

A CRITICAL STUDY OF RAMBUAI IN SELECTED MIZO NOVELS

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A CRITICAL STUDY OF RAMBUAI IN SELECTED MIZO NOVELS

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Submitted

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He has fulfilled all the required norms laid down within the Ph.D regulations of Mizoram University.

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This is to certify that the thesis entitled ‘**A Critical Study of Rambuai in Selected Mizo Novels**’ submitted by Lalropuia has been written under my supervision.

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## **DECLARATION**

I, Lalropuia, hereby declare that the subject matter of this Thesis is the result of work done by me, that the contents of this Thesis did not form the basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to anybody else, and that, to the best of my knowledge, the Thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/Institute.

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(LALROPUIA)

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

This thesis is a study of *Rambuai* in Mizo novel which is one of the underlying themes in the select Mizo novel. It will mainly focus on how *Rambuai* novel reflects the traumatic experiences of individuals and of community during *Rambuai*, and the concept of patriotism in *Rambuai* novel. The study propose to examine and analyze select *Rambuai* novel namely: *Rinawmin* (1976), *Silaimu Ngaihawm* (1990) written by James Dokhuma, *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* (1989) written by Zikpuii Pa, *Thuruk* (1985), *In Hrang* (1986) written by C.Laizawna, *Rose Par Vul Ve Ta Rih Lo Chu* (2005) written by Capt.L.Z.Sailo, *Pu Khuma* (2002) written by Vanneihluanga. *Nghilhar Kan Tuar* (2010) written by Mafeli, and *Zorami* (2015) written by Malsawmi Jacob. This chapter will also highlight a brief history of Mizoram *buai* and it will be followed by the analysis of the emergence of *Rambuai* novel within the realm of Mizo literature.

The study aims to expose the massive atrocities and havoc experienced by the Mizo during the *Rambuai* and post *Rambuai* era and the disasters faced by Mizoram through the select *Rambuai* novels that have been mentioned and that are caricatures of many of the real life *Rambuai* victims. The study aims to investigate the matter by conducting interviews with *Rambuai* victim survivors in order to evaluate the credibility of the *Rambuai* stories written in *Rambuai* novels. The study also aims to incorporate with related literature that is linked to insurgency, political



upheaval and conflicts that exist within a certain political real. Finally the study aims to incorporate relevant theories related to trauma.

The objective of the study is to highlight the mental sufferings of the Mizo community due to *Rambuai* that is often neglected by many writers and that often remains to be the untold story by *Rambuai* victim survivors. Focus will also be given to the after effects experienced on issues such as personal hardships and mental trauma due to *Rambuai*. The objective will further illustrate the patriotic zeal of the Mizo people and the division caused amongst the Mizos due to the fervent idea of patriotism. The female sufferings and patriotic deeds of the Mizo people will also be elaborated as the objective of the study.

The word *Rambuai* is very popular among the Mizos as the term has significant and poignant meaning in the hearts of the Mizos. In the Mizo language *ram* means land and *buai* refers to disturbance. Therefore, the coinage *Rambuai* may mean land disturbance. Thus, for the convenience of this research, the word *Rambuai* will particularly refer to Mizoram disturbance. David Truman, in his *Disturbance Theory*, expresses the word disturbance as:

A political postulation that states that interest groups form primarily when there are changes in social environment that upsets the well beings some groups of people. An example could be scarcity in resources, a change in power/policy that some people object to, etc. In addition, interest group can form in opposition to other interest groups so as to counteract in their respective political domains. (n.pag)

As Truman states in his theory, the main reasons of *Rambuai* is an insufficient and negligence of the Government of India to support the needy people of Mizo District who suffered a great famine due to *Mautam* in 1959. *Mautam* means flowering bamboos and it generally occurs in Mizoram after every fifty years. *Mautam* is invariably followed by a plague of rats which devour the rice crops and cause famine. It is obvious that the next *Mautam* famine will certainly happen again in the year 1959 as the last *Mautam* occurred in Mizoram in 1911. Due to this certainty of *Mautam* famine in the near future, the anti-famine campaign organization was established and immediately a campaign was held against the *Mautam* famine, This campaign was not successful as both the Central Government and Government of Assam did not take the situation seriously. For this reason, frustration towards the Indian Government emerged in the hearts of the Mizos and they started to question why they were so neglected and abandoned by the Government of Assam and the Central Government. Besides, Chawngsailova states, “The feeling of separatism which had been nurtured so long in the mind of the people got erupted taking advantage primarily of the economics discontent” (44). Furthermore, Hmingthanga states:

The general feelings of Mizo nationals in India was the feeling of being unwanted, despised and alien. Meanwhile no Mizo workers felt secure under an Indian boss; no student felt favoured by Indian masters, and no Mizo soldier in the Indian Armed Forces felt that he was fighting for his country. The more a Mizo has contact with an Indian, the more he feels lonesome alien unwanted. (56)

In his *Untold Atrocity*, Zama, writer of MNF movement history says, “So in 1960 a new organisation called Mizo National Famine Front (MNFF) was formed” (6) to effectively counter the *Mautam* famine in 1960. Consequently, after the end of *Mautam* famine, “the MNFF was converted into political party named Mizo National Front (MNF) on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1961. The main objective of Mizo National Front party is to struggle for Mizoram independence as a sovereign state and to unite all Mizo clans under one political umbrella” (8).

Since the MNF party had started functioning as a political party, it carefully studied the political history of the Mizos and eventually decided that if it still remained as a part of India, it would be due to political immaturity, ignorance and lack of consciousness of Mizo fate. The MNF thus decided that there were only two options, either to remain as a part of India or to live as a free nation. Therefore, the MNF representatives negotiated from time to time with the Government of India in order to attain independence from the Indian Union. Hmingthanga states:

The leaders of the Mizo National Front had, many a time, verbally and in writing, put forward to the Government of India, their desire of self-determination for creation of free and independent Mizoram for bringing about protection of Human Rights and Dignity, which the Mizo, by nature, ought to have, but the Government of India, violating the Charter of the United Nations and its Universal Declaration of Human Rights reaffirmed in the principle of Bandung Conference, have ignored the voice of the Mizo people and are determined to continue domination and colonialization ruling over us with tyranny

and despotism by instituting self- designed administrative machinery with which they endeavour to mislead the world to win their confidence. (128-129)

Though the Indian government ignored that the Mizo has the right to live as a free nation but the Mizo National Front leaders did not despair. Therefore, they ceaselessly continued seeking the opportunity to have interaction with the Indian government officials in respect of Mizoram independence. Therefore, taking advantage of the visit of Assam by Lal Bahadur Shastri, the then Prime Minister of India, the MNF Party High Command led by President Laldenga met the Prime Minister and submitted the Memorandum on 30<sup>th</sup> October 1965 (Zama 10). This memorandum mainly focuses on the case of the Mizo people for freedom and independence. The most important content of this memorandum that push MNF party leaders in pursuance of Mizoram independence is:

Due solely to their political immaturity, ignorance and lack of consciousness of their fate, representatives of the Mizo Union, the largest political organisation at that time, and fifty credited Mizo leaders representing all Mizo political organisations including representatives of religious denominations and social organisations that were in existence, submitted their demand and choose integration with free India imposing condition, inter alia ‘That the Lushai’s will be allowed to opt out of Indian Union when they wish to do so subject to a minimum period of ten years.’ (Zama 13)

After the submission of the memorandum to the Indian government, Zamawia, an Ex-Army Chief of Mizo National Army (MNA), states that the MNF party leaders met Mr. Tarlok Singh, Member of the Planning Commission, who came to Aizawl in January 19, 1966. In this meeting, the MNF leaders informed him about the memorandum that they had submitted to the Indian Government and requested him to take necessary action when he returned to New Delhi for the achievement of their demand. Vishnu Sahay, Governor of Assam, who came to Aizawl in February 2, 1966, was also met by the MNF leaders but he was so angry with the MNF leaders when they told him that the main objective of the MNF party was to unify Mizo people and to live as a free nation. For the third and the last time, the MNF leaders met H.V. Patashkar, Chairman of North East Hills Commission, who came to Aizawl in February 7, 1966. In this meeting, Mr. Patashkar advocated and advised the MNF party leaders to adopt the 'Scottish Pattern' also known as 'Nehru Plan' for the administration of Mizoram but the MNF party leaders refused to accept his proposal. Moreover, the MNF party leaders explained once again about the memorandum they had submitted to the Indian Government and informed him about the meeting they had with some Indian officials. They also requested him to inform the Prime Minister of India that the choice of the Mizos is none other than independence from the Indian Union and to live as a free nation. (232-234)

From the experiences of their meetings and talks with political leaders and officials of the Indian Government, the leaders of MNF party came to realize that the Government of India had no intention to fulfil their demand, and that it would never allow the Mizo independence from the Indian Union. Finally, the MNF leaders

decided to launch an armed struggle as the effort they gave for Mizoram independence by means of non-violence seemed to have no meaning as the Indian Government turned deaf ears to those of their attempts. Chawngsailova says, “Therefore, the MNF launched an armed struggle movement on 28<sup>th</sup> February, 1966 in order to free the Mizos against the oppression of the Indian Government” (41). And he further states that

The *Operation Jericho* was carried out as planned simultaneously at Aizawl, Kolasib, Serchhip, Lunglei and many other places capturing Indian army posts, security posts, police stations and 5<sup>th</sup> BSF Camp, . . . Within a few moments after *zero hour*, the MNF declared Mizoram Independence. (51)

No sooner had the Mizo National Front declared independence against Indian Government the Central Government was immediately aware of the armed revolt in Mizo District. In urgent response to the MNF armed struggle and to control the situation of Mizo District:

The Government of India sent military forces to counter the MNF movement in Mizo District. The whole district was declared a ‘Disturbed Area’ under Assam Disturbed Area Act of 1955. Besides, the Armed Forces (Assam and Manipur) Special Power Act of 1958 was also in force in the District. (53)

Soon after the Government of India declared Mizo District a disturbed area, “For the first time in Indian history, the Indian Air Force was used within the country, to

bombarded the MNF formation around Aizawl town on 5th March 1966” (53). Zama called this air strike ‘the cruel air raid’ as the jet fighters dropped their bomb over civilian residences here and there, even shot their heavy machine gun not only at the MNF position but also anywhere in the Aizawl town (32).

Subsequently, the Indian Government declared the Mizo National Front as an unlawful organisation and imposed certain restrictions and order against the sale and purchase of assets that could be a helpful material to strengthen the movement of Mizo National Front movement and failing which the defaulter is liable to be punished with five years imprisonment or fined or both (Chawngsailova 53). Although the District Commissioner issued a stern order to maintain normal life in Mizo District, it was not successful because of the counter insurgency measures taken up by the Indian army which was very intimidating for the civilians. Besides, the underground army were also frightful for the civilians; if civilians failed to help them or speak a single word against the MNF movement, the place could easily become a threshold of death as the underground army expected the civilians support and co-operation whenever they were in need. Therefore, the Mizos who have been living a peaceful life earlier started living in a new era known as *Rambuai* that lasted for over twenty years. Lalnithanga says:

Cases of kidnapping became rampant in Mizoram and several people targets and killed in the process. The Mizo Union leaders being conscious of their being objects of hatred went over to Aizawl in a body security. The forces visiting every village started dealing harshly with the people without rhyme or reason in a most indiscriminate

manner. They would be made to squat the whole day on the ground and even dealt them with blows. The ordinary public, women and the children were afraid of both the MNF and the security forces lying as it were between Scylla and charibdis, and literally between the anvil and hammer. That became the plight of the general public and fear gripped the entire land as a result. (132)

In addition to the sufferings of the Mizo people “that the Government of Assam proposed to group villages in selected centres which they called Protected Progressive Villages. . . . Mr.B.C.Carriapa, Liaison Officer for Mizo District and Cachar was appointed by the Central Government to issue the Order of Grouping of Villages in Mizoram on January 2, 1967” (Zama 78). Though the Mizo simply called this grouping of villages *Khawkhawm* or Grouping but the truth behind this is, however, one of the horrendous military actions undertaken by the army during *Rambuai* as the main purpose of *Khawkhawm* was to minimise possible attacks on the army by the underground army and to prevent their easy access to the nearby villages from their jungle camps wherein the underground army could obtain food and information about the army. “Grouping of villages was carried out in 1967 and 1968. In the first phase, 75 villages were grouped in 15 Grouping Centre and the second phase was carried out from 1968 to 1970, during which 367 villages were grouped in 73 grouping centres” (Zama 82). The affected villagers had no choice though they were not willing to be grouped. They reluctantly obeyed as the army forced them to leave their village. When they were led out of their villages, the army burnt down all the houses. In some villages, villagers were not given a chance to



prepare for grouping so that many villagers left their village without their belongings. The so called Protected Progressive Villages (PPV) seemed beneficial for the affected villages as the people of grouping centres were promised that they would be given free rations but they received only a small amount of ration. Besides, the villagers of the grouping centres were often forced to build the army camp, to build fences around the grouping centre, to dig trenches and make bunkers, to fetch water, and to collect firewood. Moreover, villagers were notified that they should seek prior permission from the army in order to go outside the centre. Due to the restriction of limited working hours and curfew during night time, the villagers could not spend more time in their jhum which resulted in lower productivity in agricultural crops. Forced labour, hard work and malnutrition afflicted the people of grouping centres. Thus they suffered from various illnesses, and some of them even lost their lives.

*Rambuai* may be considered as an important milestone of the political history of Mizoram, but the result was devastating as the whole land was engulfed by the atrocities that Mizo history had never witnessed. The phrase '*Tuboh leh dolung kara leng kan ni*' which means living between the hammer and the anvil, is very appropriate and it is frequently used by the victims of *Rambuai* to describe the life of the Mizo community during the twenty dark years. The insurgency movement and counter insurgency measures adopted by the army greatly threatened the life of the common people. Parents lost their beloved sons in the hands of both the army and the underground army. A number of women suffered sexual harassments and many women were brutally raped by the army before the very eyes of their husbands. Many innocent civilians were also beaten black and blue without proper reason. The

army used to severely torture some of their captives and gave them no other choice but forced them to spy on their community. In order to save their lives and to safeguard their families some of the villagers became informant. Therefore, people of most villages were afraid of each other as any one amongst them could be an informer for the army. The nights were under curfew and every household was ordered to turn off their lanterns and put out the fire in their hearth by eight o'clock every night. Even the sounds of the footsteps of the army patrolling during the night frightened the villagers and prevented them from sleeping soundly because they knew that the army had the authority to enter a house at any time in search of the underground army. Some social norms and traditions were no longer appropriate to be practiced during the curfew; religious activities were also under restriction. Starvation, pain, fear, loneliness, and feeling of despair engulfed the life of individuals and community. Thus many people lost their self confidence for they could not longer protect themselves and their family from the army atrocities. Since the heights of their agonies and pains were so intense, the end of *Rambuai* could not erase the psychological pains it had inflicted on them. Severe mental wounds and pains inflicted upon the people left severe wound that had not yet been healed with the passing of time after the end of *Rambuai*.

*Rambuai* reached its peak in 1969 and after 1969 there was an attempt to settle a peace talk between the Mizo National Front leaders and the Indian Government. Finally, after many attempts and efforts to have the peace talk by the political leaders, representatives of Non-Government Organization like Church, as the student organisation called Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP), and Young Mizo

Association (YMA) etc. *Rambuai* came to an end when the Peace Accord was signed between the Mizo National Front movement and the Government of India.

