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## Creating Environmental Awareness through the Youth: A Case Study of Don Bosco College, Kohima

Fr. (Dr) Suresh<sup>1</sup>  
Dr. Lanukumla Ao<sup>2</sup>

### Abstract:

*In the present scenario, due to anthropogenic activities, environmental degradation is taking place at an alarming rate resulting in various environment issues. The younger generations including students are the effective media to bring enormous changes in the society. Hence, creating awareness about the environment to the young minds is the vital step in generating environment responsibility in the society at large.*

*Education has considerable power to help individual reconsider environmentally harmful lifestyles and behaviors. Therefore, environmental education can contribute significantly to the solution of environmental problems. Don Bosco College, Kohima, Nagaland through its various clubs is rendering services in creating environmental awareness and in that way has provided facilities to foster the development of the youth as responsible citizens in relation to the environment.*

*The paper therefore, will highlight the various steps taken by the college in fostering environmental awareness and responsibility among the students. This paper will examine the issue of changes in behavioral patterns of the students and in generating new research avenues in the field of environmental education.*

**Keywords:** Environmental Awareness, Environmental Education, Environmental Responsibility, Behavioral Pattern.

### Introduction:

Today's youth are the agents of change. They represent hope of the present and future as they are tomorrow's leaders. Young people have a greater stake in the future because the future belongs to them, they are more environmentally conscious and have more access to information than the seniors. They are thus well placed to advocate environmental issues and spread its awareness as they have been living in an era where environment protection is in prime focus.

Progress towards sustainable environment is dependent upon a fundamental change in youths' attitude to nature and the environment (Sukhwinder: 2013). The role of education institutions in relation to environmental sustainability is more prevalent as it is essential to impart and reinforce the environment respecting moral values in the young minds (Brynjegard: 2001). Over the past 15 years or so, educational institutions across the world have been encouraged to mobilize students and to take a more active participation in local, national and global processes towards environmental sustainability issues (UNESCO: 2012). Learning more about the environment generally means learning more about what we have done to the environment rather than what we have done to care for it. To become involved in respecting nature and protecting the environment over the long term, people need to have a sense of hope and gratification from environmental instructions (Stewart: 2001). However, instead of focusing on environmental protection, educational institutions across the world were compelled to work

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## AN INTERFACE BETWEEN NEP 2020 AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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### Abstract

Education to all and for all Children has been one of the major watchwords in the core of Indian Education since decades. The National Education Policy 1968 and 1986 with RTE Act 2009 had somehow led to improvement relating to access and enrolment of children to schools in India. According to U-DISE 2016-17, the enrolment rate of Differently-abled children is 1.09% in comparison with other children 98.91% and the enrolment drop rate from grade 1-12 is 1.1 % to 0.25. In fact, very few among these children rarely progress beyond primary level and mostly does not even get enrolled or access to education. National Education Policy 2020 came as a much awaited educational policy in the 21st century. Realizing such disparities in the existing education system in the country, NEP 2020 has made a tremendous attempt in refocusing and reassuring equitable and inclusive education in India. Prioritizing RTE 2009 and RPWD 2016, the new NEP has included various innovative recommendations for making education more inclusive. This paper attempt to review only on some highlighted recommendations for disabled and discussion on its possible implication.

### Keywords:

Education, Inclusive, Disabled, NEP.

### Introduction

India as a developing country has witnessed two types of educational system for a decade. One is Education in Special schools for children with disabilities and the other, Education in regular schools for normal children. Education for Children with disability begins to draw attention only in the second half of the twentieth century with various encouraging trends of developmental strategies and programs. Making education Inclusive has been one of the challenge to the existing exclusionary policies and practices of general educational system in our country.

Inclusive education being borrowed from alien country, the concept has still not obtained strong base in our educational system and the term itself is often misinterpreted or most often interchangeably used with the term integration. To define, the term inclusive education means that children from all categories with or without disabilities to be educated under the same roof in a regular classroom and the system of education to be liable to make necessary alteration to meet the needs of all children. Whereas, in integrated education children with disabilities are required to make adjustment with the existing school system with additional support and facilities.

Several attempts has been made in the past to make education inclusive in the country, however, despite all efforts, this area still remain insufficiently rolling due to multiple reason. As such NEP 2020, emanate with a diverse attempt to make education system further equity and inclusive in nature. Some of the new recommendations mentioned in the NEP2020 are discussed as bellow.

### SEDGs (Socio-economic Disadvantaged Group)

The SEDGs in New NEP 2020 is categorized into the following; Gender identities that includes female and transgender, Socio-cultural identities including SC,ST,OBCs and minorities, students from villages, small towns and aspirational districts under Geographical identities, migrant communities, low income households, children in vulnerable situations, victims of trafficking, orphans, child beggars in urban areas and urban poor under Socio-economic conditions and Disabilities such as 21 types of disabilities in RPWD Act 2016 including learning disabilities.

### SEZs- Special Education Zone

NEP recommended that regions of the country with large population from educationally-disadvantaged SEDGs should be declared as Special Education Zones, where all the schemes and policies are implemented to the maximum through additional concerted efforts, in order to truly change their educational landscape.

Schools for disabled

NEP 2020 recommends choices of schools to accommodate different levels of disabilities

- Regular or Special schools - Children with benchmark disabilities
- Resource centers- Children with severe or multiple disabilities
- Home- based – Children with severe and profound disabilities

NEP 2020 states, 'There will be an audit of home-based education for its efficiency and effectiveness in line with RPWD Act 2016.'

Involvement of parents/caregivers

NEP recommended that Resource centers in conjunction with special educators will support the rehabilitation and educational needs of learners with severe and multiple disabilities and will assist parents/guardians in achieving high-quality home schooling and skilling for such students as needed.

