimally of one or more parents and their children. Family helps in conserving customs and settlements and sees that it is carefully passed from one generation to the other. The family is the Centre of culture and the cultural activities and in educating the children to prepare the young generation to face the challenges of the modern world. The traditional respect for elders is deeply rooted in Naga culture, where the family acts as the institution imparting such values to the children. To impart traditional values, knowledge and social ethics to a child is the responsibility of the parents. But, the traditional values and sentimental attachment to parents and grandparents are eroding because of the fast electronic advancement.

The Naga family system is Patrilineal and traces their descent through the men line. Modern father is concerned and give importance to giving education to his children but traditional fathers were giving training to his children how to become good agriculturists. The mother teaches the social and moral values with the Christian way of life to the children. The family life is centered on respect and co-operation, parents and elders were respected, children enjoy freedom but brought up to be obedient and co-operative. The rich parents even give land for cultivation to their daughters during her marriage. In the family, children not only help the parents in the modern society, but he or she should spend time in studies in schools, colleges and universities. After the death of the father gives respect to the eldest son and considered as the head of the family, others will consult with him if any problem arise in the family .The youngest son will get his parent's house, because the duty of the youngest son is to look after the parents in their old age.

4. Marriage and Divorce

Traditional Naga marriages are simple, yet highly auspicious. Marriage is socially recognized but varies from society to society. Marriage is an important social institution of the society. There are two forms of marriage basically ceremonial and non-ceremonial. Monogamy is the accepted form of marriage found in all the Naga tribe. Anyone marries from the same clan is expelled from the village and it was regarded as a great disaster. But, at present, with the advent of western trends, love marriages, arranged marriages, picking

their own choice and desire, takes place in all the tribes of Nagaland. The boys made frequent visit to their counterparts to know each other, and if their fondness grew each other and the boy proposes to get married with a girl then it was communicated to his parents. If any of the boys were not able to choose a girl, it was the parents who select the partners for their son's. There are two types of marriage in the Naga society- informal and Formal means. Man taking a girl to his house, where they remain for kenna of one day is known as Informal marriage and the ceremonial marriage is known as formal marriage. According to the traditional Angami tribe the marriage price consists normally of a spear, two pigs and fifteen or sixteen fowls. The man will buy a spear, pigs, chicken and keep them in his house, while the girl starts making rice beer in readiness for the ceremony. Three days after marriage they are restrained to go out of the village but after three days they can move out of the village. The marriage bond is the most essential relationship in Naga society.

Today boys and girls know each other through other means of communication and socialization such as- students' activities, youth activities, church activities, in schools, colleges, work places etc. They get to know each other and if they wanted to marry, they go and express their desire to their parents. If both the parents agree, the boy's parents will come with suggestion but if the parents do not agree then the alternative is to elope or to end their relationship. At present, they prefer someone who is educated; have wealth, beautiful, etc., for marriage. Educated person prefer educated partner and should feel economically stable. Earlier, they looked for the qualities in men such as whether he has taken any enemies head or whether he is hard working, and so on and in women they looked for qualities such as art of weaving, knitting, etc. But, the advent of Christianity, education and modernization had greatly changed the Naga socio-cultural settings. The increasing marriages are solemnized in various churches, expect during the transplantation and the harvesting season.

A man may divorce his wife if she does not bear him any child. Man gets unsatisfied with his wife for not being able to give him any male heir. He divorces his wife with the purpose to remarry with the hope of getting male heirs. If the husband ill-treats his wife by way of physical abuse or mental torture to the extent that she can no longer bear it, then a divorce is being sought. If the wife is caught committing adultery then she will be forced out from their house. In case of a divorce by mutual understanding, the wife gets one-third of their movable properties, but not immovable property. H.J Hutton written in his book, divorce creates problems in the family, lack of sexual purity and opposing attitudes of the couple invite a case of divorce. When a man wished to take a second wife without divorced his first wife, he must first obtain the latter's permission. Divorce is not encouraged today for chief reasons, so divorce is less compared to the past. Even if there are some problems the church leaders, pastor and the counsel try to bring settlement to solve the problems. Thus, marriage is considered as sacred and a bond of commitment, so separation has less possibility today. In case of mutual agreement for divorce the couples will divide all the properties equally. The spread of Christianity, education and revelation to the world have changed their life style.