Lalnithanga writes:

Thus on the night to June 30<sup>th</sup> 1986, the representatives of the Govt. of India and the MNF respectively concluded the peace process in writing and lent their signatures thereon. On this night, at Aizawl, lighting bonfires in the streets, sizable members of the public were celebrating the conclusion of Peace by roaming about the whole night both on foot and in vehicles. (172)

Though the signing of Peace Accord seems to be the best solution for restoration of normalcy in Mizoram, and to resolve the conflict between the MNF and the Government of India. Yet, it could not completely erase the traumatic experiences suffered by individuals, families and the community during the past twenty years of *Rambuai*. Moreover, the strong desire for Mizoram independence still lingers in the hearts of some leaders of Mizo National Front and the underground army personnel, even though they had surrendered themselves to the Indian Government for the sake of the signing of the Peace Accord. Therefore, the traumatic *Rambuai* experiences during *Rambuai*, and the residual desire for Mizoram independence that has been lingered in the hearts of some underground army and the MNF movement supporters gradually appeared as the new thematic in Mizo literature in the form of poetry, drama, fiction and non-fiction. Thus, *Rambuai* has turned out to be one of the most significant themes that generates a new literary genre towards the end of the twentieth century in Mizo literature, and it remains an

ongoing process till date. In the introduction to *Rambuai Literature* written by C. Lalawmpuia Vanchiau, Prof. Margareth Ch.Zama states:

The holocaust of sixty lakhs of Jews by Hitler during the World War II, war between North Vietnam and America during 1965-75, partition of India and Pakistan which caused great massacre among Hindu and Muslim have contributed to the richness of literature in myriad manner and as such, and it will continue to do so in the realm of literature. Likewise, Mizo writings that reflected Rambuai will certainly be made known to the world. With the growth and development of Mizo literature, the word *Rambuai Literature genre* occupy a significant part and will significantly continue to add to the richness of Mizo literature. (viii)

In view of world literature, war and its related events are no doubt important factors that enriched different genre of literature. The French Revolution, The American War of Independence, The Glorious Revolution, The October Revolution, The Revolt of 1857, World War I and II are well known historical events that had produced numerous literary works in the form of poetry, fiction and non-fiction. Dickens wrote his famous novel *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) based on The French Revolution, *A Farewell to Arms* (1921) is a novel by Ernest Hemingway set during the Italian campaign of World War I. *All the Lights We Cannot See* written by Anthony Doerr is a novel based on World War II and it won 2015 Pulitzer Prize for fiction, and *The Siege of Krishnapur* (1973) is a novel by J.G. Farrell set during The Revolt of 1857, inspired by events such as the sieges Cawnapore (Kanpur) and

Lucknow. Significantly, *Rambuai* and its related aspects that are reflected in Mizo fiction contribute the richness of Mizo literature. Moreover, writers who had written *Rambuai* fiction have elevated the value of Mizo fiction. The Mizo Academy of Letters had even awarded the Book of the Year title to four fictions based on *Rambuai* such as: *Beiseina Mittui* (2010) written by Samson Thanruma, *Thinglubul* (2013) written by Lalpekkima, *Kawlkil Piah Lamtluang* (2015) written by C.Lalnunchanga, and *Falung* (2019) written by Lalengzauva.

In Mizo literature, war and its related incidents are also important sources of literary works, and the reflections of such wars and its related events can be seen in poetry, drama, and fiction. In his *Mizo Poetry* Thanmawia writes:

One of the forces which did most to shape Mizo life for nearly three centuries was the frequent war with the neighboring tribes or the wars among themselves. As such, the Mizos have several war chants and songs on the triumph over their enemies. If the Mizo pasaltha killed his enemy, he had to trample the dead body under his foot, declaring his own name and would chant Bawhhla (War chant). (49)

In his *Mizo Hla Hlui* Thanmawia mentions one of the oldest Mizo lullabies that depict how the Mizos raid their neighbouring tribes and how they expected their warriors to act in the olden days:

*A khiah khian rammu an kal dial dial e,*

*Ka nauvi pa tel ve maw, ral that ve maw? (27-28)*

[Over yonder, the warriors are marching onwards/ I wonder if my man is there, did he slay?]

In her book *Sakhming Chul Lo*, Lalsangzuali denotes that Saikuti, a Mizo poetess, also composed a satirical poem in connection with war during her time. In early Mizo society, each village had a devoted tree called *sahlam* on which the head of the enemy was suspended whenever the warrior killed their enemy. When Saikuti realised that for a long period no enemy's head had yet been suspended on her village *sahlam* that stood at the gateway of her village, she satirically addressed her village warriors who could not yet kill their enemy while the *sahlam* was blooming:

*In zuat sual e, chhuahtlang thing lenbuang,*

*Chunglum lianakpa 'n chhunrawl a vai e.*

*In zuat sual e, chhuahtlang thing lenbuang,*

*Par a chhuang e Mizo lu ngenin. (3-6)*

[You have mistakenly reserved the tree at village gateway/ The crow is longing for her lunch/ You have mistakenly reserved the tree at village gateway/ Blooming demandingly Mizo head.]

Besides, Thanmawia says, "Saikuti composed several songs in order to encourage young men to be great warriors, and stimulating them to glorify their village Thingsai, so that other villagers might not dare to raid it. Thanmawia also mentions that Saikuti used to praise the warriors for the achievement they had made against their enemies. Bawmzo thlunglu tui ang kan lak ni chuan, Kan thanin Saikhaw tlang a nghawr dim e. (The day we brought home heads from Bawmzo, Saikhua resounded with chants over victory.)" (45)

In one of the Mizo folk songs *Lalvunga Zai*, Lalvunga's mother is scorned by the enemies. Lalvunga who was warned by his sister to hide from his enemies

refused to hide. He was captured and his enemies slay him and hung his head on the *sahlam* chanting the satirical song to his mother “*Lalvunga nu tap tap lo la I chauh vang/ I fa Lalvung sahlam uai zo ta*” [Stop crying Lalvunga’s mother you will be exhausted. Your son Lalvunga is already suspended on the *sahlam*].

World War I and World War II also produced many songs in Mizo literature.

Thanmawia says in his *Mizo Hla Hlui*:

After the British colonised us, some Mizo bachelors were recruited as soldiers and sent to battle field. When they were far away from home to counter the enemy, those Mizo bachelors were so lonely and used to compose song; likewise, some lonely girls who were at home also composed song too. The compilations of those songs are called Raid songs *Ral run zai* (Songs on Raids). This includes songs of Abor raid, songs of German raid, songs of Japan raid, and songs of V.Force. (517)

Besides poetry, the impact of war can be seen in Mizo fiction, in the novel *Hawilopari*, which is claimed to be the first Mizo novel written by L.Biakliana in 1936. Some incidents in the plot formation were based on the second British Expedition to Lushai Hills in 1871. Zoramdinthara states about the adventure of the protagonist Hminga and his friends in *Hawilopari*:

After sometime, the four young men reached Hringchar (Silchar) where they were recruited into the army by one English army officer who came to know of their good character. Even in the army, their

performance and services were commendable. Fortunately, after ten years, they had an opportunity to visit Mizoram by way of an expedition team against Mizoram in the wake of a raid at the Cherra Tea Estate by Mizo warriors, who killed one tea planter (James Winchester) and captured his only daughter, Mary Winchester. When the expedition was over, with the permission of their commander, they were allowed to go home. When they reached the outskirts of their village they met with their father's funeral procession. (8)

*Chhingpui*, the second short story in Mizo fiction, written in 1937 by Kaphleia, is also written based on the famous Mizo historical event known as Chhak leh Thlang Indo (war between East and West). In this war, Liankhama, who is one of the eastern chiefs and whose domain was some eastern portion of Mizoram, and Kalkhama, who ruled in some western part of Mizoram were the major opponents. K. Zawla remarks about this raid in his *Mizo Pi Pute Leh An Thlahte Chanchin*:

In this raid, the western warriors killed brutally a beautiful young woman Chhingpuii of Chhingchhip village while she was on the road approaching her family paddy field with some of her village folks in 1878 AD. (136)

Kaphleia skilfully interwove this incident with the love affair of Chhingpui and Kaptluanga, the central characters of his fiction. *Lal Hlau Lo Thi*, written by Lalzui Colney, is another short story based on one of the famous raids in Mizo history called Khuangleng *Run*. The story depicts how Banchhingpuii, the daughter of Khuangleng chief Thanhranga, was accidentally discovered by the protagonist Dama



after many years of her enslavement by the Sukte chief. Sukte chief Zapauva raided Thanhranga's village while Thanhranga left his village in order to raid the frontier inhabitants of Mizoram. His daughter Banchhingpuii and his wife were captured by Zapauva, the Sukte chief. So Zapauva took Banchhingpuii and her mother to his village which was located far at the eastern side outside Mizoram.

In Mizo fiction, the following fictions are well known for their topics on war and raid: *Phira Leh Ngurthanpari* (1950?) written by Lalzuithanga, *Khawnglung Run* (1977) written by R.Lalrawna, *Ka Mihuaisen leh Ka Pasaltha* (2005) and *Pasalthate Ni Hnuhnung* (2006) written by C.Lalnunchanga. Moreover, in Mizo fiction, there were more than ten fictions which were written under the influence and circumstances of World War II. Among these fictions, the following fictions are well known for their contents of World War II and its effects on the individuals and Mizo community. Such fictions are *Mymyo Sanapui* (1946) written by Capt.C.Khuma, *Pathian Samsuih* (1970) written by Rev.Zokima, *Irrawadi Lui Kamah* (1982), *Goodbye Lushai Brigade* (1983), *Kimoto Syonora* (1984) written by James Dokuma, *Ka Hmangaih Tlat Che* (1991) written by Lalruali, *Awi Karei Lucknow* (1997) written by Captain L.Z. Sailo, *Chhuahtlang* (1998) written by L.Zokhuma, and *Tlanthangi leh Lianhnuna* (1999) written by Lalsiama. Therefore, war and raid can be considered as important factors that widen the scope of Mizo literature as many reflections of war and raid appear in poetry, drama and fiction and non-fiction. Likewise, *Rambuai* also plays an important role in the development of various kinds of Mizo literature, poetry,drama, prose and fiction. In his article "The

Other Side of Silence: Women's Narratives within Rambuai Literature" published in *Emergent Identities in Literature* Vanchiau says:

The Mizo National Front independence movement of 1966, commonly known as 'rambuai' (years of trouble, has generated a strong body of 'Rambuai Literature', covering both 'MNF narrative and 'non-MNF narratives in the form of fiction and non-fiction. (63)

*Rambuai* plays a vital role in the production of poetry under Mizo literature. Songs calling for patriotic fervour, dealing with personal and social losses, dirges for those who had died in battle, the suffering of the volunteers for their homeland enriched Mizo poetry of the times. Suakliana's song *Kan Hun Tawng Zingah* dealing with the prevalent theme of village grouping moved the hearts of the common people and became well known. Rokunga's *Ka Pianna Zawlkhawpui* lucidly depicted the contemporary social evils of the time and was an instant hit. In *Jail Run Thim*, Zama denotes a song called *Prisoner Boy* in which the composer Vanlalngaia proudly proclaims of how he was imprisoned due to *Rambuai*:

At the clarion call for freedom,  
Off so I went for underground;  
Leaving my bosom darlings home,  
To be a prisoner boy. (297)

On seeing the psychological and physical strain on the people due to *Rambuai*, V. Thangzama tried to comfort the Mizos by composing *Tho La, Ding Ta Che* in 1976, where he urged them to forget their sufferings and to strive for a better future. In *Rambuai Literature*, Lalawmpuia Vanchiau included 45 songs pertaining to *Rambuai*

and its repercussions (iv-vi). A majority of the songs composed during *Rambuai* deal with the misery of the moment and lamentation for those who had lost their lives.

*Rambuai* gave much poetical inspiration but its influence in Mizo drama was minimal. This could be due to the fact that drama had been losing its influence in Mizo literature. Only *Zonun Darthlalang* (2012) written by R.Lalthazuala, *Lal Thangliana* (2013) written by J.Lalnangliana, and *66 Indona* (2013) written by R.Lalhlimpuia may be considered as *Rambuai* inspired drama.

Within the realm of Mizo literature, the influence of *Rambuai* in novel is much larger than that of poetry and drama. While the influence of *Rambuai* seems to gradually diminish in the realm of poetry and drama, but its influence in novel have been increasing till date since the first *Rambuai* novel was published in 1976. So much so that *Rambuai* novel may be considered as a sub-genre in Mizo literature; and the emergence and development of *Rambuai* novel in Mizo fiction can be divided into two aspects: novels based on *Rambuai* that were written under *Rambuai* circumstance and novels based on *Rambuai* that were written after the end of *Rambuai*.

*Rambuai* lasted for two decades. The first decade 1966-1976 had been one of the greatest coercion between the MNF and Indian Government. It can also be said that during those ten years the mental and physical suffering of the Mizos had reached its height. Because of this, it is very risky for Mizo writers to write about *Rambuai* based novel for public reading. Nevertheless, *Ka Di Ve Kha* a *Rambuai* based novel written by Vanlalngena was published in cyclostyle print and this novel can be regarded as the first novel based on *Rambuai*.

However, there has been different view points with regard to the first published *Rambuai* based novel. In *Rambuai Literature* Vanchiau states, “Though there has been no book form of the so called first *Rambuai* fiction, *Ka Di Ve Kha* written by former Deputy speaker, Vanlalngena, the old copy has been search for publication” (87). R.Lalrawna also declared that this fiction was given out in cyclostyle print for public reading (Interview). In a compilation of seminar paper, *Rambuai Literature*, organised by Govt. Hrangbana College, Lallianzuala writes:

Prior to the year 1976, Mizo novels which had its basis in *Rambuai* may not be available in print. However, the composition was very much present. As we are announced as a disturbed area, the love stories that were published before *Rambuai* occasionally published. However, the first printed novel might be *Rinawmin* written by James Dokhuma which was published in two volumes by David Memorial Press, Thakthing Bazar, Aizawl. (60)

Significantly, *Ka Di Ve Kha* was published one year before *Rinawmin*, but the copy of the former novel could not yet be found. Therefore, *Rinawmin* was the first published book that was based in *Rambuai*. Consequently, though a copy of *Ka Di Ve Kha* is no more, it can be regarded as the first *Rambuai* based novel and *Rinawmin* can be regarded as the first *Rambuai* based novel which was properly transcribed in Printing Press. Besides, that it is noticeable from the preface of *Rinawmin* that Dokhuma wrote his *Rinawmin* in 1970 while he was imprisoned in Gauhati District Jail (5). Though, *Rinawmin* was published only after six year when Dokhuma was released from prison, it is presumable that no one would dare to write

fiction interwoven with *Rambuai* elements within Mizoram as *Rambuai* reached its peak in 1970, and possessing documents related with *Rambuai* was very dangerous for anyone. Therefore, *Rinawmin* can be claimed as the first *Rambuai* novel in Mizo literature for it was written in 1970.

In 1982 *Zoramthang: Daughter of the Hills*, written by Pramod Bathnagar was published by Vikrant Press in book form (Vanchiau 87). This novel was published five years after the publication of *Rinawmin*. *Zoramthangi: Daughter of the Hills* was *Rambuai* related novel written in English. The author Pramod Bathnagar was an MA working in Mizoram after the Mizo District became a Union Territory. In 1985, C.Laizawna had published *Thuruk* which mildly reflected about issues related to *Rambuai*. In spite of the critical situation and grim atmosphere during this first decade of *Rambuai* it is definitely a great achievement that four *Rambuai* related novels have been published.

*Rambuai* which lasted for two decades was indeed a critical and chaotic time for the Mizos. This chaotic time had greatly hindered the development of Mizo literature in many aspects. In *A Study of Mizo Novel* Vannghaka denotes “Insurgency in the then Mizo District left no scope for full-fledged novels during this decade, which may as well be called the ‘dark age of Mizo literature’ ” (19). The fact however cannot be denied that *Rambuai* had adversely affected the development of Mizo literature. Nevertheless, the literatures that are produced after *Rambuai* had greatly brought about development in Mizo fiction especially within the realm of *Rambuai* based novel. Afterwards, the experiences of the affliction, agony, distress,

torment are poignantly reflected in *Rambuai* based novel and thus become a disguised blessing for Mizo literature.