Technology-based solutions will be used for the orientation of parents/caregivers along with wide-scale dissemination of learning materials to enable parents/caregivers to actively support their children's learning needs.

Teaching methods and TLM

NEP recommended One to one teachers and tutors, peer tutoring, open schooling, appropriate infrastructure, suitable technology intervention to ensure access which can be particularly effective for Children with disabilities.

Assistive devices and appropriate technology-based tools as well as adequate and language-appropriate teaching-learning materials will be made available to help children

with disabilities, integrate more easily into classrooms and engage with teachers and their peers.

### Discussion

- The traditional categorization of marginalizing the disabled in NEP 1986 has been moved to the broader categorization in NEP 2020, under the umbrella of Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs). This might remove the barrier and segregation of such children in the society in general and educational system in particular, developing positive attitude among educators and parents towards education of such children
- The broader categorization might decline the importance of focusing on the priority areas which otherwise may require much more attention comparing to other categories. It might reduce the scope of full coverage of children with disability under SEDGs.
- NEP 2020 resolves the confusion of the choices of schools by including the provisions for school of differently-abled children mentioned in RTE 2012 and RPWD 2016 such as neighborhood schools, special schools and home-based education. It provides freedom to the parents to choose the type of schools for their children to attend depending on the kind of disability.
- However, the fact that there is scarce of inclusive schools and special schools in many parts of the rural areas in our country will be a reality check towards attainment of this goal. The conditions of few schools providing inclusive education at present are also not sufficiently functioning or adequately progressing to meet the goal.
- The audit of home based education in line with the guidelines of RPWD may also not be valid because the provision in RPWD for inclusive education contains accessible buildings and classrooms and individualized support towards full inclusion. No proper guideline for home-based education has been provided- curriculum, technique and method of assessment etc.
- Giving priority to the quality of Home based education involving parents and caregivers are a good step towards attainment of the targeted goal. And which will also be the choice of many of the parent's keeping in mind the safety and security of such children. Research findings in the area of parental attitude have shown that more than 90% of parents of children with disability asserts possessive and protective attitude towards their children.
- There is a scarcity of resource centers and special educators. Technology-based solution to orient parents and caregiver might be a greater problem as for the success of this recommendation as it required parents/caregivers to be fully or partially techno-friendly and literate.
- Owing to regional disparities and differences, NEP recommendation on identifying SEZs is a good attempt to attain equity and inclusion.
- Declaration of SEZs will depend on the census report of such mentioned population and its authentication will depend on the sincerity and valid means of data

collection of any agencies or organization involve in collecting the data. If not, it might lead to a chance of excluding those regions which are exclusively in need of the provision mentioned for SEZs.

- Innovative teaching methods receded by research findings and TLM centering on technology based solution recommended by NEP for reassuring the quality of inclusive education is quite commendable.
- One-on-one teachers and tutors and technology interventions will be a greatest obstruction towards the attainment of goal precisely in a region where student-teacher ratio is imbalanced. And availability of technology remains one of the major deficiencies in many of the schools.

### Suggestions

- Proper guidelines should be framed with eligibility criteria to ensure full coverage of mentioned categories of SEDGs.
- Check on the availability of inclusive and special schools and assess facilities and infrastructure of such existing schools.
- Check on the availability of resource centers and special educators in rural areas.
- Appropriate norms and standard to be framed to assess home-based education.
- Declaration of SEZs should be backed by valid authentication.
- Inclusive and Special schools to be equipped with latest technology and the special educators should be trained to be techno friendly in SEZs areas.
- There should be an alternate solution for parents who are illiterate or partially literate for providing home-based education.
- Teacher-student ratio should be checked and monitored in schools providing inclusive education.
- Orientation on awareness and knowledge about the available provisions and rights of Education for disabled children should be made compulsory for parents/caregivers and teachers in SEZs areas.

### Conclusion

New Education Policy 2020, when viewed from the perspective of equity and inclusive education for disabled can revamp the status of such children in the society. With all its recommendations, the new NEP can be viewed as an innovative attempt to improve the existing concept of education for disabled. The success of which will depend on all the citizens from every walks of life, if not corresponding all other previous policies and framework, it will remain a mere policy in paper.

All the recommendations mentioned in NEP 2020 on equity and inclusive are worth researching and discussion. However, due to time constraints only few distinct recommendations are covered in this paper, leaving scope for further research and discussion on the same.