5. Food and Drinks

Food constitutes an important part of culture and food culture refers to the practices, attitudes and beliefs on the consumption, production, preparation and distribution of food of different people. The structure of local economy depends on the natural resource availability, pressure of population and the level of individual. Major component of their daily meals is rice. They commonly use little or no spices that are widely used by the mainstream people. Vegetables are usually cooked in simple manner. The rice, meat and vegetables cooked together. Chilies were very important without which they could not manage. They ate white ants, big bee hornet, frogs, grasshopper, crabs, snails, dragonflies. The blood of animals was cooked as soup as well as for medicinal purposes. Big portions of meat was kept in the fire place and used as smoked-dried meat. They made bamboo pickles, appetizer eatable things like baked beans or boiled beans with salt and chilies. The favourite drink of the people is the rice-beer, which nourishes and strengthens the people. Drinking rice-beer is also a tribal way of entertainment. Ceremonies can never be complete without pouring the festival drink.

The advent of western education it brought job opportunities, thus people slowly move away from the agricultural activities and try to have easy life except for some old people. New machineries and technologies have been invented with the rapid advancement in science and technology that has made the life of the farmers stress-free. Animal husbandry also helps farmers to enhance their agricultural income and increase production. Many changes took place after the advent of Christianity; they stopped drinking which is harmful to the body. They eat different types of wild animals. Dogs, considered as a special delicacy are reserved for festivals banquets and used as medicines for different sickness. Cooking in the past was very simple but today, they have learnt the art of cooking various dishes as well as frying, boiling, and steaming with all sorts of modern accessories. One of the collective ways of food preparation is to cook meat and vegetables separately, and when they do not cook meat they have fry dal and other vegetables. They cook smoked meat along with potatoes and other vegetables especially with bamboo shoot and great lovers of vegetables.

6. Traditional Dress and Ornament

Naga traditional dresses are highly valued for their attractive designs and combination of colors. Stockhausen says that, the Naga traditional ornaments give a very inspiring idea of traditional way of life. Ornaments were mostly worn on special occasions, but some people, especially those with a prestigious position also wore them in everyday life. Early days, the finest of cloths could be worn only by the head-hunters or donors of the feast of merit. Every tribe has its own designs and choice of colors, each shawls has meaning and implication, shawls are for men and women found in many varieties. It would be hard to beat a Naga in his ceremonial fineries and his natural skill and taste in making use of the cowries, feathers, goats', hair dye red, shells, bones, and ivory. Naga textiles, of great variety and colour are worn by men and woman especially during the festivals and other great occasion. With the progress in transport and communication created an opportunity for the business and run their business smoothly by opening variety of cloth shops,

making it easier to get all kinds of clothes. The educated girls wear western clothes like pants, shirts, blouse, sweater, jacket, coat etc.

Today, many changes has taken place and we find hardly a modern man or women dressed in full traditional attires except, few aged village people during festivals and while performing festival dances. The modern boys and girls wear only during the festivals and cultural programs or during important social gatherings. The present generation like the western clothes like jean pants, shirts etc. Most of the educated Nagas like to use formal dress like pant, coat, necktie, shoes, etc. with shawl during social gathering, conferences, important church activities, etc. Earlier they kept their cloth in bamboo box but today in the modern boxes, suitcase etc. They kept their cloth under their bed after washing instead of pressing, but the present generation use electric iron for pressing the cloth. The present generation no longer bothers to wear the traditional attires; they feel odd to wear except on special occasions. The younger generations are more comfortable to wear modern clothes for various seasons, weather conditions, unlike traditional dress; the second hand cloth with less price are available for all seasons, according to the demand and need of the people. Westernization is one of the important factors which had replaced their traditional clothes and accessories except during students' meet cultural functions, tribal gatherings and festivals.