At the time of *Rambuai*, Mizo novelists could not freely express their feelings and viewpoints as they desired. It was a great risk to write about the advancement or condemnation of the MNF movement. On account of this, majority of the Mizo writers chose to be silent. M.C. Lalrinthanga said, “Warning was given to the journalists who had written against the MNF movement. The editor of local newspaper ‘Romei’ Mr. Robert Lalchhuana and Chhawrpial editor Mr. Z.A. Kapmawia were given warning as they wrote against the MNF movement. After a while, Mr. Robert Lalchhuana was physically tortured by the MNF which resulted in a fractured arm. The life of Z.A. Kapmawia was taken.” (Interview). In *The Mizo Uprising*, a historian J.V. Hluna also denoted “Pu Zadinga MLA and Pu Z.A. Kapmawia editor of Chhawrpial Daily Newspaper were also shot dead in the month of May, 1982” (322). In her novel *Zorami*, Jacob illustrated how dangerous it could be to write and protest against the activities and to condemn the actions of the underground army through one of her characters Lalrinmawia, who is an editor of the local daily newspaper. He had written in the editorial of his newspaper:

Will these killings bring independence? No. Will they improve the lot of our people in any way? No. They are butchering innocent civilians. They are slaughtering their fellow Mizo men. What is the point, we ask, what is the point. (142)

The point he asked was soon answered by the two underground army; at night he was taken out from his residence and they told him “We want you to be silent!” Later in the night, his body was found by the roadside (144).

In 1986, after two decades of tumultuous turbulence and convulsive period, the MNF and the Government of India finally signed the Peace Accord which brought about peaceful and serene atmosphere among the Mizo community. After the Peace Accord was signed by the MNF and the Government of India, Mizo writers were gradually able to express their thoughts and feelings without any obstructions. In 1986, Laizawna published a short story *Zalen Hma Chuan* which had its basis in MNF movement. In comparison with the former *Thuruk* which was published during *Rambuai*, in *Zalen Hma Chuan* Laizawna openly and vividly reflected his interest and secret hope in the MNF movement.

In *Rambuai Literature*, Lalawmpuia mentions that there had been fifty one *Rambuai* novels and its related short story which were published between 1986 and 2013. He further states:

These novels are the ones which are all available in book form. That there must be at least seventy (70) *Rambuai* Fiction with the inclusion of the ones which could not be found anymore. Nevertheless, there are Mizo fiction writers who are writing about *Rambuai* fiction at present and as well as other writers who are attempting to write about it. (111)

Apart from the mentioned *Rambuai* novel by Lalawmpuia, there are other eight *Rambuai* and its related novel namely-*Nghilh Ni I Awm Lo* written by Elis H.

Pachauu, *Lungawina Kim* written by H.Lalngurliani, *Thinglubul* by Lalpekkima, *Thih Nge Dam* written by PC Lawmkunga, *Nunhlui Tahna* written by C. Zolianpari, *Keimi* and *Lawmlung khaw Thangtea* written by Thankima, and *Kara Hla e Hnai Mahse* written by VL Rema (Rairahtea). These fictions were published before 2013, and were all published in book form. Amongst these novels, Thankima's *Keimi* and *Lawmlung Khaw Thangtea* are written in the form of short story which were published in his compilation of short story *Pang Dai Lo*. After 2013, four Rambuai based novels *Zorami* written by Malsawmi Jacob, *Hnam Sipai Chambangte* written by Zochhumpuii Pa, *When Black Birds Fly* written by Hannah Lalhlanpuii, and *Falung* written by Lalengzauva were published.

The three *Rambuai* novels namely *Zoramthangi: Daughter of the Hills*, *Zorami* and *When Black Birds Fly* were all written in English. Beside these, Dipak Kumar Barkakati had written *Diktawn* in Assamese language in 1998 (Vanchiau 92). The author of *Zoramthangi: Daughter of the Hills* Pramod Bhatnagar and Dipak Kumar Barkakati, author of *Diktawn* were the only non-Mizo who had written about *Rambuai* related novel.

Within the realm of Mizo novel, the publication of *Rambuai* and its related novel was much greater in number during the 21<sup>st</sup> century than the 20<sup>th</sup> century (during the year 1975 to 1999). During these 34 years, twenty novels of *Rambuai* and its related novels were published. Nevertheless, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, during the year 2000-2019, there were publication of forty *Rambuai* and its related novels. Therefore, between 1975 and 2019, all together there were 65 *Rambuai* and its related novels. However, with all the other *Rambuai* novels which were published



through hard work, there seemed to be eighty published *Rambuai* and its related novels. Thus, it may be noted that during the span of five decades (1975-2019), there had always been an average publication of one or two *Rambuai* based or *Rambuai* related novels in a year.

Within the sphere of Mizo novel, it may be considered that the influence of *Rambuai* gradually increased and eventually spread its roots. Subsequently, some Mizo writers had the opinion that it was time to classify the different shades of *Rambuai* depicted in Mizo novel. Lalawmpuia opined that “All Mizo fiction related to *Rambuai* can be termed as *Rambuai* Fiction” (81). He further noted that one aspect of creative writing *Rambuai* fiction will in future encapsulate all fictions that are written in relation to the insurgent period. The coverage of *Rambuai* novel is thus quite vast. However, as the nature and importance of *Rambuai* in Mizo novel differs in myriad manner, it would be better to classify them into two kinds; (i) novel based on *Rambuai* as *Rambuai* based novel, and (ii) *Rambuai* related novel.

In *Rambuai* based novel, the writer uses *Rambuai* as the setting of the novel and *Rambuai* has a huge impact in the life of the characters. As the characters live under the gloomy atmosphere of *Rambuai*, it certainly has a negative and positive impact. The ambiance of the narrative are usually dark and gloomy. The setting and characters are usually taken from real life and the historical fact is given importance. Novel like *Zoramthangi: Daughter of the Hill* written by Pramod Bhatnagar, *Rinawmin*, *Silaimu Ngaihawm*, *Kham Kar Senhri* written by James Dokhuma, *Rinpui leh Seizika* written by C.Chhuanvara, *Zalen Hma Chuan*, *Thuruk*, *In Hrang*, *Omnus*, *Sulhnu* written by C.Laizawna, *Nunna Kawng Thuam Puiah* written by

Zikpuii Pa , *Mizo Ngaihndan Dek Che Tham* written by K.Hawlla Sailo, *Mittui Kara Hmangaihna* written by Zothansangi Pa, *Nukawki Fanu* written by Lalhmingliana Saiawi , *Hmangaihtu Tuarna* written by Lalremmawia Sailo, *Chhingkhual Nula Rinawm* written by F.Biakngura, *Hringnun Hi* written by V.L Rema, *Nghilh Har Kan Tuar* written by Mafeli, *Zalenna Lungkham Val* written by FLC Sanga, *Ram Zun Kara D Zun* written by FLC Sanga, *Rose Par Vul Ve Ta Rih Lo Chu* written by Capt. L.Z. Sailo, *Hmangaihna Par* written by C.Ringzuala, *Rinpuui leh Seizika* written by C.Chhuanvawra, *Hmangaihna Hmasa* written by Lalthangliana Sailo *Hnam Sipai Chambangte* written by Zochhumpuii Pa, *Pu Khuma* written by Vanneihluanga, *Beiseina Mittui* written by Samson Thanruma, *Falung* written by Lalengzauva, *Zorami* written by Malsawmi Jacob, *When Black Birds Fly* written by Hannah Lalhlanpuii can be categorised as *Rambuai* based novel.

In *Rambuai* related novel, the author of the novel depicts some *Rambuai* atmosphere and its related aspects. In such writings, some *Rambuai* issues that do not have deep impact of *Rambuai* are depicted by the characters. The plot of the narrative utilized *Rambuai* in order to make the story interesting. Thus, such novels can be categorised under the umbrella of *Rambuai* related novel. At present, there are seventeen *Rambuai* related novels within the realm of Mizo novel namely *Lungrang Hmangaihna*, *Keimah Unionliana* written by Lalhmingliana Saiawi, *Hmangaihna Zungzam* written by Lalhriata, *Nang Chauh Lo Chu* written by Khawlthangmawia Chenkual, *Naupang Bo Chu*, *Hnamdang Neih Chu* written by Lalremmawia Sailo, *Khaw Ram Fan* written by H.Lalngbaka, *Retheih Luat Vangin*, *Lungphun Mawi Ber* written by K.L.Ramthlenga, *Kha Mi Zan Khan* written by V.L.Remma , *Mizo*

*Hmeichhe Rinawm* written by T.Vanlawmate, *Hun Inher Danglam Tuar Chhuah Zawh Ka Inring Lo* written by Devasy Lalmuanpuia, *Nunhlui Tahna* written by C.Zolianpari, and *Kaihranga* written by Lalnunthara Sailo.

According to the theme and the way the writer depicts the atmosphere of *Rambuai*, Vanchiau classified *Rambuai* account writer into ‘MNF narrative and Non-MNF narrative’. He states:

There are number of interesting hidden story in ‘MNF narrative’. However, *Rambuai* literature should not only rest in the fassinating account of *Rambuai*, it should rather avoid the truth by indepth comparable study of MNF narrative and Non-MNF narrative. (21)

Subsequently, in *Rambuai* based novel and *Rambuai* related novel, it may be assumed from their writing whether the writer is fascinated by or has accused the MNF movement through the portrayal of the characters.

Though majority of *Rambuai* related fiction writers did not get involved in the MNF movement. However, James Dokhuma, author of *Rinawmin*, *Silaimu Ngaihawm* and *Kham Kar Senhri*, C.Chhuanvawra, author of *Rinpuii leh Seizika*, K.Hawlla Sailo, author of *Mizo Ngaihdan Dek Che Tham*, and Zochhumpuii Pa, author of *Hnam Sipai Chambangte* were personally involved in the MNF movement. Among the three writers, James Dokhuma and K.Hawlla Sailo may be classed as writers of *Rambuai* based fiction in the MNF narratives. In *Rinawmin* Dokhuma depicted his concept of MNF movement through the protagonist Rozuala “Hluni, just as I wish to see your face, I wish to see freedom and I yearn for my homeland just

the way I yearn for you” (53). In *Mizo Ngaihda Dek Che Tham*, Hawlla propagates the Mizo National Front movement through his protagonist Zoramhngaihzauala by stating:

It is a privileged for us to be able to have a good day. Just after the Indian army left, we are able to hoist our national flag. Though, this flag is hosted with trepidation, the youth will certainly enjoy the taste of freedom under this flag. Though, the Indian army had taken away our freedom right now, our freedom fighters will not be defeated by them for all time. Though, they are defeated by them, they will certainly rise up. (98)

There are also writers who have no involvement in the *Rambuai* movement but whose work could be considered with the inclusion of MNF narratives regarding the theme and idea imparted in their novels. *Zalen Hma Chuan*, *In Hrang* and *Thuruk* written by C.Laizawna, *Zalenna Lungkham Val* and *Ram Zun Kara D Zun* written by FLC Sanga, *Hmangaihna Hmasa* written by Lalthangliana Sailo, and *Hmangaihna Par* written by C.Ringzuala were all written in the perspective of MNF narratives even though they have no involvement in the insurgency movement in relation to the underground or over ground movement. However, there were writers who intentionally wrote about the MNF narratives and also writers who had given priority to Mizo nationalism and their love for Mizoram in their fictions. Though these writers were not themselves involved in the movement, their writings however reflect the movement and thus such writers may be mentioned among the MNF narratives. C. Laizawna says, “During *Rambuai*, for people like us, it was more of a

fight between the people and the army than that of politics. This certainly had a deep influence and impart in my writings” (Interview).

In their novels, most of *Rambuai* based novel writers called the underground army as Mizo National Army, Mizo Army, and National Army. But Lalhmingliana Saiawi and Zikpuii Pa addressed Mizo National Volunteer as both ‘Mizo Army’ and ‘militant’ in their fictions. Zikpuii Pa says, “Mizo army and Assam Rifles fired each other” (66), and “Why do you beat me? Beat the militant, are you afraid?” (80). In *Nukawki Fanu*, Lalhmingliana Saiawi says that militants are not so many and they didn’t have enough weapons, they sometimes ambushed the army and ran away quickly (27). Unlike other *Rambuai* based novel writers, Zikpuii Pa described explicitly through his character Chhuanvawra the vice of the Indian army towards Mizo community without favourable touch of the MNF movement.

*Rambuai* based novel has been tackled by both prolific Mizo writers as well as Mizo writers who are not commonly known by the public. Among such writers some writers have published only one *Rambuai* based novel, while other writers have published more than five novels. Amongst these writers C.Laizawna had written the most in number with regards to *Rambuai* based novel and *Rambuai* related novel. His short stories like *Thuruk* (1985), *Zalen Hma Chuan* (1986), *Omnus* (1986) *In Hrang* (1987), *Sulhnu* (1987), *Tah a Tul leh Thin* (1991), *Ka Phal Lo* (1996) were all *Rambuai* based novels.

James Dokhuma had written two novels that fully depend on *Rambuai* such as *Rinawmin* (1976) and *Silaimu Ngaihawm* (1992). The novels of Lalhmingliana Saiawi namely *Lungrang Hmangaihna* (1995), *Keimah Unionliana* (1997) and

*Nukawki Fanu* (2010), depict some incidents of *Rambuai* which seem trivial but constitute to the plot of each novel. Lalremmawia Sailo also wrote three novels based on *Rambuai* such as *Hmangaihtu Tuarna* (2001), *Naupang Bo Chu* (2002) and *Hnam Dang Neih Chu* (2002). V.L Rema wrote three novels namely *Kha Mi Zan Khan* (2003), *Hringnun Hi* (2003) and *Kara Hla E Hnai Mahse !*, F.L.C Sanga wrote two novels based on MNF narrative such as *Zalenna Lungkham Val* (2004) and *Ram Zun Kara Di Zun* (2006). K.L.Ramthlenga also wrote two novels with *Rambuai* elements such as *Retheih Luat Vangin* (2002) and *Lungphun Mawi Ber* (2003).

Most of the *Rambuai* based and *Rambuai* related novels in Mizo novel have been written by male writers. There have been only four *Rambuai* based novels written by women writers till date. Those are *Nunhlui Tahna* (2007) written by C.Zolianpari, *Nghilh Har Kan Tuar* (2010) written by Mafeli, *Zorami* (2015) written by Malsawmi Jacob, and *When Black Bird Fly* (2019) written by Hannah Lalhlanpuii.

*Rambuai* based novels differed in degree with regard to the writer's facet of freedom. *Rambuai* based novel which are written during *Rambuai* and after *Rambuai* differed to a great degree in relation to its setting, and there are some writings which conceal the milieu and names till the end of the story. Writers who had written after *Rambuai* enjoyed more freedom and courageously depicted the real village and locality during *Rambuai*. However, some of the settings and names are altered in accordance with how they wanted to reflect. In relation to this In *Rambuai Literature*, Vanchiau states, "Creative writers searched for convenience in creative

writing in order to move beyond the code of historical document and enjoyed more freedom in a scrupulous manner” ( 85).

Writers of *Rambuai* based novel wrote scrupulously in naming the settings and characters even if it is with written after *Rambuai* as history had reflected even individual lives during *Rambuai*. Therefore, writers of *Rambuai* based novel are restrained in many ways as compared to other historical novels. The restriction in terms of character naming among writers of *Rambuai* based novel do not altered even during and after *Rambuai*. In the foreword of *Rinawmin*, Dokhuma states:

My writings are based on real life when the ongoing of Mizoram Independence Movement nearly started, between 1965 when MNF Special Assembly declared Independence and incidents which had taken place after 1966 in Mizoram. However all the names of the characters are fictionalised. However, there are times I cannot avoid to mention the names of some MNF leaders. I do pray that I will be understood for mentioning the real names of some MNF leaders. (5)

Dokhuma wrote *Rinawmin* in 1970 when *Rambuai* reached it height. Moreover, it is known that even after the end of *Rambuai*, writers were still restricted in naming the characters of their novels. In the introduction to *Nghilh Har Kan Tuar* Mafeli states:

The name of the book and its nature are all fictionalised. Even if some people’s names are found, they are not based upon. Incident that happened during Mizoram disturbance which are verbalised as well as the suppression of some painful memories, and those that had not happened are all blend together for pleasant read. (viii)

*Nghilh Har Kan Tuar* was written after two decades of the end of *Rambuai*. In such a span of time, writers are restraint in character naming except in some exceptional cases where writers had to mention the real names and designations in their writings. In such aspects, the incidents within the ambit of history are fictionalised and those mentioned names from real life do not sound offensive but rather added authenticity of the novel.