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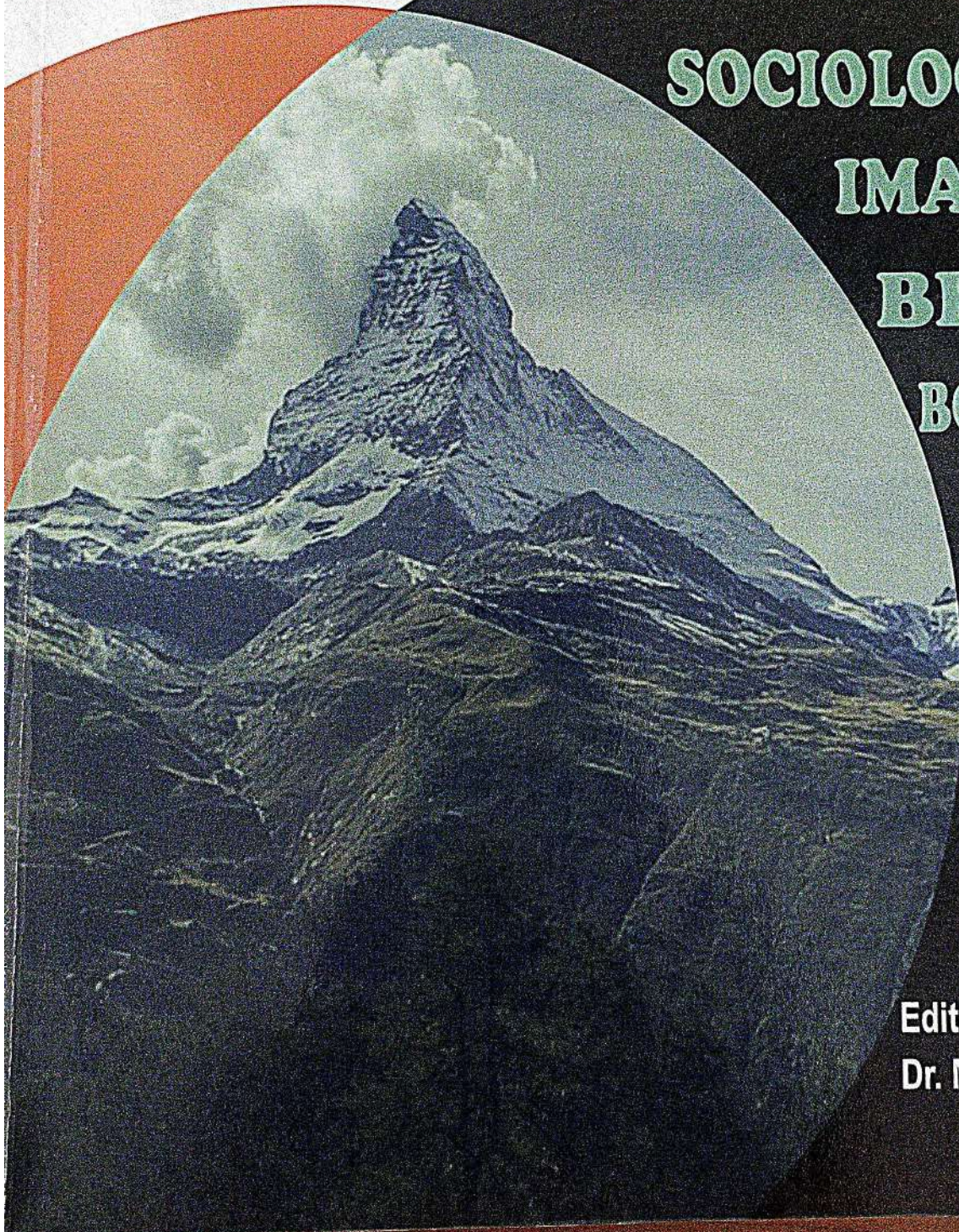
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ST. JOSEPH'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)  
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IMAGINING  
BEYOND  
BOUNDARIES



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with  
Department of Sociology  
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## PREVENTION OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN NAGALAND

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**Abstract:** A substance abuse is a pattern of repeated drug or alcohol use that often interferes with health, work or social relationships. Substance abuse known as drug abuse is a patterned use of a drug in which the user consumes the substance in amounts or with methods which are harmful to themselves or others, and is a form of substance-related disorder. Substance abuse and alcoholism are the major social problems which are engulfing the youth all over the state of Nagaland. The young persons have become the most vulnerable group an easy victims of substance abuse. There are various issues and challenges in Nagaland in relation to substance abuse such as discrimination, domestic violence, wife beating, divorce, rape, prostitution, murder, school drop outs, premature death, and broken families. Substance abuse and alcoholism are regarded as the root causes of many social evils in Nagaland for which it is a growing concern in Nagaland. They have emerged as the most important cause of distress, crime and violence in present day Naga society. The paper attempts to examine the epidemic of substance abuse prevention based on the investigation carried out in Kohima, Dimapur and Phek districts of Nagaland. It will propose suggestions to prevent drug and alcohol abuse in Nagaland.

Keywords: Substance, Drug, Alcohol, Abuse, Prevention

### **Introduction**

Nagaland is a tiny state of India in the North-East region, land-locked by Myanmar on the east, Assam on the West and Manipur in the South. The epidemic of substance abuse is a growing concern in Nagaland. Substance abuse has become an intense and pervasive social problem with a major social impact in Nagaland. Early substance abuse prevention is one of the best ways to lower the risk for addiction, and this prevention starts at home with families and parents. Substance abuse is harmful not only for the individual but also for his family and the society at large. The young people throughout the state of Nagaland have become the most vulnerable group and easy victims of drug abuse. The civil societies, voluntary organisations and government in collaboration with non-governmental organizations have to adopt the models and strategies in the role in prevention and reduction of substance abuse in the state. This paper is based on the study conducted in Kohima, Dimapur and Phek districts of Nagaland.

Substance abuse prevention, is also known as drug abuse prevention, is a process that attempts to prevent the onset of substance use or limit the development of problems associated with using psycho active's substances. Prevention is understood as any activity designed to avoid substance and reduce its health and social consequences. An extensive awareness programme is needed for all sections of the

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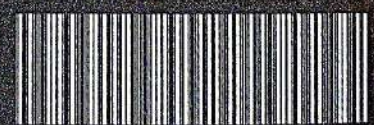


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# The Cultural Heritage of Nagaland