7. Agriculture:

The main occupation of Angami Nagas is agriculture - both Jhum and terrace cultivation. The terraces were irrigated by channels which carried water from the streams or torrent for a distance that may sometimes be measured in miles as many fields being fed on the way. The manuring of Jhum land is ever attempted, but sometimes manure in the form of cow dung collected by the owners of cows from their house and from the neighbouring is frequently applied to terraced fields. In the task of digging and puddling, a man is usually helped by his friends or kindred, he in turn also helps to work in those fields that have helped him. The owner of the field on which is being done is expected to provide those who come to work on his land with meal at mid-day which is cooked in the small field house which every owner of land erects. The paddy has been sown thickly on a patch of dry ground and the seedlings were ready for transplantation after four months. After planting it need cleaning two or three times. The Jhum land is cleared by chopping the trees first and then burning the low jungle and as much of the trunks of the trees as possible. After sowing, the land is cleaned three to six times before reaping. Agricultural activities start by the time specified by the sound of some birds and they believe that the birds act according to the forces of nature.

Today many changes have been taken place in the agricultural field of Nagas, but some elements are prevailed as 1912. The young generations only help the parents during transplantation and harvesting time. The old farmers in the villages are busy throughout the week except on Sundays. Some farmers employ people on daily wage basis and not the traditional way of asking help from the kindred and relatives. In order to generate fund during paddy planting time, the student's organizations, church youth organization, youth clubs etc., also gives a helping hand. Today with the advancement of science and technology many new things have been introduced in the field of agriculture. Cow dung manure is rarely

used for cultivation as it is now replaced by modern manures like insecticides, pesticides, fertilizers, and good yielding seedlings supplied by the government through agriculture department that led to the surplus agricultural production in the villages.

8. Animal Husbandry

The Nagas considered meat as his most important food item. In addition to using it as food, animals and poultry was needed for propitiating the supernatural beings and spirits for good luck during hunting, head-hunting, fishing, fertility of crops, animals and men. Animal husbandry helps farmers to enhance their agricultural income and increase production. Importance has been given to piggery farming, poultry farming and dairy farming. The most significant animal was mithuns. The magnificent animal is a form of wealth in which men invested for the Nagas large sums of money, but except for trading purpose and for consumption at feasts the Mithun is of no particular value, and the breeding of Mithun for trade. The mithuns are allowed to roam at their will in the jungle and grazing lands round the village, black predominated. Mithuns were kept for presentation of rituals during festivals, marriage ceremonies and for death rituals. These animals lived in the forest and were rarely visited time to time by their owner. The cow-shed was made near the owner's house, but often cows were kept in the entrance in front of the house. Hutton wrote even though it was genna but the status of a family depends on number of cattle. Even during the time of death, cattle was killed and distributed to all the clan and kindred and well-wishers. The owners of the cow make cow sheds in the jungles, kept herdsmen to take care the animals.

Today, they have given up buying and selling of mithuns for commercial purposes because they spend more time in other works. The herdsmen get money, rice and vegetables as their monthly salary, but early they received baskets of rice for looking after the cow. Pigs were reared for consumption and ceremonial purposes. Even in times of sickness and death pig is killed and in times of marriage pigs were considered as marriage price. During headhunting times, when a warrior came in victory, a pig is killed and celebrated. The tribal festivals the pigs were killed. The Nagas catch animals and birds for eating and dog meat are considered as having a medicinal value. Dogs were never killed or eaten by the man who has trained or kept for hunting purposes, and when they die a natural death, they are wrapped with a cloth and bury them, in recognition of the services they have rendered to their owners. Cats were kept in large numbers, and their ownership was valued, but not killed and eaten because it was genna.