In depicting the incidents, characters names and setting of *Rambuai*, writers of *Rambuai* based novel concealed or fictionalised in order to avoid hurting people. As the novel *Rinawmin* was published during *Rambuai*, the author Dokhuma was very careful in selecting the setting of the novel. In the novel, the enmity between the Mizo Union party and the MNF movement, the intense hostility that the MNF held against the so called *kawktu* which means informer or informant are the true image of *Rambuai* which someone could have taken it as the image of themselves and could feel again the wound which they thought that had already vanished. Therefore, Dokhuma fictionalised all the setting of the place and did not mention the names of the place till the end of the novel. He did this in order to avoid hurting the sentiment of people who have experienced the incident. However, it is known that *Rinawmin* is set in a certain Mizoram village, which is one day walk distance from Aizawl. Names of town and villages like Aizawl, Lunglei and Phuldungsei are mentioned in accordance with the demand of the narrative.

In Laizawna's *Thuruk* , written in 1985, towards the end of *Rambuai*, he speculatively wrote about *Rambuai* though there is no harm depicted in terms of individual or a particular village. In the narrative, Aizawl is the only place he mentioned "Several villages end up in smoke; people are perplexed and bewildered



as the capital city Aizawl has already been burnt.” (170). He mentioned Aizawl only once throughout the whole story for the sake of portraying *Rambuai* atmosphere. Just as the settings of the incident cannot be figured out, the incident cannot be identified with any village or individual. However, it is known that the incident certainly happened during *Rambuai*. However, in his other *Rambuai* based fictions *Omnus* and *Zalen Hma Chuan*, which were published after the end of *Rambuai*, Laizawna mentioned the name of villages and locality of some places in Mizoram. Of all *Rambuai* based fiction, *Rinawmin* and *Thuruk* are written in utmost precaution as it is written under *Rambuai* circumstance.

After the end of *Rambuai*, Zikpuii Pa wrote *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* in 1989. Amongst the *Rambuai* based fiction, this novel vividly depicted the arrogance of the army and the pain it had inflicted on Mizo women. He enunciated how the army imprisoned married women and maidens at the church and school building and committed brutal mass rape. Pi Kungliani hanged herself because of frequent brutal mass rape, those three women who were shot dead by the Mizo Army for they wrongly publicised as if some women were rather enjoyed the army rape, and making fun of them publicly. All these incidents are taken from real life and because of this Zikpuii Pa is cautious enough in choosing the setting of the novel. He thus fictionalised the setting of the novel and created his own imaginary village Zopui where all these painful incidents had taken place. In this manner, the incident will not be identified with any individual or places. Like other writers of *Rambuai* based novel, Zikpuii Pa is watchful in choosing the setting of his novel. Though, Zopui

village is his imaginative village, the excruciating experience that Zopui underwent were based on historical fact.

The rise of *Rambuai* novel can be attributed to four reasons. Firstly, *Rambuai* brought about great social upheavals. For some families it proved to be a road to perdition, while it proved to be a social ladder for some. These social changes were mentioned by most of the *Rambuai* novel writers who put together their protagonists from the opposing strata of society. These novels depict the influence of the insurgency that had brought difficulties to different families: how families were stripped away, how they were dragged down to the depths of poverty and yet were able to rise again. The abrupt changes in social status brought a change in the relationships between lovers and such realistic incidents are documented in Ramthlenga's *Retheih Luat Vangin*, Lalhmingliana's *Nukawki Fanu*, P.C.Lawmkunga's *Thih Nge Dam*, and Lalnunfela's *Luah Loh Lungdi*.

*Rambuai* also stirred the imagination of some writers who depicted through their characters that some volunteers had accidentally found some hidden treasures. One consequence of the conflict was that volunteers had to move about in parts of Pakistan, China, Burma and Bangladesh. This further widened the imaginary boundaries of the Mizo novelists and sowed the seeds of Mizo mystery fiction. Lalnunthara's *Kaihranga*, C.Laizawna's *Sulhnu, In Hrang, Omnus*, Lalengzauva's *Falung*, and Lalpekkima's *Thinglubul* can be categorised within this type of novel.

The private sufferings and social hardships endured by the people was what brought about the birth of *Rambuai* novel. That the ensuing destitution was not of someone's choice, but due to a just cause; that the assault on personal rights, and all

the mental stress may be pardoned was one of the intent for *Rambuai* novel. What most writers have omitted in regards to Mizoram disturbance was how a majority of the Mizo had suffered. Rosanga states:

Majority of Mizo writers, especially the ex-Mizo National Army (MNA) or MNF have offered narratives based on their successful campaigns in and outside the hills and propagated the atrocities committed by the Indian army. Although the main emphasis of such works is based on the account of eyewitnesses, they are however biased and they failed to address the suffering of the common man in the hands of both the Indian army and the MNA. . . . The MNA narrative fails to acknowledge the hardships and sufferings of the common man. (47)

Most *Rambuai* novel depict the sufferings of the Mizo people in general as well as the grieve of individuals who had suffered at the hands of the Indian military, and the underground volunteers, and those that were against the underground volunteers due to personal jealousy. Many years have elapsed after these incidents, but the trauma still lingers for the victims and even their descendants, and that is one of the important the reasons why such life like incidents and characters have emerged again through Mizo fiction. Novel like James Dokhuma's *Rinawmin*, *Silaimu Ngaihawm*, Malsawmi Jacob's *Zorami*, Mafeli's *Nghilh Har Kan Tuar*, Zikpuii Pa's *Nunna Kawng Thuampuih*, Lalthangliana's *Hmangaihna Hmasa*, Vanneihthluanga's *Pu Khuma*, Lalremmawia Sailo's *Hmangaihtu Tuarna*, and Khawlthangmawia

Chenkual's *Nang Chauh Lo Chu* are illustrations of the traumatic *Rambuai* experiences.

The rise of *Rambuai* novel under Mizo fiction may be attributed to patriotic fervour and reunification of the various Mizo clans who had drifted apart and had lost their common roots. Such kinds of patriotic feelings had never been mentioned in the earlier in Mizo novels, and *Rambuai* based novel and *Rambuai* related fictions are the first that mention such incidents. The first *Rambuai* novel, *Rinawmin* published in 1976 written by James Dokhuma was the first Mizo novel which related about patriotism. Through its characters Rozuala and Hrangluaia, it propagated the spirit of patriotism using the MNF movement as the background. The MNF movement's main motive of breaking away from the yoke of the Indian administration is to be independent and to be free as other nations or to search for such a way gave nationalist aspiration to the Mizo people and thereby gave them a sense of patriotism. In his *Chawnpui* Lalthangliana writes:

From 1966 there was a change in spirit among the Mizo. This had a great impact on the Mizo clans as a whole, so much so that its effect could be felt among all the Mizo clans, even those residing outside Mizoram. This led to a genuine sense of nationalism among many people. Regardless of their personal loss and grief the Mizo youth volunteered for the cause and many lost life (290-291).

However, while there was a sense of patriotism and much hope for Mizoram independence from the Indian governance, the Peace Accord that the MNF were about to sign could not appease the minds of many. The end result was the blooming

of *Rambuai* novel in its different forms. This sense of patriotism that was curbing by the Peace Accord could be the cause for *Rambuai* novel, and it continued its growth with the constant nourishment of unexpressed ideas formed during *Rambuai*. C.Laizawna's *Thuruk, Zalen Hma Chuan, In Hrang*, Capt. L.Z.Sailo's *Rose Par Vul Ve Ta Rih Lo Chu*, Dokhuma's *Rinawmin, Silaimu Ngaihawm*, K.Hawlla Sailo's *Mizo Ngaihdan Dek Che Tham*, Lalnunthara Sailo's *Kaihranga*, Mafeli's *Nghilh Har Kan Tuar*, Malsawmi Jacob's *Zorami*, V.L.Rem'a's *Kar a Hla e, Hnai Mahse*, Zikpuii Pa's *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* are *Rambuai* novel that all portray the concept of patriotism in Mizo society.

The element of romance between young people mostly occupies a significant place in *Rambuai* novel. In fact, it is one of the main factors responsible for the birth of this kind of fiction. However, the element of romance is highly significant in illustrating the life-changing aspects affecting the individual and the society, by clearly highlighting the struggles and hardships faced by the people, and expressing the concept of patriotism in the minds of the Mizos. Therefore, the study that is focused on how *Rambuai* novel reflects the way insurgency had caused individual trauma and collective trauma in Mizo society during and after the end of *Rambuai*, and analyzes the concept of patriotism in *Rambuai* novel.

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## Chapter II

### Collective Trauma in Rambuai Novel

This chapter examines the collective trauma on the mental sufferings experienced by the Mizo society during the insurgent period and it tries to reflect how the people had to undergo different problems and how it brought about different social vices to the fore resulting in social degeneration due to village grouping. It will estimate the changes brought by night curfews, and how the social structure and traditions were changed resulting in the double fold sufferings. It will also examine how *Rambuai* instilled fear of the army and the underground army in the civilians.

One prominent feature that has occupied a place in *Rambuai* novel is the exposure of the hardships and the sufferings endured not only by individuals but by the society as a whole. Since the trauma of *Rambuai* is a haunting experience for the victims most of them prefer to remain silent about their experiences rather than revive the pains and the sufferings endured by them. V.Thangzama, one of the Mizo poets wrote about *Rambuai* in his song *Tho la, Ding Ta Che* in the following words:

Hnutiang hawi lovin nghilh zai rel ila,

Kan hlíam hluite dam rawh se;

Khua a sang ta hle, khua kan tlai ang e,

Tunah hian I kal ang u. (17-20)

[Forget the past never to turn back/ Let our old wounds be healed/ The day is worn-out it is getting late/ Now is the time to move forward].

In this song, V Thangzama inspired the people of the land to forget their traumatizing experiences that had broken their spirits and he urged them to keep on moving

forward towards progression. However, those who have been seriously affected physically and mentally were not likely to forget the impact of *Rambuai* by remaining silent. The victims themselves or writers who share similar emotions rendered their feelings in their creative writings especially poetry and fiction, in order to restore their mental health.

The sole intention of the novel writers of *Rambuai* is not only to depict the sufferings endured by the people during insurgency but to provide a thorough narrative of the incidents that had occurred during *Rambuai*. It is the medium through which they can expose the full extent that *Rambuai* had created on Mizo society during and after the insurgency. At the same time, it was also a means of attempting to restore their wounded mentality. Another intention of *Rambuai* novel writers is to make the younger generations aware of the sufferings undergone by innumerable victims who are unable to express their terrible experiences. For this reason, *Rambuai* novel is an essential tool to unearth the impact and sufferings endured by the primary victims and their generations. Since non-fiction writers are mostly supporters of the MNF movement who have been active participant as underground and over-ground, their narratives are mostly written in support of the underground army and their actions are portrayed in interesting ways. In their narratives, almost all accounts of brutality and sufferings during the insurgency are targeted against the army. However, during the period of insurgency, the army and the underground militants were equally feared by the civilians though on different grounds. This seems to be the reason why the phrase '*Tuboh leh dolung kara awm kan ni*' which means living between the hammer and the anvil is appropriately used to describe the situation during insurgency as the people were not only victimised by

the army but also by the underground army. Besides the army and the underground army, some civilians also used the opportunity to take revenge upon their enemies who had hurt their sentiments. However, the MNF narratives did not make many references about the victims who have suffered in the hands of the underground while the scar left behind was reflected in the form of mental trauma even after the post *Rambuai* phase. In *After Decades of Silence*, Zama and Vanchiau state:

There are also crucial questions to which there are several answers – question such as why, where, who were the real victims, who were those responsible, and the like. And as with other conflicts, there is always a suppressed voice which none there to foreground. The sufferings caused by the army atrocities were many, but so were those undergone in the hands of the underground and yet, most narrative remain untold. But with the passing of time, there comes a strong desire to set certain straight, to retell histories, do justice to those no more, and to provide an unbiased history for the future generation. (58)

In his *Memory, Trauma and War*, Hunt states the importance of literature for traumatized victims of wars:

The use of literature (novel, poetry) can both support the psychological evidence we obtain regarding the impact of war, and, in some circumstances, help to develop our understanding. A common way for many people to deal with their traumatic memories is to write them down as a story. (161)

In her article “Locating Trauma in Mizo Literature” Zama states:

Writers particularly from the states of Assam, Nagaland and Manipur have been vocal and productive in literary representations of resistance, trauma and suffering, and continue to be so, caught as they are in present times, in the cross fire of violence due to communal and ethnic strife, militancy and underground armed movements. (66)

Among the *Rambuai* novel writers the narratives of those who had actually been involved during the insurgency, and those who have only heard about the incidents have striking similarities; portrayal of hardships endured by the community. However, there are differences in the portrayal of certain incidents concerned with individual sufferings. Since the exposure of the sufferings depicted by the writers are taken from accounts which they themselves have experienced or based on the narratives of the relatives who have been victims. *Rambuai* novel seems to convey a clear and precise picture of the minds of the people that have been deeply affected by the insurgency. Therefore, it can be considered that the emergence of this kind of novel is an important factor that has brought emotional consolation, solace, relief and release for the victims who have been tormented physically and mentally. In her article entitled “Embedded Memories of the Past Decade”, Rohmingmawii Pachuau remarks that Malsawmi Jacob, the author of the novel *Zorami*, confessed that she had wondered how Mizo people dealt with the psychological trauma that they had suffered on account of Mizoram insurgency, and she realized that their emotional wounds had not healed even after the Peace Accord was signed. She therefore, wrote the novel *Zorami* which is a quest for inner healing (75).

Trauma in *Rambuai* novel can be divided into collective trauma and individual trauma. Therefore, trauma that are reflected in *Rambuai* novel such as grouping of villages, curfew, starvation, fear of the army and the underground army, loneliness and nostalgia, economic degradation, and stagnation of education may be categorized as collective trauma. As Hirschberger states “The term collective trauma refers to the psychological reactions to a traumatic events that affect an entire society; it does not merely reflect a historical fact, the recollection of a terrible event that happened to a group of people” (n.pag).

One of the most horrendous measures adopted by the Government of India to counter insurgency was the introduction of grouping of villages which is termed as *Khawkhawm* in Mizo language. Grouping of villages caused severe trauma and untold sufferings to the people. “Thus, the period is considered as one of the darkest spots in time, which took place in three different phases in 1967, 1968 and 1972. Out of 764 villages, 516 were evacuated and squeezed into 110 PPVs (Protected and Progressive Villages)” (qtd. in Rohmingmawii Pachuau 68). The villagers who were driven to these grouping centers were provided free rations, but only meagre amount of rations were provided to meet the needs of the people of the grouping centre. However, in reality, the grouping of villages only proved to be a weapon of the Indian Government to suppress the underground army. Hence, grouping of village was only an agent of grief and suffering for the people. The villagers of selected villages for grouping were informed to carry most of their belongings to the grouping centre. The assets that were difficult to move during the time of evacuation; livestock and houses were burnt down by the army. In *Silaimu Ngaihawm* Dokhuma refers to

the grouping villages “Such villages were called PPVs, Protected Progressive Villages. The Mizos however, recalling Adolf Hitler and his massacre of Jews, called them Concentration Camps. Others termed them Public Punishment Villages” (172). Songs about the dark times were composed by many Mizo poets and the following is one of the most well known songs composed by Suakliana:

*Kan hun tawng zingah khawkhawm a pawl ber mai,*

*Zoram hmun tin vangkhua puan ang a chul zo ta,*

*Tlang tina mi kal khawm nunau mipuite'n*

*Chhunrawl a vang, riakmaw va iangin kan vai e. (1-4)*

[Of all our bad times, village grouping is the darkest/All our Zoram has faded like worn out clothes/ Men, women and children, gathered from all hills/ Go hungry and homeless like the *riakmaw* bird.] (Jacob 116)

The grouping of villages plays a significant role in *Rambuai* novel as it is recognized as one of the main causes of the many sufferings endured by the individuals and the society. Although the people suffered severe torture of various kinds, that left psychological scars on the victims and their relatives, yet grouping of villages left indelible scars with traumatic effects. It is said that usually, the condition of mental trauma of the forcibly displaced people has been less noticed. As Islamic Relief Worldwide states:

There are now more than 65 million people in the world who have been forced from their homes due to conflict or disaster (UNHCR), many of them struggling to meet their basic needs of food, water, shelter and access to essential services. However, the psychological

trauma of their displacement is less visible, and often overlooked.