*Edited by*

G. KANATO CHOPHY  
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## CHAPTER 8

# Sacred Grove

## A Cultural Heritage of Nagaland\*

*Lanukumla Ao*

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### Introduction

Traditional societies all over the world value a large number of plant species from the wild for a variety of reasons – be it for food, fibre, shelter or medicine. Arising partly out of this close human-forest linkage, and partly because of animistic belief system of the forest-dwelling traditional societies, the protected area of the natural ecosystem has existed as sacred forest in many societies all over the world in a given region (Hughes and Chandran 1998: 869-76). Nature worship is an age-old practice followed by a number of indigenous communities in India and elsewhere in the world. One such significant tradition of nature worship is that of providing protection to patches of forests (Barik et al. 2006: 1). Sacred groves are the remnants of relict virgin forest vegetation of the area, which is often very much different from the vegetation of the surrounding area. They not only serve as repository of the

\* This research paper also draws from my other works 'Sacred Groves in Traditional Beliefs of the Nagas', in Amrendra Kumar Thakur (ed.), *Proceedings of North East India History Association*, 34th session, Imphal, 2013, pp. 211-15; and 'Sacred Groves of Nagaland and their Ethos', in Lanukumla Ao (ed.), *Historical Developments in Northeast India: Trends and Perspectives*, New Delhi: Research India Press, 2021, pp. 97-105.



flora and fauna of the region but also play several important roles in the life of people living in the area. Besides providing a large number of tangible and intangible benefits to the people in their day-to-day life, these are the places of socio-cultural activities of the people residing in the nearby area (*ibid.*: 4).

Cultural heritage represents the lifestyles of a community as passed on from generation to generation. It includes both intangible and tangible forms and is expressed in customs, practices, places, objects, artistic expressions and values (ICOMOS 2002).<sup>1</sup> It is inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and carried on for the benefit of future generations. At one time the concept of cultural heritage referred exclusively to the archaeological monuments and other tangible remains of cultures. The concept has gradually come to include intangible forms which are expressed in voices, values, traditions, oral history and perceived through cuisine, clothing, forms of shelter, traditional skills and technologies, religious ceremonies, performing arts, and storytelling. Today, the tangible heritage is bound up with the intangible heritage. This article is an attempt to examine sacred groves as a cultural heritage of Nagaland. It also attempts to throw a light on the disappearance of sacred groves and its impact.

### Nagas Concept on Sacred Groves

Sacred groves have important significance as a cultural heritage of Nagaland – historical, social, aesthetic and scientific. Since time immemorial, forests have been playing a dominant role in the history of the Nagas. The Nagas are by nature, dependent on the forest land, which is the best means of their livelihood. It is also inseparably interwoven with the progress of the state. Reverence and fear of nature was intrinsic to the Naga worldview, which was followed by all the tribes in the state. One such significant tradition of nature worship is that of providing protection to patches of forests. Unlike in many states, the sacred groves in Nagaland are unique.

Most of the groves are usually small patches of forest fragments of varying sizes, ponds and streams which are owned mostly by

individuals or clans and have a significant connotation. There were neither temples, nor shrines or altars or definite cult objects, but people made sacrifices by offering eggs, fowls, pigs and dogs to please the keeper (spirits) and deities of the site and also to ward off any evil spirits from harming them. Basically they worshipped the spirits without objects and material image. Hunting, collection of forest wealth and logging are usually done strictly by the owners of the grove. The forest was regarded as the seat of the evil spirit and to cut this forest for *jhum* cultivation, an animal was sacrificed to appease the spirit (Nshoga 2009: 220). They also identified the dreaded place in their village, and it was believed that anyone who ventured to tread the forbidden spot was killed by the spirits.

In all the interviews with the locals, the interviewees gave responses to the specific taboos or actions that prevailed in the recent past. People were not allowed to do anything – hunting, cutting of trees, collecting forest wealth etc., in a sacred grove. People did not harm sacred groves mainly because of socio-religious traditions and fear of unknown, believing that those who used an axe in a sacred grove might be harmed or face consequences from the presiding deity or spirit. These beliefs have strongly influenced conservation of the particular site for ages. The sites not only yield several non-timber forest products but also harbour multiple-use livelihood goods, provide habitat, water and nest-sites for wildlife and birds. Before the advent of Christianity, the religious beliefs of the people were directly or indirectly associated with the forest. However, with the coming of Christianity, the religious beliefs and rituals associated with the forest have declined and are now fast eroding.

#### Brief Account of Some Identified Sacred Groves in Nagaland

##### *Jangjanglong (Direct Communication)*

The site is situated at 2.5 km on the south of Waromung village and is 64 km away from the district headquarter of Alongkima. It consists of a large rectangular stone perched on a hill, measuring

about 54 m on two sides, extending 36 m west and 6 m towards the east and lying at an altitude of 922 m above the sea level. The stone is said to be possessed by a ferocious spirit with supernatural powers. In the distant past, traditional rites and rituals were conducted here.<sup>2</sup> Although its peripheral area has somewhat degenerated, the stone is conserved and the core area is still intact.

### *Yimchingkaba*

This is located at Lakhuni village in Mokokchung district. The place has holes and fissures in the ground called Wangching locally. The area is believed to be haunted by an evil spirit. It is said that long ago a woman was mauled to death by a tiger, making the place cursed. Very few people venture here ensuring the forested area is well preserved. In the mid-1960s, Pangerchiba Langu was cultivating in the area along with another family. As the other son from the other family, Longkumtoshi was boiling tea in a bamboo, it burst open and severely scalded him. This led to the belief that the place was cursed and the spirit still dwells in the area.<sup>3</sup> Currently, the place is under cultivation.

