

I am still interested in Botany. I wish you could spare some time to make a trip to this place. If you come, I am sure, you would not be able to stand the rape of nature. I really wonder, why people are so blind to the problem. It really is a pity. Infact, there is going to be an agricultural emergency. Somehow, Nagas inhabit richest soil on earth-cluster of villages on top of every peak mingled with patches of zhoom fields give a kaleidoscopic view.

Nature had controlled the population efficiently, before modern civilization conquered Nagaland. Head hunting was though a hobby, was an effective measure to control population, Now new law prevents them doing it. So, population exploded! Nagas developed a peculiar system of cultivation known as zhoom system; they cleared the forest and cultivated the cleared land for two years and then shifted to new area, only to return to the same place after fifty years or so. Then there were plenty of animals for them to compensate for their protein deficiency and river full of fish — for them to celebrate their 'fish-behen' — fish festival, fished with bamboo basket. Once in a year they celebrated 'chuha-behen' to control rodents which were hunted with bows and spears. With the onset of civilization, Nagas have changed their outlook, they use modern wapons to kill animals and explosive to kill fish. They have axe and saw to cut down huge trees which took not less than few hundred years to grow to these heights. They return to the same g zhoom now after every third or fourth year. Agricultural land is not properly developed. Terrace method of cultivation is somehow not acceptable to them, therefore, for miles and miles, you would not find a tree. Monsoon lasts until November every year. This crodes atleast few inches of fertile soil and wash it down to Brahmaputre. As soon as they leave zhoom fields elephant grass invades the place and nothing grows after that. The yield of paddy crop is reduced to half after every event of zhoom. There is no programme for soil conservation thus miles and miles of land is being converted into grass fields. A stage will soon come when whole of Nagaland will become some kind of grassland.

The disappearance of forests has considerably effected the weather. Monsoon brings all kind of diseases — dysentery alone kills thousands of people followed by malaria. During summer, the high temperature is unbearable and then there is no fire wood to keep them warm during winter. They have even destroyed bamboo what to talk of animals. Not even a bird to be seen flying around. Apart from earthworm there is nothing seen crawling or flying or moving. Among the elephant grass a plate human being emerges out like the panthem of Naga.

Modern education is another joke. They teach politics in college, when there is no need for politics; economics when there is no knowledge of economy and money has no value; and history to people, whose history is reduced to just a struggle for existence. Tough Naga boy soon starts imitating western style and colourful pants and he starts smoking. And well, the sex is free. By the time he finishes studies he is a qualified 'goonda' who is unfit to hold any reasonable civil appointment; and he has already forgotten his culture. He goes back to his village; a few may get contracts, government lavishes all its resources through corrupt officials in the name of development and fraternization, no less than an amount of Rupees eighty five crores for five lakhs of people; needless to say that in this wilderness many people have made fotunes.

An old naga witnesses all this change through a cloud of confusion and sadness, when he looks back he could only see the peaceful warrior like life of old day village life, which has already faded away. Future

seem to be quite confusing to him. In the same morong village assembly hall one may find an old Naga sharpening his spear while his son is in bell bottom pants lazily humming english songs — 'the change' that brought about all this kind of development seems to be quite confusing to the old Naga. His land is no more productive, climate has irrecoverably changed, diseases, havocs of monsoon, unemployment, underground movement, corrupt and cruel administration — he is desperate, he has lost faith in every thing. The religion he first accepted is now just reduced to a kind of religio — political organizations fighting for so called freedom. Freedom from what? Freedom from India, freedom from China, freedom from his religion, his village? He is a slave in his own land. He has destroyed the natural wealth, how can he get freedom. He will remain a slave for ever if he does not bring sufficient attention to his land — just imagine the proud Naga is a slave in his own land!

But the government seems to be blind, there is a Forest Department without forest, P.W.D. makes half of its work on paper and take away the money. Medical department is corrupt to the core. Block Development officials develop their own tummy; they plan but plan only to increase their bank account. Everything goes on in the name of the Christ, the underground and the development.

The educated youth are quite aware of the fact they will no more tolerate their sisters reduced to prostitution, they want a powerful administration, a few desperates have gone to China and many others have joined underground. They really want freedom from their struggle, they have been misguided to join communists, when they returned they will spread this liberation ideology among the villagers, then liberation struggle will start and the whole insurgency problem will take a different set up, By then it may be too late for the government to realise its mistake. I wish there is somebody sincerely interested in solving this problem. The rebel problem is not China or in the hands of underground, it is in the fields and its solution is also in the fields — a restoration of the green plenty.

At present government should declare an agricultural emergency for 10 years. Agriculture and forest experts should be flown in, to launch projects, to preserve the soil based on whatever forest is left. Feed the villagers for the time being. The amount of Rs.85 crore worth is sufficient to feed five lakhs of people for five years; develop tea estates and coffee estates and from it a well maintained net work of roads, so that the product can be easily transported to the nearest market down in the plains -- start a number of such plantation estates and reforest the area; subsequently educate the people, the use of modern methods of agriculture, probably then we will win the war within twenty years.

If the agriculture fails, I am sure we will sacrifice many divisions of army to fight against Communism. You can very well imagine the outcome. Why not the government send a team of scientists with Army, why not give a scientific approach to the problem, why always depend on the orthodox channels of working, when I see the way things are going on. I have a feeling that we are digging our own grave. I feel pity to witness the drama and I feel so helpless.

I did make an effort to reforest some area. I started a nursery and preached them about 'forests'. I tell them stories of how our great civilizations of past vanished when forest were destroyed. All this takes time, unluckily I do not stay at any place more than a few months

and my efforts are reduced to just military propoganda.

Some of the administrative officers are useless, they are unimaginative, they are at best glorified clerks, busy in establishing their authority rather than slogging in the fields. They have no administrative background or experience. Everybody seems to be worried about insurgency. Actually the overground corrupt officials are more dangerous than undergrounds. It is a pity to see the deterioration. I tried to tell senior officials about it and they are a bit too senior to listen to a junior officer like me and most of them are trained to listen to only military talks.

Yes, if you get a chance, see for yourself. Please, do come if you get a chance, bring your jeep. I will take you around and see the way they have spoilt everything. I am sorry to write all this. But I know you will understand me. I wish you a happy New Year. Send me instructions and I shall collect flowers for you. Can you educate me on butterflies, there are plenty of them. I want to collect them or can you introduce me to somebody who could give me some idea how to go about it."