9. Traditional Belief and Practices

The traditional religion was animism which depends on certain beliefs and enslaved them under the domain of superstitions. Naga traditional religion includes a belief in a Supreme Being, who is the creator and sustainer of human and other living beings. They believed that after death, the spirit of a person went to the land of dead. They believed nature and supernatural forces, and the spirits are believed to be present everywhere, which is responsible for sickness or death, and good health and richness of people. The important character of animism is the practice of appeasement. In times of disasters and natural calamities they seek the help of a Supreme Being. Tribal religion is the belief expressed culturally. Beliefs are

interpretation and explanations of myths. Thus, tribal culture is myth lived out, or religion in practice. The tribal religion and culture are consistently related like two faces of the same coin and it is identical. Disease might also be averted by offering a substitute in the form of old cloths, chickens freed and driven them away in the jungle to serve as an offering for the spirits of the jungle, or ,it may be, to carry away the element of sickness or misfortune that attaches to the person who devote them to this purpose. The practice of head-hunting was predominant among the Nagas and it was something more than war. They believed the abode place of God is in the sky and the soul of those who lived good life goes to the sky after death and if you want to reach there one should accomplish genna.

The Nagas believed that to hurt the feelings of older people would bring misfortune upon the offender. Traditional life of the Nagas were full of superstitious believes, uncertainties which hindered the progress of human being. Their life is dominated by fear of evil spirits. But Christianity brought changes; the Christians healthily resisted devils and faithfully submitted to God which changed the contaminated human environment into a creative helpful society. According to Christian doctrine states that, God is all-pervading, he sees everything, he is self-existent, which cannot be unknown, independent on him, but also everything to depend on Him. As the self-existent and independent one, God can give the guarantee that He will remain eternally the same in relation to His people. One of major belief is life after death the Christians believe that the soul does not undergo any change in any situations after death, but each soul after death would be distinguishable. Worship and traditional practice were carried out under their spiritual leader called Kemevo. The Kemevo directs all public ceremonies and fires the days for them, and as the office is hereditary, he is also the repository of the genealogical and historical traditions of his village, clan, and kindred. The coming of Christianity renovated social and religious transformation among the Nagas. Now most of the Naga villages are numerically dominated by the followers of Christianity.

11. Dignity of Labour

No work is less important and should not feel shy or feel ashamed digging the earth for construction, and cultivation in the fields as the flow of money into the hands damage the work culture. The Education policy of 2020 has gigantic task for cultivating work culture among the young generation at their potential age as students. The present generation hesitate to be seen doing manual work and carrying things in front of their peer group. Thus, the youth of today need the attitudinal change which is possible through education. According to L.S Mehra, “The youths of today have evolved their own ideals, values and standards which are different from those of the older generation. They have become indifferent towards the “values of the past”. The traditional system of education helps to learn through direct experience and active observation.

12. Customary Laws

There is no written constitution for the Nagas. They follow only the customary laws and any violation of these laws leads to punishment like banishment, fines etc. which is handed over down to them from one generation to the next and all are sure of it practices. It helps to have order in the society. Customary laws described as a set of rules through which a tribe practice its culture and express its

worldview. It is 'an established system of immemorial rules which had evolved from the ways of life and natural wants of the people. The general context of which was a matter of common knowledge, coupled with precedents applying to special cases, which were retained in the memories of the chief and his counselors, their sons and their sons' sons, until forgotten, or until they became part of the immemorial rules. As Joseph Thong stated in his writing that, the unwritten customs, cultural patterns, conventions, social norms and values had been established by old age usages and practices by the member of the Naga Society and has survived through centuries and handed down through oral traditions by the members of the society as a means of control for the harmony and good relationship among the members. Customary Law is an established thought and habit which has gained social recognition in uniform values, supported by common consent of the community.