### *Ngaza*

This lies 3 km from Ungma village on route to Settsü. It has naturally arranged stones in the shape of Arju (*morung*), and believed to be the house of the God (*Ngazatsüingrem*). The area belongs to the Pongen clan. While hunting here, the Pongen clan is always blessed with a good hunt while other clans do not catch anything. When disputes between members of the village cannot be resolved by village elders, the elders and the priest go to Ngaza taking offerings of rice along with them and perform rituals by wrapping the rice in two leaves, one each for aggrieved person and ask god to deliver judgement. After the ritual, the priest opens the leaves, the owner of the leaves in which the rice is disturbed, is declared as the wrongdoer. The Ngaza area is also said to be a zone

safe from fire during *Jhum* cultivation.<sup>4</sup> Although the peripheral areas are under cultivation, the core area is still undisturbed.

### *Ngatipang*

This lies about 1 km from Ungma village. There is a bamboo grove and a cave called *Jentisang ki*, meaning house. The local people worship the *Ngati* god called *Jentisang* from a distance, as they revere him. According to belief, a man while hunting a porcupine chased it to the cave; here he met *Jentisang's* wife who was pounding rice. She asked the man why he was hunting her pig. The man had to return home without the game.

People who go to the grove to collect bamboo shoot say that the *Ngati* god appears in their dreams asking them to return it; and at the time of jungle burning for *jhum* cultivation, if a fire spreads to the *Ngatipang* area, the area around the cave does not catch fire.<sup>5</sup> Presently, the area is being cultivated.

### *Mt Tiyi*

The site covers about 31 ha and lies above Wokha town at distance of 80 km from Kohima. The locals believe that this is the place where the spirits of the dead wash their feet on their journey to the land of dead. The place had been revered and conserved since ancient times.<sup>6</sup> The place forms the main catchment area for the town. Owing to population pressure and unscrupulous deforestation, there has been a gradual decline in the green cover of the area.

### *Potsowlan (Pathway of the Gods)*

The site rises to 487 m above sea level and is located about 28 km from Wokha district headquarters. It forms a pathway between Mt Totsu and Mt Tiyi, which the locals believe to be the pathway of the gods. Respect was shown to the gods by not resting on the path and keeping the area free from cultivation.<sup>7</sup> Locals still maintain

the pathway ensuring that it remains neat and clean throughout all seasons. However, people have started cultivation in the surrounding areas over the last decade.

#### *Limyon (Red Field)*

The site is located at Echuyonton under Wokha district at an altitude of 558 m above sea level and is located at a distance of 30 km from the district headquarters. It is inhabited mainly by the Aremo, Asao and Anyimo clans. Legend has it that in a fight between Mt Totsu and Mt Tiyi, Mt Tiyi decapitated Mt Totsu and placed the head at Limyon. It is said that the area turned red due to blood oozing from the head of Mt Totsu. The people regarded the area as unclean and unhealthy and hence it was left uncultivated for a long time.

Due to increase in population and demand for land, a family cultivated the area in 1953-4, during which their daughter died. In 1962-3, a widower cultivating the land also died. In 1973, two families cultivated the land during which a son from one family and a father from the other also died.<sup>8</sup> Although the yield is good from the land, it is left uncultivated even today.

#### *Liko Emvu (Unclean Land)*

The site is located at Yanphiso, 28 km from the Lotha district headquarters, and at an altitude of 276 m above sea level. In the upper part of the land belonging to the Tsanglao clan, there is a pond with a keeper (spirit) said to reside there. The area is thought to be unhealthy and unclean as a few people who had tread the area faced unfavourable consequences.<sup>9</sup> The site, therefore, is well preserved.

#### *Ali-Merum (Red Soil)*

The site is located at N. Longidang village under Wokha district at an altitude of 782 m above sea level. People of the area believe that the head of evil spirits (*tsüngrhan*) from the north beheaded the

evil spirit of the south in a battle. The body was buried in a place called *tsüngrhan khup* (evil grave) and covered with slate, which can be seen even today. Locals believe that due to their fight, the soil came out from underneath making it red and unsuitable for cultivation.<sup>10</sup> Currently, the area is preserved.

### *Sako-Selek*

The site is located at N. Longidang village under Wokha district and is situated at an altitude of 458 m above sea level. The place is believed to be the meeting place of the evil spirit. Some time ago, common folks dreaded to venture in that area. Only the chosen one, i.e. a messenger for the living and the dead could visit the site. The messenger used to perform rituals to please the spirit. During their forefathers' time, the place was covered with thick forest and even birds could not fly out from that place.<sup>11</sup> At present deforestation has taken its toll on the area.

### *Ihaingkicia*

The site is at Peren village and lies at a height of 1,443 m above sea level. The locals believe that a *Herabe* (spirit) resides here. Therefore, the people hold the place in reverence. The spirit was supposed to have protected the villagers from external attacks during the head hunting era. There are also many instances of people encountering the spirit. Though the area was not cultivated, making traps and collection of cane and firewood was done. Rituals were also performed by offering white cocks to appease the spirit.<sup>12</sup> Presently, the area is moderately disturbed.

### *Mt Herapaitu*

The site is situated at Peren village. According to legend this is where the spirit *nchang* from the south-west got engaged to a lady but could not marry her. She married Herapaitu instead. *Nchang* composed a song for his lady love requesting her to look back to him. People used to see shawls displayed at Mt Herapaitu, especially

in the evening. In the distant past, during the Hega festival, when a dancing troupe visited this part of the village, they claimed to have seen the spirit viewing their dance sitting on a tree.