(n.pag)

Mizo historians who wrote about *Rambuai* gave importance to the various physical sufferings endured by the people while they have also been neglectful in highlighting how the grouping of the villages have deeply affected the minds of the people and have changed their mentality. *Rambuai* novel, on the other hand, is a responsible factor in exposing the physical, psychological, social, cultural and traditional problems faced by the people of the grouping of villages that most historians have failed to mention. In fact, this kind of fiction exposes the different perspectives and new insights to describe the effects that the grouping of villages had upon the people.

Amongst *Rambuai* novel Dokhuma's *Silaimu Ngaihawm* and *Rinawmin*, Jacob's *Zorami*, Mafeli's *Nghilh Har Kan Tuar*, and Vanneihluanga's *Pu Khuma* are novels that portray the way that grouping of villages affected the physical and mental life of the individuals and the whole Mizo community. When the Government of India began to enforce the grouping of villages in Mizoram, the villagers of selected villages to be grouped were extremely stunned as the Government of India conveyed the information to them only a few hours before the village grouping was implemented in Mizoram. The villagers faced mental trauma even before the village grouping was implemented. As reflected by Dokhuma in his *Silaimu Ngaihawm* that "the elderly clung to their doorposts, weeping openly" (155). Before the British rule, the Mizos were often forced to move to different places due to war and scarcity of food. They moved to new lands under the leadership of their chiefs, depending on

their circumstances. Since this custom of leaving one location to live in a better location with fertile land was a necessity for survival, it did not much affect the Mizos' psychological and physical aspect. By the year 1890, when the British government subdued the Mizo Chiefs and ruled over them, each chief was given his own territory. Further, the British Government prohibited the Mizo Chiefs to raid and war against each other. Since, the British Government had allotted the Chieftain territories, even the brave and strong chiefs did not dare to move out of his boundary. Gradually, the Mizos were transformed from their nomadic culture to that of permanent dwellers. Furthermore, after the abolition of chieftainship in 1954, the people elected their representatives amongst themselves and that created a sense of belonging in the Mizos. Since the people became quite attached to their respective region(s), when the Indian government implemented the grouping of villages by force, the Mizos within each territory who were by then quite attached to their own areas were in a state of shock and pain. In *Silaimu Ngaihawm*, Dokhuma reflects:

The village elders who had been reared and nurtured by the spring water of Hualtu, whose feeling of nostalgia and tenderness could roused only by their own village and who now were about to be driven out of their homes by alien men, wept and mourned aloud, unable to accept and understand this trauma. Anyone who was slow or did not pack fast enough was bullied and hurried by the soldiers. Some carried their excess goods and hid them on the outskirts of the village. Happiness had left each and every face. No one looked forward to the migration, yet no one dared to show it. (171)



In his other novel *Rinawmin*, Dokhuma states that the people were offended and he reflects that "Some lamented on leaving their homes. There was none who looked happy" (70), showing how offended they felt. The pain that the Mizos endured due to village grouping had a deep impact on Dokhuma. Thus, grouping of villages stands at the centre of his novels in his *Rinawmin* and *Silaimu Ngaihawm*. In these two novels the traumatic *Rambuai* experiences of the Mizo community are focused in multiple ways. In her article "Locating Trauma in Mizo Literature" Ch. Zama says, "The village grouping that Dokhuma felt so strongly about, so much so that he was compelled into creating a work of such fiction to showcase it, can be located as the 'collective trauma' of the Mizo community at that point in time, which involved the pain of displacement and dislocation . . ." (71). In his novel *Mizo Ngaihdan Dek Che Tham*, Hawlla Sailo describes the life of the Mizos who were affected by the grouping of villages. He states:

There is nothing more agonizing in the history of the Mizo, and there never will be, than being forced to leave the homes and community in which they resided since the time of their forefathers, the place that they longed for more than any other place in the world, and were grouped together with other villages. (48)

In the novel *Pu Khuma*, Vanneihluanga does not mention much about the nostalgia of the people who left their homes due to the village grouping. Instead, he narrates incidents such as the scarcity of food and nourishment, and he describes how the hardships resulted in the demoralization of the individuals as well as the whole community. Erikson states, "By collective trauma, on the other hand, I mean a blow

to the basic tissues of social life that damages the bonds attaching people together and impairs the prevailing sense of communality" (153), similarly, in the story *Pu Khuma*, Vanneihluanga states, "For the people who were used to eating to their heart's content, who adapted their way of life according to their harvests for all those years, the sudden alteration of their lifestyle brought drastic deterioration" (83). Thus, the attitude of the Mizo people that was unselfish and altruistic in nature showed a drastic change. The people of the grouping villages became accustomed to receive everything for free. This turn of event that particularly caused instant deterioration to the age old social and customary norms resulted in dependence; on the provisions funded by the Central Government. Further, the poor became poorer since the strictures imposed by the army made it impossible to maintain their agricultural plots. Thus many Mizo families experienced shortage of food that was a stark contrast to their past lives. Shortage of food and starvation resulted that "Some young men sold their sisters in exchange of the army's bread and other food stuffs, and even shameless women became intimate with the army" (Vanneihluanga 83). Due to village grouping, the people could no longer continue their means of livelihood that is farming; having to work in their agricultural plots for a limited period under the dominance of the watchful army and the restrictions imposed by the curfew. This in turn directly resulted in low production of harvest that led to lack of food provision and further led them to misery. In *Pu Khuma*, Vanneihluanga remarks that Khuma's village faced miserable plight "when a handful of endorsement came from the government and the people were fighting over stinky rice, bad quality flour and dried corn" (82). It is said that the Mizo, from their ancestors were self-sufficient people (Lianzela 51), but when they have to survive

without rice, eating edible roots throughout the year, the last word of a dying old man in Khuma's village was, "Do not say that I died of old age, say that I died of despair" (82). Thus, the sufferings of the people due to village grouping in Khuma's village reflects the socio cultural scenario of *Rambuai*. In her article entitled "Embedded Memories of the Past Decades" Rohmingmawii Pachuau states "A social trauma is thus a wound to the social body and its culture frame; it affects people as much as on the physical and mental level as on the social and cultural level" (77). The grouping of villages also results the presence of *kawktu* within the Mizo community. The word *kawktu* literally means pointer or informant. In Vanneihluanga's *Pu Khuma*, the presence of *kawktu* within the community results in loss of trust, enmity, and other vices. In the circumstance of despair and hunger individuals within the community took the advantage of being *kawktu*. Such *kawktu* reported their neighbors who were arrested, and in turn the *kawktu* was favoured by the army. The despair and hunger gave birth to people who reported their neighbours and got them arrested in order to be in favour of the army (83).

The Mizos experienced two kinds of famine; *Thingtam* famine and *Mautam* famine after every fifty years. However, *Thingtam* famine and *Mautam* famine were never the cause of problem that would ruin the Mizo cultural life because they knew that the famine would only last for about two years and after which, they would be able to cultivate and reap the harvest from their jhum land. The hope that the famine would be over after two years safeguarded their culture even during the time of starvation. However, in Vanneihluanga's *Pu Khuma*, the villagers besides enduring their hunger were unable to hope for a better future under the control of the army.

They called for God in despair, but the voice of the army officer rang louder (84). The emergence of pointer, prostitution and betrayal added to the immensity of despair and hunger due to the village grouping within Mizo society that thereby increased the level of severity of collective trauma in the story.

In the novel *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, written by Zikpui Pa, the people who were grouped at Zopui village were insecure and submissive due to the torture they received from the army and everyone was subdued, full of hatred for the army, but they do not dare to share their thoughts to people from another village or strangers. Those who were once able to express their thoughts and feelings were suppressed and they bore their heartaches alone under the subjugation of the army (120). The villagers of Zopui suffered village grouping to the point that even their freedom to talk about their own rights was taken away. The protagonist of the story, Chhuanvawra said, "Everyone tried to tell me about their poverty and unsettling condition, and even who already told me wanted to keep on talking about it" (121), which showed the desperation of the villagers. Through the protagonist Chhuanvawra, it may also be noted that each person could not disclose his or her sufferings to anyone else.

Mafeli, in her novel *Nghilh Har Kan Tuar*, describes how the village grouping disrupted the unity of the society. She states "The village of East Lungdar was also used as a grouping centre. With diverse people being put together, it was difficult to be in unison. People started to think differently" (62). Though the Mizos, from their forefathers, lived in a tightly-knit society and they were content with the societal dogma (Dengchhuana 250); however, Mafeli remarks, "When different

villages were grouped together by force, they had to reside discontentedly in another village, on the other hand, for the inhabitants of the village, it was impossible to continue their normal lives and it caused disgruntlement among the people" (62). That was how unity in the society was fractured. Besides being grouped together, there was also curfew and everyone was walking on eggshells for fear of being doubted by the army and was scared even to go to their neighbour's house and due to that, they had to conspire against each other. Village grouping even gave birth to robbery among the Mizos who were known for their honesty. These hardships "forced them to do bad things which their minds and characters never accepted" (Mafeli 146). But Mafeli sympathetically states that the Mizos were not to be blamed for their sufferings, and remarks how the village grouping due to insurgency planted disorganization and selfishness in the Mizo society. She further notes that disorganization and selfishness were unavoidable for the villagers of East Lungdar and remarks "it is understandable" (62).

Scarcity of food is what the people of grouping of villages had severely suffered during *Rambuai*. The *atta* flour that the Indian government provided for those in the grouping centre was not considered as food even when they filled their stomach with *atta* flour, their hunger was not satisfied as rice is the main food of the Mizos since their ancestors' days. In Mafeli's *Nghilh Har Kan Tuar*, it is obvious that the sudden alteration of food was quite traumatising for the people of grouped villages as the people could not accept the *atta* flour as food. Even though they had eaten *atta* flour, their common catchphrase was that they had not eaten food yet. The hunger of the children and the absence of rice was what often made the parents shed

their tears. The men could do nothing despite the fact that it is disgraceful in the Mizo society to not be able to reap enough rice for the family; they watched their hungry family in dismay (118). There were times when the Mizos suffered famine even before the insurgency; however, being herded together like cattle and suffering from continuous hunger not because of a natural calamity was too severe for the self-sufficient Mizos that it further led to stealing. In *Nghilh Har Kan Tuar*, one of the minor characters Zeli states "Oh, look, some of our vegetables went missing yesterday . . . Pu Lala's family also lost some belongings, it is very strange. I never knew we have kleptomaniacs in our village" (Mafeli 74). The statement implies that some Mizos had gradually begun to steal things from their neighbours. Dokhuma reflects "the Mizo were accustomed to simply locking their doors with a small log" (Hmanlai 322) which is often regarded as the symbol of their honesty, yet, this idea was contradicted by Zeli's remark. It may therefore be assumed that the age old Mizo honesty was replaced by vices such as dishonesty and theft during the village grouping. Similarly, in the novel *In Hrang* written by Laizawna, in the village where the female protagonist Laltilani and others were grouped, the people had "hungry minds, followed by their hungry stomach. As people from different villages were put together, it created corruption among the people" (30). The degradation of honesty due to village grouping has never regained its status in the Mizo society till today.

*Rambuai* fictions mainly depict the detrimental effects of the distress suffered by the Mizo community due to village grouping, arising out of the insurgency. However Malsawmi Jacob in her novel *Zorami*, contrastingly illustrated how the villagers of Darnam in the midst of *Rambuai* still projected the beautiful Mizo culture. While the army exploited the grouped villagers to fortify their

village(s) they experienced innumerable psychological pains. Yet, the villagers still found time to joke with one another during their hard labour which in turn greatly perplexed their guards:

The Indian soldiers who were keeping watch over them puzzled at their behavior. They did not know the stoical endurance is considered one of the ultimate virtues among the Mizo people. That it has been practiced since the time of their forefathers as part of *tlawmngaihna*, the most beautiful quality that defies definition. (114)

But their antics did not mean that their sufferings had lessened. Since being jocular in the face of hardships was a cultural trait of the Mizo people, the Darnam community also used humour as their defence so that “They hid their pain behind their laughter” (113).

One of the most infuriating aspects of the period was the night curfews which brought about a great communal change. In *Zorami*, Malsawmi Jacob pointed out that “Many were tortured to death for breaking the curfew. No one was allowed to come out of their homes after dark. This was a great punishment for a people who loved to socialized” (116). “Those who broke the curfew were sometimes shot at, and arrested without fail. And most nights were under curfew.” (Hawlla Sailo 47). The Mizo community had always been a closely knitted society from the time of their forefathers because they know the true value of their neighbours. In fact, one Mizo saying goes “It is better to be enemies with seven villages than having enmity with your neighbours” (Dokhuma, “Hmanlai” 350). Since the daytime was allotted to work, the only leisure time they had was the night. In case of death in the

community, all the neighbours would gather at night to console the bereaved family. From the onset of Christianity regular church service routines were set for the night. Traditionally, night was also the time when Mizo bachelors court the ladies. The night curfew thus imposed was a real hindrance especially for the youth. Saiawi in his novel *Nukawki Fanu* states “For a Mizo bachelor, staying at one’s own house after dinner can cause great restlessness; while a popular girl or one who is already spoken for may suffer from bouts of solitude” (27-28). The song, *Curfew Kara Suihlunglen*, more popularly known as *Curfew hla* was composed due to the ever-present nightly clampdowns. It distinctly outlined the plights of the Mizo youth of that time:

*Aw, lunglen curfew karah hian,*

*Tuar I har hrilh ka thiam zo love;*

*Hmanah Zoram nun leh chimloh thadangi zun,*

*Ngaih hian chin lem a nei thei dawn lo. ( Vanchiau 518)*

[Desolate me! In the midst of curfew regime/ Can’t proclaim how i missed you/Reminiscing our life and her charm/Seems not have the culmination of its allure.]

When the protagonist’s sister, Zopari was shot dead by soldiers in Saiawi’s novel *Nukawki Fanu*, her grieving family did not have the traditional night visitors to comfort them because the curfew forbade a formal traditional neighbourly solace. The few who braved the regulation were thoroughly frisked, the girls teased upon while the men could not do anything (Saiawi 47- 48). Curfew during the insurgency period could have two different and opposing interpretations. In regards to the



curfew within Aizawl, in *Nukawki Fanu* Saiawi writes “Having young daughters and sons, the curfew can be a blessing in disguise because their offsprings are always at home, away from harm” (28). On the other hand, L.Z. Sailo, in *Rose Par Vul Ve Ta Rih Lo Chu* related that the military officers took advantage of the curfew to court the ladies of different villages while the other bachelors were forbidden to go out at night. None dared to speak out against them and all kept quiet (36). The consequences of the night curfews were quiet different in the big towns and villages: at the demise of Zopari in *Nukawki Fanu*, young men and women, both from and outside their neighbourhood in Aizawl were able to brave the curfew hours to console the grieving family even at night (47-48). The situation was different in Saitual village, when Pu Lala lost his life in the hands of the army, none of the neighbours turned up for fear of breaking the curfew, and the family members dared not cry out in their grief (L.Z.Sailo 37). In East Lungdar village, Mafeli also stated “Death in the family was the epitome of suffering, No neighbours could come to offer solace and the grieving family had to suffer alone” (131). *Rambuai* novel shows that there were great differences in the same hardships faced by different people; based on location, social and economic status. In Saiawi’s *Nukawki Fanu*, the army had camped right next door to Lianhawla’s house, but none of the expected trouble was experienced by the family since they were a well to do family. Instead, whenever the army needed anything, they simply bartered with whatever they had with them (29).

