

# **DIMAPUR GOVERNMENT COLLEGE**

**Dimapur - 797001 Nagaland**

**NAAC Accredited Grade B+**

## **Report on Monthly Research Seminar held on 20<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2025**

On September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025, the Department of History at Dimapur Government College hosted its monthly research seminar in collaboration with the Research & Development Cell, funded by the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) at 12:15 pm in the college's seminar hall. The session has brought together faculty and researchers to examine a critical yet under-explored chapter in Naga history.

Dr. Ngutoli Y. Swu, Assistant Professor, Department of History, served as chairperson for the proceedings, while Dr. Vivi Swu, Associate Professor, Department of History, presented her research on ***"Grouping of Villages During the Naga Movement: A Case of the Sumi Experience."***

Dr. Vivi Swu's presentation addressed the complex political dynamics that emerged during the Naga independence movement, a period marked by fundamentally opposing interpretations of sovereignty and territorial rights. The Naga position maintained that they had never been conquered or ruled by India, arguing that while the British had forcefully annexed portions of their territory, the departure of colonial powers restored their inherent right to sovereign status. In stark contrast, the Indian government asserted that Nagaland constituted an integral part of British India and therefore automatically became part of the Indian Union following the transfer of power, similar to other Indian states.

Within this contested political landscape, Dr. Swu's research focused on a particularly coercive policy instrument: the systematic grouping of villages implemented as a counter-insurgency strategy. Her methodology combined in-depth interviews with community members, group discussions with affected populations, case study analysis of the Sumi experience, and purposeful random sampling, creating a comprehensive qualitative framework for understanding lived experiences during this traumatic period.

The village grouping policy emerged as the brainchild of two British colonial officers - Kapoor, the Commissioner, and Carvalho, the Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills District. Drawing inspiration from successful British counter-insurgency operations against Chinese fighters

in Malaya, where civilian populations were systematically separated from guerrilla forces, these administrators adapted the strategy to the Naga context. The primary objective was to sever the vital connections between villagers and freedom fighters, cutting off the supply lines of rations and information that sustained the guerrilla movement.

Dr. Swu's research revealed that the Sumi territories experienced four distinct phases of grouping implementation, each varying in scope and intensity. The first phase lasted from May 1957 to July 1958, followed by a second implementation from February to June 1959. The third phase extended from April to December 1960, while the final and most targeted phase ran from July 20, 1963, to May 1964, specifically focusing on families and relatives of known freedom fighters.

The physical manifestation of this policy took the form of three major concentration camp complexes. The Satakha town concentration camp housed nine villages: Xuivi, Kilo, Satakha Old, Satakha New, Khukiye-Lukhayi, Hoishe, Shoipu, Nasami, and Kichilimi. The Shena New concentration camp accommodated four communities: Nunumi, Usutomi, Shena Old, and Shena New. Meanwhile, the Mudutsugho concentration camp confined five villages: Mudutsugho, Khughuto, Chisholi, Chishili, and Heboli.

These camps represented more than mere administrative relocations; they constituted systematic attempts to break the social fabric that sustained resistance movements. By concentrating populations under direct state surveillance, the policy aimed to eliminate the guerrilla forces' dependency on village-based supply chains and intelligence networks. The strategy reflected a broader understanding of how indigenous resistance movements operated within their traditional social structures, requiring the disruption of these organic connections to achieve military objectives.

Dr. Swu's presentation emphasized the profound impact these policies had on Sumi communities, documenting not merely the administrative mechanics of grouping but the human experiences of displacement, surveillance, and social fragmentation. Her research contributes essential documentation to a period that remains inadequately studied in Northeast Indian historiography, providing empirical evidence of how colonial and post-colonial state mechanisms operated to suppress indigenous autonomy movements.

The academic significance of this work extends beyond its immediate historical contributions. By employing community-centered research

methodologies that prioritize lived experiences and local narratives, Dr. Swu's approach demonstrates the value of combining historical and anthropological research methods. Her focus on micro-level analysis complements broader historical narratives of the Naga independence movement while preserving crucial testimonies that might otherwise be lost.

The seminar successfully facilitated scholarly discourse on state responses to indigenous political movements, highlighting the systematic nature of counter-insurgency policies and their lasting impacts on affected communities. Dr. Swu's methodologically rigorous documentation of the village grouping experience represents significant progress in preserving historical memory while contributing to academic understanding of this transformative period in Naga history.

This research stands as a testament to the importance of documenting marginalized voices and experiences within broader historical narratives. By focusing on the Sumi experience, Dr. Swu has provided invaluable insights into how political policies affected indigenous populations at the community level, ensuring that these crucial perspectives remain part of the historical record for future scholarship and community memory.

The session was attended by the students and Faculty of Department of History and other Departments of DGC and concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Ms. Ningshijungla Longchar, Associate Professor, Department of History, DGC.



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