As a sign of reverence to the spirit the people have preserved the place, turning it into a recreational place. The groom to be, usually takes his bride to Mt Herapaitu, showing that their lives as unmarried individuals is coming to an end.<sup>13</sup>

### *Yemetsu Lhove*

The site is located at Mishilimi village under Zunheboto district. The village is under the administrative jurisdiction of an ADC, Pughoboto. The locals believe that a spirit named *yemetsu* dwells there. Many generations ago people of Mishilimi saw *yemetsu* emerging from a hole. They closed the hole with a big stone to prevent the spirit from coming out and overpowering the people. The stone is still intact. In the past no human had dared enter the hole.<sup>14</sup> Even to this day, some people fear to go to that place because they believe the place may be haunted.

### *Sungato*

The site is at Mishilimi village. The locals believe the place to be cursed by the spirit of an angry old woman since her pig was killed and eaten by the people from the Chella clan. Till some time ago people were afraid of the place, leading to the area being reserved.<sup>15</sup> Currently, the site has become a picnic spot for youngsters.

### *Khinuhanlu (Dog's Sacrifice Place)*

This site is situated at Kuthur village, 10 km from Tuensang district, rising 1,250 m above sea level. Till the recent past, if villagers wanted to cultivate land, they had to sacrifice a dog to the keeper of the site. If the sacrifice was not made, a member of the village would die.<sup>16</sup> Hence, the site was left uncultivated. However, in 2013, construction of a link road has disrupted the area.

*Pelungkechup*

The site is situated at Kuthur village, 10 km from Tuensang district and rises to 1,254 m above sea level. Locals believe that the king of devils, *akokoba*, resides there. No one has ventured into the surrounding areas in the recent past. The villagers believe that whosoever hears any noise or sound coming from this place is sure to die.<sup>17</sup> Thus the site is neither inhabited nor disturbed.

*Khaiknohanlu (Pigs Sacrifice Place)*

This site is located at Kuthur village, 10 km from Tuensang district and is at a height of 1,254 m above sea level. Owing to growth in population and limited land for cultivation, the area has recently been brought under cultivation. Rituals are performed by offering pig, ginger and wine to please the keeper. Once rituals are over it is said that clearing of the site to be cultivated has to be completed that day itself or else death will befall the family.<sup>18</sup>

*Wonoshiyeh*

The site is located at Kuthur village at a distance of 10 km from Tuensang district. Throughout the year, thirsty birds come to quench their thirst at this stream. It is said that only the brave go towards the stream to hunt for birds. If a person, after killing birds takes rest in fields of other, ill-luck befalls the owner, or in most cases the owner dies. The locals of the area say that whenever people go for hunting to the stream, the keeper disturbs them by throwing stones.<sup>19</sup> Till this day the vicinity is not disturbed.

*Meiksuk-ke (Abode of Jealous Spirit)*

This is at Chessor village, 56 km from Tuensang district and is 1,225 m above sea level. Locals believe the site to be the devil's village. It is said that the devil rears livestock and one can even hear the devil call out to pigs to come and feed. With development and growth in population, the site has come under cultivation.



However, pig sacrifice is still done and performed by the head of the Lim's clan. Due reverence must be given while performing the sacrifice, failing which the owner of the land will face death as a consequence. At present even though the site is under cultivation, locals believe that the keeper still resides there. In June 2013, a villager named Murthung died after coming back from the site. Villagers believe that the keeper of the place hacked off his head.<sup>20</sup>

### *Longkhunpit (Stone Hole)*

This is at Chessor village, 56 km from Tuensang district and is considered sacred by the locals. The significance of the site is the presence of a stone with a hole. After the sowing, if there is no sufficient rainfall, one or two elders from the Khephuru clan go to the site to invoke rain. Stone chips and mud mixed with water in a bamboo mug is thrown on the stone. After performing the ritual, they cover their head with banana leaf and chant, *arilo* (let the rain be with us). However, if the rain catches them before they reach home, they die. On 18 June 1986, Shokhemba was sent to invoke rain, since rainfall was late that year. He was successful in performing the ritual, but unfortunately he was caught by the rain, and the following day he passed away.<sup>21</sup>

### *Asheru Long Khean (Path of Spirit of the Dead)*

The site is located at Chessor village, 56 km from Tuensang district. The locals believe that all dead spirits pass the site. The area, therefore, is considered unclean and remains untouched. It is said that the spirits take their livestock along with them and while crossing the site hit a stone with a spear, and then go to a pond (*asheru lonrike*) and take bath to free themselves to affirm that they no longer belong in this world. In this pond, strands of hair are found, which is believed to be of the spirits. The spirits then proceed to a tree and take rest. Here they tie up all the animals they carried with them before they depart for the other world.<sup>22</sup> At present the site is disturbed due to human activity.

*Wohnu-ya (Abode of Birds)*

The site is at Sotokur village, 33 km from Tuensang district and is at an elevation of 1,222 m above sea level. The site has a pond. Locals believe that the spirit/keeper of the pond heals/cures the sick. A *thümürü* (witch) performs the rituals by taking some ginger and rice from the sick person. At night *thümürü* takes the offering to the keeper of the pond. Owing to population pressure the area is used for cultivation. However, the owner of the land has to perform a ritual by killing a dog to please the keeper.<sup>23</sup>

*Mihshejin (Pathway of the Arimre)*

The site is at Chessor village, 56 km from Tuensang district. According to the inhabitants, conversation of *arimre* (devil) and cries of babies can be heard from the site. Legend has it that during a fight among the *arimre*, Rishila was killed and buried there. No trees or vegetation grows there and the site remains barren all the year. Hunters rarely go to the vicinity of the site to hunt. Even if they do enter, they do not find game and even if they do find game, they do not find their kill.<sup>24</sup>

*Moyitke-chih (Mountain Cut in the Shape of a Tail)*

The site is located at Sotokur village, 33 km from Tuensang district. There is a pond at the foot of the mountain. People do not drink the water from the pond because it is believed that it is the abode of the *arimre*. Moreover, the area around the pond is covered with thick forest growth, so that it is difficult for the people to gain access to the pond. The pond remains clean all the year. It is believed that the *arimre* keeps the pond clean.<sup>25</sup> At present the area has been disturbed due to construction of a link road.