The prominent trauma depicted in *Rambuai* fiction was fear. *Your Life Counts* relates three kinds of fear: appropriate fear, innate fear and acquired fear. Among these, appropriate fear and innate fear is the feeling that human beings learn

when they realize what is dangerous for them. Acquired fear comes from man's experience. The personal and public fear depicted in *Rambuai* novel, arising from the torment inflicted by the military and the suffering for the sake of underground volunteers could be termed as acquired fear.

Dokhuma states that from time immemorial, the Mizo people were said to be courageous, never flinching in the face of adversary, proud enough to wear a woven cloth called *tawlhloh puan*, to hold the warriors cup; brave enough to sacrifice their lives for a friend and altruistic to the core (Hmanlai 302). Their highest attribute to a man was his mettle; a brave warrior and a diligent person. When a boy was born, they would bless that "he will be courageous and an elephant hunter". Their wish for him was to be a successful hunter and a warrior. (Mizo Ramchhuah Dan 1). 'A cowardly man is only fit to wear women's clothing' was the common belief. Their forefathers had been head-hunters and those who could live upto the mark were always looked up to. Jacob clearly stated in *Zorami* that the British rule in Mizoram after 1890 may have forbidden wars between inter clan and the resultant arrival of Christianity in 1894 saw them breaking away from their old beliefs and traditions, so much so that even after the colonial rule, they had given up their warlike stance and headhunting practices and had been recognized as a Christian state. Even after breaking from their traditional warlike state, they were still considered as a courageous tribe, and they still considered themselves as headhunters even at the beginning of the *Rambuai*. The thoughts of some of the MNF volunteers at the first call to arms in Aizawl can thus be expressed as Jacob states in her *Zorami*:

Some MNF men had been on the mission to capture the Quarter Guard of the Assam Rifles in Aizawl and were getting ready for the operation. They were cleaning their guns and fitting grenades. They talked as they worked. “We must get some of the vai army heads to decorate our houses as in the olden days,” they said. They all laughed. “Then when we have sons we can give them names like *Vailukhaia*” (95-96)

But when the all inclusive *Rambuai* broke out; that the insurgency and its consequential period saw the fear of the encroaching Indian military power. In *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, Zikpui Pa remarks that when all the womenfolk, irrespective of age suffered in the hands of the oppressive military regime, the Mizo people gradually lost their courage (67). The enlistment of 2100 Mizo men in World War I, who were sent to France in 1917 (Lalnunchanga 9) and when they returned from France, Mizo men in the armed services were looked up to by the society till the time before *Rambuai*. In Laizawna’s *In Hrang*, the heroine Laltlani was infatuated by Rokhawla, an Indian army with his white canvas shoes, tapered pants and smartly pressed shirt. She agreed with her parents that marrying a soldier would ease her problems and she could easily keep up with the fashion trend (18-19). One of the first Mizo politicians, Saprawnga stated that the trend of joining the MNF movement among the youth was because it closely resembled the military life; they wore uniforms and followed all the military protocol. Right from childhood, the Mizo people had always romanticized all things related to the military. Instead of being intimidated, they always had high regards for military life (139).

Vanneihluanga's story *Pu Khuma*, set in the pre-insurgency period, showed how Lalhrawka, an Indian army had pride for his status by asking for the hand of the female protagonist Lalmawii, and his feeling of devastation at being refused. His lament at that time was "How can I, a soldier who has never flinched in the face of enemies, highly expected to win honours in battle, be ousted by an illegitimate son?!..." (69). He packed all his gear and went back to his station without enjoying the full extent of his furlough. This clearly depicted the status of army in the village; the whole community highly regarded the army, and the army themselves believed that they were above the common people, but no one thought that the army personnel were dreadful. But, due to the uprising, villages were burned and on mere suspicion anyone could be arrested. Women were mercilessly raped and most people had to flee to the forest for their safety. Many people were tortured by the army that created a deep fear of the army in the hearts of the people. Thus when the army issued the order that each person should be present in his home, the people hiding in the forest returned to their houses due to the fear of the army order. This resultant fear of the military was such that even a slight rumour conveying the order from the army was enough to send the villagers fleeing to their homes as they were afraid of being found in their hiding place for which the army would arrest them (80).

Mafeli's *Nghilh Har Kan Tuar* related how the people of East Lungdar were so struck by fear that the sound of a helicopter lifting off from the military camp at night gripped them and they became panicked. It forced some of the elderly adult men to have an urgent meeting to find out the reason, the task of which fell on the shoulders of the protagonist Rochhuaha. Even those who dared not venture out were

reminded of how their village had been burned the previous year during a fire fight between the Indian soldiers and the volunteer forces, and they all started praying for deliverance. (167)

Laizawna related in *Thuruk* that “Merely mentioning the name of the army had a positive effect of cowing down others, in fact, the word itself was synonymous to fear” (183-84) It was not only adults who were scared, “children who were clever enough would immediately stop their crying when told that they would be captured by the Indians” (179). In Laizawna’s other story *In Hrang*, when the heroine Laltlani and her friends were captured and kept by the army in a abandoned house, an unknown voice in perfect Mizo accent told them not to be afraid and that God would be with them “but they could not find solace in these words because it was the voice of army” (38-39). In *Rinawmin*, Dokhuma said that people were easily alarmed by the morbid fear of the army; they would be gripped by panic whenever they saw any man walking too fast in the streets (36). This phobia of soldiers brought much inconvenience to the church and the community as Dokhuma stated in his *Rinawmin*:

The congregation organized prayer meetings and put themselves in God’s hands. They also called for community meetings where social unity and the need for helping others in need were always stressed upon. ‘Women and children are the first to panic’ might have been the saying but even the menfolk could not keep their composure. When the news reached that Vaihal village had been burned and a child shot dead, all of them were filled with dread. (36)

The phobia for the army ousted the father from his role as guardian of the family as the family no longer found comfort in him. The bombardment of Aizawl by the government forces filled the civilian population with terror. After the bombing, the army reached the town. The few who stayed on in their home were in great fear, wondering what the army would do to them. In Jacob's *Zorami*, when Pu Biaka, one of the minor characters, tried to quell their fears by saying that the army were their saviours and would not harm them, the reply he got was, "But they dropped the bombs on the town. They do not consider whether people are innocent or not. Even young children and babies are not spared" (105). Pu Biaka's stature in the family was totally swept away by the fear of the army. People who found safety in their family before the uprising no longer could sleep in peace. "Several families would crowd together in one house during the night, as they were afraid to stay with only their families" (Jacob 105). *Rambuai* fiction clearly depicts how the fear of the army made the Mizo men lose their traditional position of guardians of the community.

Laizawna's protagonist in *Omnus*, Kaphranga said that the fear of the army was also very poignant even for the armed underground forces; they had to flee on many occasions. Laizawna's protagonist states, "Filled with fear, yet empty in stomach, we have to wander in our own land" (12). Further, the fear of the army was more intense for the unarmed civilians; there were many instances in which all men were called together and mercilessly beaten. In such circumstances, the only comfort was to whisper "I could have defeated him man to man" (Laizawna "Thuruk" 183). In his novel *Rose Par Vul Ve Ta Rih Lo Chu*, L.Z.Sailo reflects how things that they once feared most have presently changed because of *Rambuai*:

They would wake up screaming from their nightmares. The army, who were supposedly their guardians, have become their greatest fear! The broad streets of Aizawl are now more dangerous than the deepest forests. Instead, the thick jungles are now their refuge (50).

The passage shows how the focus of fear shifts from one to another; fear shifts from the previous fear to the present fear that seems to be more dreadful as it is a living fear. Therefore, fear of the army during *Rambuai* has lasting effect on some survivors of *Rambuai* victims. Even after the end of *Rambuai*, some survivors among those who had witnessed the malicious and brutal actions of the army felt uneasy whenever they saw an army man in full uniform. Ralkapthanga Sailo confessed that “Although, fifty years have passed since *Rambuai*, I am still worried and agitated whenever I see army personnel in full uniform. The experience that I had during *Rambuai* was so horrendous that the fear of the army has made me suspicious and tense. I cannot take it for granted that the army can do any good” (Interview)

*Rambuai* fiction also showed that fear of the Indian army was not the only dreadful experience of the Mizo people. The actions of radicals among the underground forces, arising from differences in political outlook also sowed terror of the volunteers among the people. Mafeli’s *Nghilh Har Kan Tuar*, is based on the experiences of the people of East Lungdar during the insurgency. It relates the blossoming romance between the protagonists Rochhuaha and Darpuii with the environment of the sufferings of the dwellers of East Lungdar; how the sufferings at the hands of the army was also supplemented by the sufferings implemented by the underground army. Trauma undergone by the families and the whole community, the

physical and mental distress on a more personal level inflicted by the revolutionary forces are all vividly portrayed in the story. East Lungdar had experienced a ground battle between the two opposing forces within its walls where some villagers had lost their lives; in the blink of an eye, their village was burnt to the ground, and the culprits were never found; whether the army or underground forces. The terrified villagers could only seek refuge in the forest in the middle of the winter. Mafeli states “Seen through teary eyes the thick, dark columns of smoke, was what remained of their homes . . . no one could offer them solace and none could share with them their empathy” (17). With their homes burnt to ashes, they had no choice but to flee to the surrounding villages and hamlets. The teary farewells saw them go their separate ways (20). The incident at East Lungdar created fear of the underground army in the minds of the people. Rochhuaha and his friends on their way to their jhum met a band of the underground army at which he and his friends though silent questioned their presence. Why were they entering the village while the village was being under the control of the army? Whatever their intentions, the fear in their minds was that the unarmed civilians would be the ultimate victims. Even when the female protagonist Darpuii pleaded to the underground army “Friends, please do not make a trouble” (48). Their minds were still disturbed. They were all lost in self-contemplation:

Parting with the underground personnel, no one talked; yet their minds were all alike. They no longer felt the urge to perform laborious work. ‘What will happen at home?’ was the question creeping into their minds. (48)



For the people of East Lungdar, the underground forces proved to be no safer than the Indian forces. For them, it was like being caught between two fires; they had to be wary of the two forces. All would be in distress if there was a rumour regarding the presence of revolutionary forces, and all would wish for their speedy departure. When Darpuui's mother mentioned that around ten underground forces had meal at Pu Tlangkhuma's house, both Darpuui and Zeli were distressed. Darpuui's mother mentioned that "If the army received no information the whole day regarding the presence of the underground army they would leave after supper" they were filled with more misery (135). "After supper!" Darpuui exhaled! They were in one mind since it was only forenoon then and supper time seemed to be a life time away (135). The mere presence of the underground army in the village could have many repercussions; the village could be burnt to ashes, they could be caught in crossfire, the men could be captured and interrogated and even the women would not be safe. All these were in their minds and they felt much agitated.

Village grouping caused much difficulty for the underground forces in terms of food; they had to rely on whichever village was at hand. In Mafeli's *Nghilh Har Kan Tuar*, the grouped villages also suffered from scarcity and could not always provide food. This was the dilemma faced by the residents of East Lungdar; yet when they related their problems, they were threatened with the terrible fate of their village being destroyed (105). They had no other option but to give in with a heavy heart. In *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, Alexander remarks that the traumatizing events interact with human nature and as human nature needs love, security, order, and connection, therefore, the traumatic events undermines these needs, and as a

result, people get traumatized (3). This is reflected in Rochhuaha's pain when he heard that the underground had threatened to burn his village. "We had to show subservience for their safety and endure the pain and shame. Yet, instead of showing gratitude, they dare to threaten us to burn our village! Father, who exactly are these underground army?" (Mafeli 105) was his lament. On the other hand, Jacob's *Zorami* depicted the merchants Rotluanga and Hmingliana of Aizawl who would willingly give donations to the underground army. "These people had guns after all. Though no threat was used, neither Hmingliana nor Rotluanga felt safe without giving whatever they asked" (177).

It seemed that even in the political sphere, the underground army were feared. Dokhuma's *Rinawmin*, depicts this fear; Ramhluni's father, a staunch supporter of the Mizo Union party, could not show any displeasure against Rozuala because he was a spokesperson for the armed underground movement (39). The people in general had to be cautious of the underground personnel who took advantage of their fear. Thus, with the fear created status some of the underground personnel levied taxes for their personal gains, while some intimidated others in the name of the cause (41). The resultant action was that none of the villagers dared to disobey the orders. The dominant social practice of caring for others in times of hardships was put to an end. At his time, they had to be wary of their own relatives since none could be trusted. Ramhluni's brother Kapmawia had to act as a witness against the Movement for which he ultimately had to pay with his life. The underground forces on their part were quite resentful against anyone who were

against them, and they also captured and silenced some people against whom they had personal grudges.

Besides the fear of the military presence and the underground forces, but closely related to them, featured in most of the *Rambuai* fiction was the role of the 'kawktu' which means 'informant or informer'. These people belonged to the same community and the result was that there was suspicion within the community. Since it was believed that people were arrested, imprisoned and killed just on mere suspicion, the army proved to be much hindrance for the underground army and their families. Since the identity of the so called *kawktu* was always kept a secret, no one could discover their true identity except through gossip. So everyone had to be cautious of even their close relatives. Even before the insurgency, one of the prominent Mizo poets Rokunga had clearly stated in his song how all had to bear the torch of valour in *Mizo Kan Nih Kan Lawm E*:

*Kan pi kan pu mi huaite*  
*Dan tha kha mawi kan ti,*  
*Thian chhan thih an ngam fo thin,*  
*An hming a thang a bawk si.*  
*Keini 'n chu dan chu zawmin,*  
*Huai taka din kan tum; (9-14)*

[We greatly appreciate the good practices of our fearless ancestors/ For they were famous as they had been always ready to die for their folks/ By being their descendants we follow their footsteps and try to stand fearlessly]

But that tradition had slowly eroded due to the insurgency. The practice of sacrificing one's life for the safety of a friend was slowly replaced by the drive for personal safety, and the word '*kawktu*' had become a household word. During *Rambuai*, *kawktu* were feared by the community and people were very careful. Some of the *kawktu* could be identified while some others remained unidentified. It is for this reason that many people were afraid and were very cautious about their contacts. Mafeli's *Nghilh Har Kan Tuar* relates of an incident at *East Lungdar* where *kawktu* accused an innocent villager Pu Lalzama saying "He is the MNF leader Laldenga" (46). The protests of the other villagers to prove his innocence fell on deaf ears. Pu Lalzama was brutally interrogated throughout the night that made him physically handicapped for the rest of his life. In Dokhuma's *Rinawmin*, Kapmawia is depicted as *kawktu* who often made arrangements to arrest many men including his own brother in law (132). Jacob's *Zorami* also shows how Ralkapa, an underground volunteer captured by the soldiers became *kawktu* to save his own life. In the process many volunteers, sympathizers and innocents lost their lives (111). As *kawktu*, Ralkapa realized how people had avoided him " 'They are afraid of me,' he thought, and the idea gave him a sudden thrill. He now realized that he possessed power over the people; power to kill without using his hands, power to destroy lives. He decided to use that power to his utmost advantage. Ralkapa used his new found power to repay the rejection of Muani, the girl he loved. He informed the army men to arrest Muani's husband Hminga. Jacob in the novel relates, "Hminga died in custody during interrogation, leaving two little boys and his young wife" (112). This incident reveals the disturbance caused by *kawktu* during *Rambuai*. Yet, the consequences of their actions will always be felt by all. At the same time, *Rambuai* fiction also tells us

that these *kawktu* also broke the hearts of their own relatives. Jacob states, “Ralkapa broke many more hearts, including that of his parents (112). The story describes how Ralkapa’s parents soon died after his activities as an informer was revealed. This seems to suggest that even the families of *kawktu* had often undergone traumatic experiences while living within the same social cluster.

