

The Rengma Civil Society and Its Role in Political Advocacy and Territorial Unification

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Abstract

The Rengma Naga is an indigenous community residing primarily in Nagaland and Assam, who possess a rich cultural and historical heritage deeply ingrained in their traditional political institutions. These institutions have long functioned as the foundation of governance, decision-making and social organization, playing a crucial role in maintaining societal order. Rooted in customary laws and indigenous leadership structures, traditional governance among the Rengma Naga historically revolved around village councils, chieftainship, and collective decision-making processes that emphasized consensus and community welfare. However, these structures have undergone significant transformations over time due to socio-political changes and external influences.

The advent of British colonial rule and the spread of Christianity introduced profound changes in the socio-political and cultural fabric of the Rengma community. The colonial administration disrupted traditional governance by imposing new political structures, while Christian missionary activities altered indigenous belief systems, thereby reshaping societal norms. In more recent times, modernization, industrialization, globalization, and the spread of Western education have further challenged the continuity of traditional institutions. Despite these influences, the Rengma community continues to make concerted efforts to preserve its cultural heritage and governance practices.

Keywords

Rengma Hoho, Rengma Mothers' Association, Rengma Selo Zi, Rengma Students Union.