*Shih Yeanyung*

The site is situated at Sotokur village, 33 km from Tuensang district. The Limkhiung Kheiungru clan has the sole right to get all

the wealth from the site. Even the keeper (spirit) of the site blesses only the clan members for hunting in the area. Other clans do not venture into the area fearful of inviting trouble. Till recently the site was revered.<sup>26</sup> Nowadays the place is under cultivation.

### *Oloanu*

The site is at Zakho village, Mon district. There is a pond where the level of water remains constant. Locals believe a spirit resides there. Till recently, the area was almost untouched. During winters, the water turns reddish in colour. Locals say that if the water remains reddish for 2-3 months, there will be no rainfall. During the Second World War, the British used the pond to dump their arms and ammunitions. After the war, they tried to retrieve them, digging to drain the water out. Before they could drain the water from the pond, one British officer dreamed that they have to give an offering to the keeper – six black cocks and six white cocks, which was interpreted as six men from the village and six British. The British therefore gave up the idea of retrieving their arms and ammunition.

If rainfall is late in a particular year, people throw stones to invoke rain. If the villagers want to clean the pond, they have to fast for three days. In the late 1970s, a villager called Pongting from Sangyu village laid traps on the drainage dug by the British to catch fish. He was warned by the elders not to do so, but he did not listen. He soon fell sick. He was carried home and died after reaching the village. In 2004, some youth from the village were cutting down a tree and it fell into the pond. As a consequence, the village got heavy rainfall accompanied by strong winds. The church and six houses were destroyed by the storm. At present, too, no one collects anything from the pond, but the adjoining area is under cultivation.<sup>27</sup>

People preserved sacred groves without any law imposed on them, as they believe in certain traditional values. The locals believe that deities, spirits or malevolent god(s), who is the creator of the universe, resides in the groves. People do not harm sacred groves mainly because of their attachment to socio-religious trad-

Table 8.1: Some Sacred Groves Identified in the State

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>Name of Site</i>	<i>Geo Coordinate</i>	<i>Status</i>
1	Mokokchung	(a) Jangjalong	94°31'05.3" E & 26°32'18.3" N	Gradual Decline
		(b) Yimchingkaba	94°30'05.784" E & 26°17'42.72" N	Under Cultivation
		(c) Ngaza	94°30'11.73"E& 26°17'46.73" N	Under Cultivation
		(d) Ngatibang	94°30'05.784"E & 26°17'42.72" N	Under Cultivation
2	Wokha	(a) Mt. Tiyi	94°16'27.55" E & 26°12'32.59" N	Gradual Decline
		(b) Potsowlan	94°07'07.2" E & 26°01'31.9" N	Under Cultivation
		(c) Limyon	94° 09'1.6" E & 26°02'06.9" N	Disturbed
		(d) LikoEmvu	94°19'1.4" E & 26°04'05.4" N	Preserved
		(e) Ali Merum	94°28'11.6" E & 26°88'18.5" N	Preserved
		(f) Sako- Selek	94°09'22.8" E & 26°02'27.2" N	Disturbed
3	Peren	(a) Ihaingkia	93°44'38.2' E & 25°30'34.6' N	Disturbed
		(b) Mt. Herapaitu	93°44'16.99" E &25°30'34.61" N	Disturbed
4	Zunheboto	(a) YemetsuLhove	94°60'09" E & 25°53'28.9" N	Preserved
		(b) Sungato	94°15'42.1" E & 25°53'8" N	Disturbed
5	Tuensang	(a) Khinuhanlu	94°49'20.3" E & 26°00'50" N	Disturbed
		(b) Pelungkechup	94°48'24.7" E & 26°00'00.1" N	Preserved
		(c) Khaiknohanlu	94°50'20.7" E &26°00'40.4" N	Under Cultivation
		(d) Wonoshiyeh	94°49'37.88" E & 26°00'3.53" N	Preserved

		(e) Meiksuk-Ke	94°45'31.2" E & 26°00'40.2" N	Under Cultivation
		(f) Longkhunpit	94°43'5.78" E & 26°04'49.96" N	Preserved
		(g) Asheru Long Khean	94°43'27" E & 26°04'53.7" N	Disturbed
		(h) Wohnu- ya	94°47'05.7" E & 26°08'05.2" N	Under Cultivation
		(i) Mihshejin	94°43'12.08" E & 26°05'7.18" N	Preserved
6	Mon	Oloanu	95°05'58" E & 26°49'20.20" N	Under Cultivation

Source: Lanukumla Ao.

itions and fear of the unknown. To venture or cultivate the grove, the people have to offer sacrifice to the presiding deity/spirit/god. For instance, at a site called Muksuk-ke at Chessor village, a pig sacrifice is done if the site is to be cultivated; at another site Wohnu-ya, Sutokor village, rituals are performed for a sick person with some ginger and rice.

Naga ancestors held reverential attitude towards nature and its life form wherein sacred groves are the potent symbols. People cherish sanctity of life through conservation of biodiversity. This ecological philosophy is a potent tool to avert any crises in society. They are not only the sacred ecosystems functioning as a rich repository of nature's unique biodiversity, but also a product of this philosophy of nature that the Nagas have been cherishing for ages. Out of the twenty-four sacred groves identified, only seven appear to be preserved. This shows that the traditional values associated with the forest are slowly eroding. One reason for this is the acceptance of the new Christian faith. Others are due to the impact of development activities, urbanization, increase in population, changes in people attitude, etc.