*Rambuai* novel tells us that all farmers, servicemen and merchants were affected by *Rambuai* in their respective economic systems. The social equilibrium was affected since many men had joined the movement while others were imprisoned or had to lose their lives in the hands of the resultant military operation with the result that the women folk had to look after the family affairs. It was therefore, necessary for all to clear their jhum; “widows and other houses without men faced difficulty because jhum agricultural job was a manly job” (Dokhuma “Hmanalai” 14). In the absence of male(s) in the family, women had to take up the task, and they would be very lucky if some neighbours would help them out. *Rambuai* fiction also tells us that such kinds of hardships often forced the women folk to resort to anti-social activities. In Laizawna’s *In Hrang*, the female protagonist, Laltlani had to face the dilemma of the absence of her husband who had enlisted in the underground army. In order to provide sustenance for her children, she had to move to Aizawl where she was ultimately forced to sell rice beer. (55). In *Zorami* we are told that Kimi’s father had been killed by the army men. The mother’s problem at the time of clearing their jhum lamented, “What am I to do now? I cannot cut down trees, how will I do farming?” (128), was timely solved by two kindly neighbours, Pu Rova and Pu Leta who lent their helping hands. But, the mother’s health ultimately suffered because of her hard work:

She soon became so frail that working in the farm became impossible. Kimi offered to drop out of school and take over the farm work, but the mother would not accept that. That was when a couple of her friends suggested brewing rice beer for selling. One of them volunteered to take her to an acquaintance who was in the business, to learn the process from her. Reluctantly, Kimi's mother gave in. Better than letting her children starve, she thought. (130)

The passage reflects the reluctance of Kimi's mother to sell rice beer, but she had no other option. This shows that in times of distress people often resort to corruptive tasks that society deems unfit. Similarly, in the case of Kimi's mother and many other women they had to take up anti-social works; selling rice beer and prostitution in hard times like *Rambuai*.

Jacob's *Zorami* tells us that it was not only the cultivators who suffered, but even the supposedly well off merchants had suffered the same problem of losing their livelihood. The stationery merchant, Hmingliana was falsely accused by his high school companion of being a staunch supporter of the underground movement simply out of jealousy. "But Hmingliana understood. There was no one other than Rotluanga who could be called his close friend. He confessed" (177). Since Hmingliana could not clear his name from the list of the underground supporter he was incarcerated at Nowgong jail during which his wife Lalfeli had to set up a tea shop to provide for her children. When Hmingliana was released from jail, they could once again manage their family.

On March 5, 1966, the day of the fateful bombardment of Aizawl and other villages “Many houses were destroyed; innocent civilians were killed or injured. It destroyed the four largest areas of Aizawl” (Rohmingmawii Pachuau 66). A majority of the merchants lost their livelihood when their shops were destroyed by the bombs and only a few were left unharmed. Lalhmingliana’s female protagonist Nukawki was one of the lucky few:

Dawrpui area was much destroyed, but Nukawki was very fortunate. Fortunate in the sense that the shop had not been gutted by the fire but all her merchandise had been looted. . . . yet she was one of the lucky few. Most were left with charred empty spaces with burnt pillars. (50)

While her husband was incarcerated at Baroda Jail due to *Rambuai* related events, the task of looking after her family fell on Nukawki’s shoulders. (51) At first, she continued the family business by reselling items that had been purchased by others at Silchar; but it did not prove very profitable. Eventually, she herself had to go to Silchar to procure her own goods. But it was not an easy task for a woman because they had to accompany the military convoys; and a day’s journey during peaceful times tends to stretch to almost a week. (53). But she had to endure the hardships since she had to care not only for her children, but her husband’s sisters too. “Generally a timid wife when by her husband, she now had to brave everything. The situation insisted. The Marwari merchants in Silchar were easily swayed by her beauty and dignity. And she was a good bargainers” (55).

The destruction brought about by *Rambuai* added to the plight of the women. When Nukawki saw the results of the bombardment of Aizawl, She believed

that she had been “Fated not to suffer too much. She made a resolution to eke out living by reselling merchandise procured by others.” (52). Saiawi expressed how Nukawki did not simply shrink from fate but rose from the ashes while other merchants could not restore their previous business and trade after the bombing of Aizawl. Therefore, Nukawki’s survival instead represents that most of the well established merchants and wealthy businessmen have lost their chance of survival under the Indian air force attack as many of them fled away from Aizawl in search of refuge. The gapping period for seeking refuge among the permanent dwellers of Aizawl merchants and businessmen had opened the way for business assimilation as many tough villagers who migrated to Aizawl in order to seek survival from *Rambuai* consequences that made them to utilized the opportunity of the absence of the permanent businessmen of Aizawl, and they captured the situation for their benefits as Saiawi stated:

While the established families in Aizawl were losing their footing and had to sell out their properties and ekeing out a living in the plains, and while most villagers were gnashing their teeth at their predicament, a handful of villagers who were proficient and courageous enough were able to stand on their own. While they left their own homesteads for of fear the volunteers and armed forces alike, they came pell-mell to settle down at Aizawl. They took roots, even illegally, wherever they could and it was almost impossible to expel them afterwards. (79)



In Lalzawna's *In Hrang*, Laltlani had no intention of being a rice beer seller forever. Her ambition was to save as much as she could and to rise above that fate. Her path was difficult, but she never gave up and she prayed to God to enable her to lead a normal life again. (61). In *Zorami*, Kimi's mother did not choose to sell illicit liquor, but since her frail health forbade her to take up farming, she had no other alternative to raise her children. It is obvious that *Rambuai* fiction portrays that many women who mentally suffered because the unavoidable *Rambuai* circumstance had left no choice to earn for their family living other than selling liquor, it was their last resort, which is strongly condemned by both the Mizo community and the Church.

*Rambuai* novel tells us that the insurgency affected learning and education in different ways, both within and outside Mizoram. All educational institutions had to be closed for almost three years as a majority of the youth who joined the MNF movement were students. As Raltawna recorded that many schools were closed down and deserted with the result that learning was delayed (2). Many students forfeited their studies and while some took up unintended paths, others lost their lives. "Many young men studying in Shillong made their way to Pakistan from where they intended to provide help to the suffering population of Mizoram." (Zikpuii Pa 67)

Jacob also reflects how the brutal action taken by the underground army against the non-Mizo residents in Mizoram had affected the future of the promising students when the underground army presented an ultimatum for all non-Mizo people to leave the state, it was not followed by Mr. George, a South Indian teacher who came all the way from his state. This ultimately resulted in his brutal killing in front

of his students. “After the incident, all the students who witnessed the murder dropped out of school” (Jacob-142).

*Zikpuii Pa Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* illustrates how the Mizo students outside Mizoram were intrigued by the political situation at home and how it became more striking than their lessons. The protagonist, Chhuanvawra, realized almost too late that he was always embroiled in political debates instead of concentrating on his studies and so he secretly gave up that practice. (17). Education in Chhuanvawra’s village, Zopui, was also greatly affected by the insurgency. The High School Headmaster, Pu Thanthianga had instructed his students not to be alarmed by the presence of soldiers. He, along with his students welcomed the arrival of the army in their village with the national flag. Pu Thanthianga might have intended to take the army protection yet the incident resulted in horror:

We will be protected by the Indian flag. He must have thought that the Indian army would be patriotic gentleman! But the result was that the students were simply shot down with a machine gun, where five of them lost their lives and all the girls were captured and sexually molested (115).

The Headmaster, along with five of his students was killed, while all the girls were raped. The tragedy of Zopui did not end there; the pride of the village, the sweet natured Ngurthansangi, could not continue her studies and she was forced to live as a prostitute.

Thus, it may finally be stated that *Rambuai* has caused various collective traumas as reflected in this analysis. *Rambuai* has resulted in the Mizo traditional, cultural and social degeneration. Such changes experienced by the Mizo society during the insurgency have left an indelible scar which might not be visible to the public eye. Readers of *Rambuai* novel, most of whom have not experienced the sufferings of the time, will be able to share the empathy for these sufferings unfelt by those who have not experienced it. Just as Alexander said, “When members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways” (304). The people who earlier idolized the army are now filled with fear of them. And wherever the underground forces set foot, the people were always filled with apprehension because of their own sufferings for the sake of the volunteers while at the same time, there is the ever present danger of angering the underground forces. Since every action taken by them was at the risk of their own lives, their burden was double fold. Every neighbour was suspected of being an informant, and it broke the social spirit that had always existed earlier. In the economic sphere, women folk were frequently forced to take care of the family that often forced them to practice anti-social activities. The period also shows many established merchants losing their livelihood and being seized by unknown persons. Since educational institutions had to be closed down, students having bright futures lost not only their careers but their lives.

### End Notes

- Huai no* : A cup for brave man. In early Mizo society, the most courageous and brave man among the people of the chief was offered a cup of rice beer by the chief in order to show their honour and respect.
- Riakmaw* : A night bird whose call sound this way. The call is imagined to be asking for a place to stay for the night. Thus the word is associated with being homeless.
- Tawlhloh puan* : It is important shawl in Mizo culture. Its name means to 'stand firm or not move backward'. Named after a courageous Mizo warrior and it symbolize courageous and bravery
- Vailukhaia* : One who hung the head of *vai*. *Vai* means a word for the race of people known as 'mainland Indians,' different from Mongoloid group, to which Mizo race belonged.

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**Interview**

Ralkaphanga Sailo : Personal interview, 11.12.2020



### Chapter III

#### Individual Trauma in Rambuai Novel

This chapter is an analysis of the individual trauma experienced by members of the Mizo society during *Rambuai*. The analysis depends on the characters of *Rambuai* novel and interviews conducted for this research. The different reflections of individual sufferings illustrated in *Rambuai* novel consists of one of the most prominent features of this kind of fiction.

According to SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) “An individual trauma refers to an event that only occurs to one person. It can be a single event (e.g., mugging, rape, physical attack, work-related physical injury) or multiple or prolonged events (e.g., a life-threatening illness, multiple sexual assaults)” (36). Individual trauma depicted in *Rambuai* novel generally depicts the sufferings undergone by the male and female protagonists of different stories. Similarly, the trauma undergone by minor characters have also been depicted in different *Rambuai* novel such as *Zorami*, *Rinawmin*, *Pu Khuma* and *Nghilh Har Kan Tuar*. *Rambuai* novel has been able to expose and voice the sad and pitiful images of suffering victims who have been neglected, who have remained silent and emotionally hurt. In *After Decades of Silence*, Ch.Zama and Vanchiau states:

Rambuai fiction is no doubt creative writing, but behind the creativity lies several sub-texts that the writer embeds, and attempts to voice. The trauma and terror experienced during the troubled history, the trials and tribulations brought on by the events often left untold by

many, make their appearance in such writings under different guises.

(71)

Onderko, Director of Research and Education, also said, “Trauma is the response to a deeply distressing or disturbing event that overwhelms an individual’s ability to cope, causes feelings of helplessness, diminishes their sense of self and their ability to feel the full range of emotions and experiences. (Trauma Defined). In *Rambuai* novel, the effect of emotional or mental trauma suffered by the individuals occupies a deeper level of significance than the physical trauma endured by them.

Generally, writers of *Rambuai* novel are very keen toward individual sufferings as it enhances their style of writing; plot element and style. Comparatively the use of individual trauma seems to gain more weight among fiction writers rather than the use of collective trauma. The traumatic experiences of the community during insurgency are often utilized as a backdrop to their stories in which individual sufferings are emphasized through fictional characters. However, this does not mean that collective trauma during *Rambuai* are less traumatic than individual trauma as some sufferings that were individually experienced by both men and women in *Rambuai* novel are also representations of the suffering of the Mizo community. Therefore, individual trauma during *Rambuai* will be examined on the study of life like fictional characters that depict many real life incidents.

A study of *Rambuai* novel reveals that Mizo women were molested and raped by the armed forces leaving scars in their hearts that can never be erased or forgotten. During war and armed conflict, rape is frequently used as a means of psychological warfare in order to humiliate the enemy (Britannica). The sentiments

of the Mizo people were hurt by the thought that the raping of Mizo women by the armed forces had been used as a weapon by the Indian Government as a means to eliminate or mitigate the MNF Movement. In Zikpuii Pa's *Nunna Kawng Thuam Puiah*, according to Rohluta, a friend of the protagonist Chhuanvawra, rape is considered as a weapon used by the Indian Government to overrule Mizoram; humiliating it and reducing it to filth and dirt (115). Vanchiau's *Rambuai Literature* gives many instances of Mizo women as rape victims. It may not be an exaggeration to say that a number of women were raped by army personnel since rape occurred beyond imagination. From what can be gathered from written records Mizo women from over 79 villages were raped by the army (427). Such victims who had suffered immensely preferred to remain silent about their traumatic experiences even though psychologically they were not completely healed. *Rambuai* novel, therefore, tries to sympathise and redress the wounds felt by the victims. *Mental Health America* states "Sexual assault can have a variety of short- and long-term effects on a victim's mental health. Many survivors report flashbacks of their assault, and feelings of shame, isolation, shock, confusion, and guilt" (n.pag). Similarly, in *Pu Khuma*, Vanneihluanga reflects that women who were sexually assaulted by the army were inflicted by strong emotional trauma; silently suffering in fear, instilling in them the thought that they are no longer chaste for their husbands (80). In *Zorami*, Jacob mentions that some of the victims are mentally affected (31). Many young ladies lost their chastity, some even committed suicide (Zikpuii pa110). Besides Mizoram, among the North-Eastern States, the state of Nagaland also suffered insurgency between the years 1956-1957, Kaka D. Iralu's book *The Naga Saga* recorded of the

events in which women from more than 44 different places were sexually assaulted by the Indian Army namely the Assam Rifles and Assam Police (Vanchiau 428-29).

According to SAMHSA “Survivors of individual trauma may not receive the environmental support and concern that members of collectively traumatized groups and communities receive. They are less likely to reveal their traumas or to receive validation of their experiences” (36), this is a reference to the innumerable sufferings endured by the people individually or collectively. In Zikpui Pa’s novel *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, it is illustrated that due to the insurgency many women of Zopui village were raped by the army. Even the female protagonist of the novel Ngurthansangi suffered the same fate as the other female characters. Ngurthansangi is the youngest daughter of the abolished chief of Zopui village, she was beautiful and endowed with good character; the pride of the people of Zopui village. Brought up in the teachings of the Christian religious ideals, she had a strong faith in her belief. She even won 1<sup>st</sup> prize in a competition held in a Sunday School convention when she was a little girl. Their village pastor Lianzuala commented that Ngurthansangi with all her beauty and goodness of heart would bring good name to their village and that in the near future she would be idolized by other villages because of her beauty (9). It is indeed a tragedy that such a beautiful maiden with good nature could drastically change after being raped by the army. The rape instilled in her the feeling of unworthiness. Chhuanvawra’s friend Thanhranga tried his best to convince Ngurthansangi by saying that she should not be too depressed because she had been defiled and that even Chhuanvawra would not stop loving her. But she responded by saying, “I am no longer worthy of him, tell him to forget me”

(132). Ngurthansangi despised herself because of the rape she suffered in the hands of the army. She was strongly convinced that her beloved Chhuanvawra would no longer want to marry her after the rape incident.