Customary laws were orally decided and imposed in full reverence and it is compulsory by the elders of the village. Customary laws are respected, sacred, and inviolable to every village had its own laws, because the villages have its own dominance. The violations of customary laws are amounted to serious offense. The customary law is the habitual course of conduct of a society and contains and don'ts based on its norms, practices and use ages, mechanisms such as taboos, sanctions, social rituals, culture, public posture and ethics of each individual. Customs are not documented but year after year it has been passed down through strict practice within the society. Every family and clan solves their disputes within and no one was the definitive decider, but the truth was revealed and the punishment was given. The customary laws were treasured and it is dealt immediately and was not kept pending like the modern laws.

Today the village constitutions are simply the adoption of customary laws, with a difference. The present constitutions are written like the oral laws in the past. Most of the time village elders and the khel representatives are still make the major decisions with honesty and with commitment for the good of the society. The customary laws were strictly enforced within the village and judgments on any case coming before the elders marked immediately. Some cases the customary laws can be make solution like unintentional killing, theft, destruction of community properties and violence against women. In traditional Naga society there was no jail or police, but whenever any breach of law occurred, penalty was justly awarded in accordance with the provisions of the customary laws and no one have the courage to challenge the sanctity of the law. Customary laws are enforced to take care of every imaginable offence and crime. It is imposed for the crimes like inter-village and inter-tribal disputes on the matters; land disputes rape, molestation, murder, poisoning, theft, robbery, property inheritance, jungle burning, fishing, hunting, lending and borrowing of paddy, adoption of child, adoption of other clan etc.

13. Traditional Arts and Crafts

Arts reflect the ways the community experiences its relationship with the unknown or the mysterious. Albert Einstein said; "The most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious. It is the fundamental, emotion that stands at the cradle of true art and true science". Naga art reflects the cosmological relationship between the Nagas and the universe. Art is a practical skill to production of

aesthetic beauty and works and work of creative imagination. Naga art and craft are inseparable and closely associated with socio- religious rituals, customs and practices. Naga art Tradition is related with customary practices like traditional ritualistic believes and practices like head hunting, stone worship, cultivation based practices etc. The artistic scene and creativity is inherent in the tribes of Nagas. The carvings and art were seen mostly on the village gate, in the Morung, and in front of a rich man's or warrior's house. People carve the wood according to their desire with different figures. The Nagas are concerned in carpentry; some of them make sophisticated pieces of furniture and decorated their home. Pottery is an old-age industry, still practiced in many place. It needs capable persons for molding pots for cooking, rice-brewing purposes and containers of valuable household goods.

The Nagas are the most expert and resourceful in beautifying almost every single article they use in their daily life. The Crafts items were dao handle, walking stick, basket or mat, attractive patterns which took lot of time to make delicate enterprises. The women flock made shawl, skirt, Naga bags with diverse designs with great skills, fine artistic taste and delicate work. Crafts and woodworks pottery not only have a sense of beauty, but it was a way of life of self-dependence. The tradition of weaving is handed down from mother to daughter, it is found in almost every society. Weaving is considered as the domestic industry because it is found in every town and the houses. The modern professional weavers produce with modern designs, which have great demand outside the state. Traditional piece of Naga wear is an expression of Naga ethical life, world view and customary values. Naga cloth and traditional Naga attire express a great aesthetic sense embedded in and shaped by the natural environment. Cloth designates social position and cultural aspects, Naga shawls range from a very simple white cloth to the attractively designed warrior or rich man's shawl. The cloth suggested for the use by men are more remarkable in colour and design due to the traditional values in Naga society, relating to warfare, heroism and paternalism.

Present Naga textiles can hardly be related in richness and adversity to the weaving that existed in their societies in the 19th to the mid- 20th centuries. Simplicity and insufficiency of form and colour add to the beauty and dynamism of Naga textiles. The women scarcely grow cotton due to obtainability of various types of materials in market, and at present readymade threads of different quality, colours and shades are available. Traditional shawls are simple without much designs and patterns but the present shawls have various patterns and designs, more complicated and beautiful. After the coming of education, only few girls took up the art of weaving as profession in the village, but earlier it was for domestic consumption but today it is for commercial purposes. Most of the traditional dresses have been reformed and the Naga fashion designers make all sorts of dresses with the traditional decorations, designs and colours. Modern weavers have lost the significance and importance of various colours that they use, because the young people are influenced by the western culture and live a more comfortable life than their parents who worked hard with commitment. As Aglaja Stirn in his book noted that, the Naga basketry is a male domain and had fine design. The old people are skilled in this work and very few modern people had the knowledgeable art of basketry. The present educated people are not fascinated in learning the art of basketry, blacksmith like in the past years because of better job and education opportunities.