Sacred groves do not just help conserve valuable biodiversity, soil and water, but are also critical in regulating weather and climate cycles so vital for life to blossom and flourish on the planet. With the degradation of the environment, especially forests, a large number of rare, endangered and other taxonomically and

ecologically important plants and animal species are disappearing. This article has attempted to highlight the importance of recognizing and preserving sacred groves in Nagaland as a cultural heritage in terms of the historical, social, aesthetic and scientific significances of these groves. One of the facts that makes sacred forests such an important factor in conservation is that it promotes not just the protection but of every possible element of habitats. The sacred forest/groves of the world are shrinking day by day. Dense sacred forests are fast becoming sparse, and the sparse ones are getting converted into degraded wasteland. The main reason for this destruction has been the rapid decline in the traditional values system and the various demands of the growing population, which has obviously led to deforestation (Zehol and Zehol 2009: 36). Unfortunately, in the case of a relatively small state like Nagaland, there are signs indicating the change in the sacred groves. The groves are fast eroding. If the religious beliefs associated with the sacred groves and traditional wisdom contributing to forest protection could be suitably integrated with the modern scientific forest management practices, these sacred groves could become a very useful model for biodiversity conservation in the region. Evidently, there is a strong need to perpetuate and promote the concept of sacred groves and to evolve a mechanism whereby the forest departments could provide technical inputs to improve the canopy cover and regeneration of trees in the degraded sacred groves of the region (Tripathi 2005: 3).

## NOTES

1. The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) is a professional association that works for the conservation and protection of cultural heritage places around the world. Now headquartered in Paris, ICOMOS was founded in 1965 in Warsaw as a result of the Venice Charter of 1964, and offers advice to UNESCO on World Heritage Sites.
2. As narrated by Kiremwati Aier, 86, Retd Pro-Vice-Chancellor, NEHU and Alemchiba Ao, 85, from Waromung village, Mokokchung District, during an interview conducted at their respective residences at Kohima on 11 October 2014. Also see J.P. Mills, *The Ao Nagas*, 1926.

3. As narrated by Rev. Dr. Toshi Langu, 64, Lakhuni village under Mokokchung district during an interview conducted at his residence in Kohima on 5 October 2014.
4. As narrated by C. Yashikaba, 75, Ungma village under Mokokchung district during an interview conducted at his residence in Kohima on 3 March 2014.
5. Ibid.
6. As per details given by Supongnukshi, IFS.
7. As narrated by Nchumbemo Tsanglao, 60, and Renphamo Tsanglao, 48, from Sankitong village under Wokha district during an interview conducted at their residence on 27 June 2013.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. As narrated by Ntsomo Murry, 86, and Nyimtsemo Ezung, 83, of N. Longidang village under Wokha district during an interview conducted at their residence on 26 June 2013.
11. Ibid.
12. As narrated by Chubam, 78, from Peren village under Peren district during an interview conducted at his residence on 30 July 2013.
13. As narrated by Asiakep Sephe, 53, Peren village under Peren district during an interview conducted at his residence at Peren town on 30 July 2013.
14. As narrated by Hovishe Wotsa, 89, Khupu, 72, Tokiye, 54, and Khulu, 56 from Mishilimi village under Zunheboto district during an interview conducted at Gaonburas house on 12 September 2013.
15. Ibid.
16. As narrated by Shochah, 60, Neoji, 61, Ritsong, 55, and J. Shokhum, Chairman Village Council, 72, Khutur village under Tuensang district during an interview conducted at the village council hall on 12 February 2014.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. As narrated by Throng Kiuba, 2nd Head Gaonbura, 67, Chessor village under Tuensang district during an interview conducted at his residence on 13 February 2014.
21. Ibid.
22. As narrated by Nokrunba, Head Gaonbura, 81, Chessor village under Tuensang district during an interview conducted at his residence on 13 February 2014.
23. Ibid.

24. As narrated by Lothrong, 87, Doki, 46, and Shobhu, 88, Sotokur village under Tuensang District during an interview conducted at Gaonbura residence on 14 February 2014.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. As narrated by Nokao, 52, Zakho village under Mon District during an interview conducted at his residence on 8 May 2014.

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**Bendangsenla  
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With a Foreword by  
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**The Two Sides of a Coin: A Critique of  
the *Auxiliary* Power of the Matriarch in  
Patriarchy as Seen in Easterine Kire's *A  
Terrible Matriarchy***

ADENUO SHIRAT LUIKHAM

**E**asterine (Iralu) Kire<sup>1</sup> is an eminent writer and leading voice in the Naga literary world having authored several collections of poems, novels and children's books. She has won prestigious national awards recognising her excellence in literature. Her novel *A Naga Village Remembered* (2003) is considered a literary landmark having the distinction of being the first English novel published in the state. Her works have also been translated into several foreign languages.

*A Terrible Matriarchy* (2007) is the story of a girl, Dielieno (literally translates as 'errand girl'), the youngest in a family of five children with four brothers. She is determined to get

---

<sup>1</sup> I have chosen to use the maiden name of the author 'Kire' in my discussion even though the 2007 edition of the novel used for this paper has 'Easterine Iralu' as the published name of the author. The author has since reverted to using her maiden name in later publications.

*"This book, a collaboration of solidarity and power, invites us to foster care and gender accountability. Grounded in collective wisdom and the reflections of our ancestors, poets, writers, and seminarians, there is a transformative fire waiting to be ignited. There is work to be done. And the first step is to read this book and contemplate on the possibilities of a just equal future together."*

**Dolly Kikon**

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