14. Festivals

Nagaland is known as the land of festivals as each tribe celebrates its own festival with dedication and passion. Festival is one of the ancient traditions of imparting social and cultural values among the people. The Hornbill festival is the major event is a showcase of the entire Naga culture. It is annual seven day feature that takes place from 1-7 December. A festival is a special occasion of feasting or celebration which is normally associated with religious practices. Traditional festival is an important occasions for communicating culture to the new generations. In the absence of proper system of education in the traditional society, the most effective mediator of education for the younger generations was through the festivals. Folk dances and songs are trained and cultured during festivals. Singing and dancing is a part of every festival. To promote inter-tribal interface and to encourage and preserve the rich cultural heritage festivals are celebrated every year. Each festival brings to the family and clan even to the village contentment and prosperity among the people. They are fond of social and community life. Their social life was marked with feasts of merit, traditional games and festivals. But today, participation by the younger generations in the festivals has become very occasional. Festivals become the passionate of the village life, but the new generations are not aware of its significance

According to A.Lanunungang, A festival is an occasion for celebration and the commemoration of anniversary or significant event and merrymaking. According to Horam explains that “Agricultural success or failure depends on the clemency or the fickleness of nature. This agency has to be won over and kept satisfied”. Gannas are observed and rituals performed in festivals to propitiate the Supreme Being for protection of crops from destruction by devastating wind and hailstone. Traditional games and sports, dance and music are important in festivals, it is an important occasions for communicating Naga culture to the new generations. Folk dances and songs are trained and cultured during festivals. Each festival brings to the family and clan even to the village happiness and prosperity among the people. T. Raatan in his book written that, the festival is ensuring the health and well-being of the community during the coming year. It is an occasion of great merry making; enormous quantities of rice-beer, beef and pork are consumed. The community as a whole participates in the celebrations. The hornbill festival has become a mega event not just for the 16 tribes of Nagaland, but also the remaining seven Northeast Indian states to showcase the best of their cultural elements. The historical myths and the stories try to bring back the traditional cultural practices and make the younger generation to be aware of the traditional culture.

In conclusion, it may be relevant to recall the words of Swami Vivekananda; “If anyone dreams of the exclusive survival of his own religion and culture, I pity him from the bottom of my heart and point out that upon the banner of every religion and culture will soon be written in spite of resistance, “Help and not Fight; Assimilation and not Destruction; Harmony and Peace and not Dissension”. The diversity of culture creates a rich and varied world, and increases the natures of human capacities and values. To promote and respect diversity of cultural expressions and raise awareness of its value at local, national and international levels we must preserve our culture and keep our culture intact. All cultural expressions presuppose the recognition of equal dignity and respect for all cultures. The conservative natures of the

Nagas will never lose completely their rich cultural heritage and superstitions. The common feature of the Naga Culture has a changing pattern from tradition to modernity. Many of the eminent Naga leaders have been taking the initiative to encourage the tribal people to revive and safe guard their cultural heritage. Education is one of the important and effective tools for the promotion of Culture. According to Elwin, to appreciate the artistic culture and to preserve one should require sympathy, imagination and the ability to relate with human life. The Nagaland state government has opened a separate department—"Department of Art and Culture" aims to foster the continuity, promotion and preservation of Naga culture. Exploring the myth, love and legend, usage and custom, song and dance, antiquity and abundant oral literature are the main functions of the department. The traditional culture has been changed to certain extent as it has been passed from generation to generation.

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