Apart from the traumatizing experiences suffered by Ngurthansangi in the hands of the army, she was also blackmailed into marrying Captain Ranade who threatened Ngurthansangi's father Khawvelthanga. Captain Ranade severely beat Ngurthansangi's father and forcefully married her. Ngurthansangi's niece Rozingi said "if my aunty did not marry him my grandpa would be badly beaten up, so she is left with no other choice, but trapped to marry Capt. Ranade" (108). With a heart full of grief and pain, Ngurthansangi had to marry an Indian Army Capt. Ranade, a man outside her own tribe who had been the cause of all the misery and pain suffered by the people. Beside the tortures endured by her father in the hands of the army, the evilness of the fate endured by Ngurthansangi was thus narrated by her father Khawvelthanga, "it is a shame to even talk about the humiliating torture his daughter had gone through" (106). For Ngurthansangi, her decision to become Capt. Ranade's wife would be an insufferable torture for her. Besides, she would always be afflicted with an undying grief because her love for Chhuanvawra would never die. She states:

Tell Chhuana that I have been washed away by the sea of sorrow to an unknown world. The only thing I can do now is to remember him and now I regret for not obeying his word. Send him my regards and tell him that no matter who I marry he will always occupy the deepest place in my heart forever. (131)

It was only when Capt. Ranade took Ngurthansangi to Bombay to marry her that she came to realize that Capt. Ranade was already married. Capt. Ranade never took her to his home, instead he left her on the outskirts of Bombay for three days before selling her off to Manohar Singh Yadav the owner of a brothel. Manohar Singh Yadav tried everything to make Ngurthansangi become a high class prostitute. She was starved, beaten, threatened, cajoled and raped by his men. Ngurthansangi, however, put up a strong fight for almost a year and never gave in to prostitution. Finally, Manohar Singh Yadav engaged a doctor to use drugs on Ngurthansangi to increase her sexual appetite. From then on she worked as a high class prostitute in the city of Bombay under Manohar Singh Yadav. She was named Rita Moonlight Belle and she ultimately became a prostitute, available only for the very rich and for the foreigners who visited India. (173)

After living as a high class prostitute for five long years, she was finally discovered in Bombay by Chhuanvawra who was on IPS probation in different parts of the country. Chhuanvawra informed her that he planned to rescue her from the brothel to which she replied, "My love Chhuana, there's no point in rescuing me, I am no longer the Nguri you knew before, now I'm a shameless and dirty person, no longer considered decent enough to be with anyone. Leave me and forget me" ( 172). The chaste and good character maiden of Zopui village turned down Chhuanvawra's attempt to rescue her because she considered herself unclean. She regretted the time when she had refused to sleep with Chhuanvawra when he tried to seduce her and said, "Words cannot express how much I regretted not losing my virginity with you before I turned into a prostitute. I began at the wrong turn now I'm nothing" (175).

Referring to Ngurthansangi's present situation, Chhuanvawra told her that she was not responsible for what had befallen her, rather she had been forced by evil men to become a prostitute and that she did not have enough strength to fight back. But now that he had found her he promised her that he would be her strength. However, she brushed him aside and said that she no longer possessed any will to even accept his offer. She said, "If you had come a little earlier I could have escaped, but now I have offered myself heart and soul to my profession and I don't know how to dismantle myself from it" (173). Unable to think clearly for herself she had at present become a slave to prostitution. Moreover, the article "The Intersection Between Prostitution and Sexual Violence" published by Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape states "Those who are involved in prostitution often live in a perpetual state of fear experiencing violence at the hands of people who sell them sexually and those who purchase them for sex acts" (8) So, she could no longer trust even her beloved Chhuanvawra, the man whom she esteemed highly, to rescue her from the evil clutches of Manohar Singh Yadav who had reduced her to prostitution. Manohar Singh Yadav besides being a wealthy man had a brother, who was a minister, and equally prosperous and greatly feared by the Government of India. Together, the whole of Punjab Police under their thumb. A Goanist prostitute who fled the brothel was caught in no time and was stabbed to death. It was because of the knowledge that even the police did not have the power to protect them that Ngurthansangi was afraid to take the risk of being rescued by Chhuanvawra. She told him, "I'm afraid to run away from here. Now that you have found me, sleep with me, I can tell you where to find me and you can come anytime. If we can convince the authorities, I could also come to you, make me your wife but don't ever think of rescuing me!"

(175). Ngurthansangi not only felt small and insignificant but she was overcome with fear. She therefore, no longer possessed any strength to follow the road to freedom.

While it hurts our sentiments to think that Ngurthansangi's sexual assault by the Indian army had been responsible in creating a sense of worthlessness in her mind, the women of Zopui who had suffered the same fate had been much despised by the society. Instead of sympathizing them they were detested and subjugated by their own people. The decision made by Ngurthansangi's father reflects the degradation faced by rape victims and their families. Ngurthansangi's father remarks to Chhuanvawra:

We remember you, Chhuana. Even Mami has not forgotten you. She cries a lot. But after much deliberation our family have arrived at a decision that she is no longer worthy to become your wife, so we have given her hand in marriage to someone else. She strongly wished to be married to you but looking at the circumstances we are afraid to approach you. (106)

Even though Ngurthansangi's father is deeply hurt by the fact that his daughter has been brutally raped by the army, he is strongly affected by the thought that she is no longer worthy to be married to a respectable person. Much against his will, he married her off to Capt. Ranade whom he thought was in love with his daughter. Ngurthansangi was bitterly hurt by the fact that she was unable to marry her beloved Chhuanvawra, and she had to marry someone from a different caste.



From the opinion formed by Ngurthansang's father over his daughter's fate, it may be assumed that the rape victims of Zopui villager would never find peace, comfort and solace in Zopui village. They would always remain afflicted with shame, fear and worthlessness. Besides Ngurthansangi, many women of Zopui village had been sexually assaulted by the army. Pi Kungliani committed suicide by hanging herself after suffering multiple rapes from the army. Three women of the village namely, Sangi, Kungi, and Remmawii narrated an incident in which some of the women did not put up a strong fight while the army was raping them. This greatly flared up the anger of Zopui village and the congregation as well. Some church elders even decided to divorce their wives if such an incident proved to be true. While the whole village and the congregation was in great trouble due to the incidents of army rape, Sangi, Kungi and Remmawii joked of an incident in a marriage ceremony; Pi Hrangi was raped by Major Suala and how she meekly surrendered to him. This has not failed to lose its humour. However, since the names of the wives of eminent church elders, BDO's, rich business men, were mentioned by Sangi and her friends, the underground army had enough of their stories and they killed the three friends. The killing of Sangi and her friends did not prove so much as a defence for the rape victims. It was only a means to prevent the eminent villagers of Zopui from being disgraced and humiliated within the society. The only reason why Sangi and her friends were killed by the underground militants was because they had mentioned the names of the wives of eminent villagers. It implanted in the minds of the people of Zopui that even though many women had suffered the same fate, the rich and eminent villagers were given more respect and attention than the

commoners. For the rape victims of Zopui, their beloved village became their enemy and a contemptible place rather than a place of their comfort and safety.

When the protagonist Chhuanvawra returned from Shillong, on his way to Zopui village he was arrested by the army. He was confined in a room at the outskirts of Aizawl. There he learnt that rape victims of Zopui village were not the only laughing stock of the village. Some women were arrested by the army were kept in the room next to his room. His prison mates used to laugh when they heard the sound and cries of women whenever they were raped. Consequently, whether it is Zopui village or other villages, the agony of the rape victims was doubled by the degrading treatment they received within their society. In *Hmanlai Mizo Kalphung*, Dokhuma states “Since the olden days, Mizo women had always occupied subservient role in their society” (313). In Mizo society, when men committed adultery they are not blamed, but for women it had always been implied as the greatest sin. Adulterous women were mocked, scorned and condemned by the society. Adulterers are bitten by tiger, often refers to women adulterers ( *Hmanlai* 215-216). The touching of a married woman’s breast without her approval cost the perpetrator to pay a high price like mithun. On the other hand, no fine was imposed on a man for touching of a maiden breast ( *Hmanlai* 222). In *Mizo Chanchin*, Zatluanga remarks that it was believed that the greatness of man lies in his ability to sleep with numerous women during his lifetime which had great consequences in the afterlife. Subsequently, if a man who had slept with two sisters died, they attached two sickle feathers of a rooster on his head to show tribute. They would attach hornbill’s feathers on the head of the deceased male who could sleep with their chief’s daughter (14). The Mizo

ancestors believed that in the entrance of *Mitthi Khua*, there was an inescapable Pawla, who knew everything about the life of the deceased. If a bachelor failed to sleep with a maiden during his lifetime, he mercilessly pelled him with his pellet bow. Thus, the wounded spirit would be stuck in *Mitthi Khua* for three years (Dokhuma “Hmanlai” 44). Due to this belief, bachelors often paid court to maidens in order to avoid Pawla’s pellet bow. Those who could sleep with any maiden were boastful in their success as can be seen in one of the old songs “*Di nei lo Pawlan a sai an ti/ Fam mah ila min sai bil lo nang e/ Ka nemrang puan ka di zawwna*” [They said Pawla pelled a man without lady love, Even if I am dead, I will not be pelled. I have shared my *nemrang puan* with my lady love].

In the olden days of Mizo society, women always played passive roles and were regarded as secondary beings; an object, even in sexual relations. For this matter, even after the conversion into Christianity, the Mizo traditional ideal that still had its residue in the people still caused their ability to laugh at their women while they were being raped by the army. Lalrawnliana, Ex-underground army and writer of MNF movement history observes “Some people mockingly state that if all the raped victims got pregnant, many women will conceive army child unexpectedly” (4). This statement shows that even after the end of *Rambuai*, there were Mizo rape victims who were mocked although they had to endure the agony and torment during the rape. For the rape victims, the continual subservient role given to women by Mizo culture added to their burden. This very burden borne by Mizo women was realized by Chhuanvawra, the protagonist of *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, while he was in prison in Tawito camp. He realized that Mizo men were responsible in

safeguarding the dignity of Mizo women. He forbade the men who laughed at the cries of women who were presently raped next to their room. He rebuked his prison mates and made them aware that rape was the most repugnant sinful act that was inflicted upon their women folks. Hence, they should not laugh about it but should be enraged by it (82). The vicious acts done by the army against Mizo women were very different from Gandhi's non-violence policy. Keeping this in mind, Chhuanvawra urged his prison mates to shout whenever the army raped their women:

I said lets shout out and mock 'Mahatma Gandhi conquers' 'Mahatma Gandhi ki jay!' Our main intention is to show to the army that Gandhiji had wanted the Government of India to rest upon truth, dignity and integrity though with this account, the army rules over the Mizo people. Thus mockingly shout that the pervert Mahatma Gandhi has conquered. He has succeeded in all his evil plans and has triumphed over his women foes. (182)

As suggested by Chuanvawra, he and his prison mates shouted to show the army that they opposed the rape of their women folks. When the army learnt that they were being ridiculed, they immensely tortured Chhuanvawra and his prison mates. Through Chhuanvawra, Zikpuii Pa vividly describes rape as a vicious sinful act inflicted upon women by the army. His account lucidly narrates that the responsibility of man lies in swathing the rape victim with sympathy and kindness and not disgracing the rape victim. Therefore, ZIKpuii pa tries to show and confirm that rape victim women were not basically filthy and degrading. He seems to suggest that since rape victims did not choose to be raped, they still had virtue and dignity

that should be understood by the Mizo society. Zikpui Pa winds up his story with the wedding ceremony of Chhuanvawra and Ngurthansangi at Zopui village church. Although they could have been married in Aizawl town, yet Chhuanvawra chose Zopui village church in order to prove to the people of Zopui that the army raped victims could still gain their confidence and become whole again with the help of the people of the village.

Jacob's *Zorami* depicted through the female protagonist Zorami and other minor characters; Rami and Mawii, the physical and emotional torment that rape victims experience. When Zorami was only thirteen years of age, she was brutally raped by an army man while she was fetching water from the water point (63). After the incident, she felt that her dignity had been ripped off violently and it created fear and eventually it deprived her of her sense of self worth. Due to the affliction, even after the end of *Rambuai*, the scar lives on and the victims are emotionally tortured that caused many rape victims to commit suicide.

Snipes says that many rape survivors exhibit symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) which is characterised by intrusive symptoms like flashback events, avoidance behaviours such as avoiding people or situations that remind the survivor of their rape (2453). Striking similarity of the symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder given by Snipes, is reflected in the character Zorami who was raped at dusk. Jacob states that when dusk fell Zorami was seized with terror and broke out in cold sweat. She sat by the fireplace, her head buried between her knees, and trembled violently. Her mother tried to soothe her, but only succeeded in making her cry uncontrollably (197). Moreover, even while she was with her father, Zorami was

frozen with fear whenever a *vai* man in army uniform came close to her (199). In view of her behavioural reaction to the *vai* army man, it is obvious that Zorami had suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder after she was raped by the army.

Zorami's father Thanchhunga was a part of Indian army performing his duty in the border area when *Rambuai* started. When Zorami almost become fourteen, her father received his transfer order to Shilong, taking the advantage of his transfer Thanchhunga brought his family along with him to Shillong. Jacob states that as the family adjusted to the new place, the terrors that they had experienced were gradually pushed away to the back of their minds (202). Zorami was admitted in a convent school for girls, she gradually became her former self. She resumed interest in living and in studies. At night, she could even sleep without nightmares. Though Zorami's mental trauma seemingly vanished during her stay in Shillong, the peaceful circumstance and beautiful scene of Shillong enabled her to repress her traumatic past until she completed master degree and settled again in Mizoram. However, when Zorami and her family returned to Mizoram, her repressed trauma which she seemingly had forgotten gradually re-appeared in the forms of nightmares and flashbacks. According to the *The Mighty*, the world's largest digital health community, "Repressed memories can come back in various ways, including having a trigger, nightmares, flashbacks, body memories and somatic/conversion symptoms. This can lead to feelings of denial, shame, guilt, anger, hurt, sadness, numbness and so forth." (n.pag). The recurrence of Zorami's trauma "first came in the form of a big that snake intruded into her sleeping dream in the night. Then it made its presence felt in a number of ways even while she tried to disregard it" (Jacob 210). At first,

she somehow managed to escape from the thoughts of being intruded by such nightmares, and she was able to live a normal life, yet when the protagonist Sanga proposed to marry her, she experienced a psychological turmoil and she was filled with fear and anxiety.

When the male protagonist Sanga sent a mediator to propose to Zorami for marriage, Zorami was in a delirious state as she felt ashamed of herself. Her father rebuked her for not being able to make up her mind instantly. He felt that Zorami, now a damaged goods had lost her chastity; a man like Sanga was not someone whom she deserved as husband. He scolded Zorami “You should be only too happy he is willing to marry you, a damaged girl. He is too good for you” (62). When Zorami learnt that even her father regarded her as only damaged goods after being raped by an army man, the pain inflicted upon her by her father was no less painful than the agony she received at being raped. Zorami believed that Sanga like her father would surely humiliate her for being a raped victim and she muttered to herself:

Damaged, damaged, damaged! . . . I'm damaged goods they want to get rid of! They want to dump me on an unsuspecting customer. But they will not fool him, I shall tell him everything. He is likely to reject me once he knows. That's all right. Better than getting marriage with a dirty secret on your conscience. (62)

The above statement clearly reflects how the raped victims were stigmatized and humiliated by the Mizo society. The humiliation added to the pains and sufferings as they are considered as damaged goods, not fit to be a wife. Instead of

hiding her case from Sanga, Zorami decided to tell him everything and determined that even if Sanga rejected her because of the rape, she would accept his decision. In Zikpuii Pa's *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* also, the female protagonist Ngurthansangi was brutally raped by an army man due to which her father considered her unworthy to be the wife of Chhuanvawra (72). Though, the misfortune that had fallen upon Zorami was not her of choice, the stigma that society attached to her was too painful and it made her feel worthless, dirty and unfit for marriage. Jacob illustrates that Zorami yearns to be unburdened by the stigmatization of the Mizo society, yet it seems to her that the Mizo society was a muddy and filthy river, that she, in her extreme desperation states:

And the dirt, the dirt! How she wanted to wash herself clean, to be immersed in a flowing river! But, there was no such river within reach. All she could get was a few mugs of water for a bath. She loathed her defied body like a rotten carcass. In sleep, she dreamt of a brook running a hill. She ran to it, hoping for a dip in its clear, clean water. But when she reached there, she saw only muddy, filthy water.  
(197)

Since the olden days, in Mizo society, women had always played a subservient role as can be seen from several sayings which had recounted the exploitation and negligence of women. It had always been the male who dictated women and made laws for them. One of the Mizo sayings 'Words from a woman are no words as crab is no meat' that clearly depicts the insignificance of women's accounts. Dokhuma states that if a woman spoke while men were in serious and deep conversation, they



would say 'Do not speak. You are woman', thus women were regarded as having nothing of significance to utter (Hmanlai 316). In such a situation where Mizo society expected women to behave, Zorami was scolded by her mother when she sang before her class "You sang before the whole class? You are not ashamed? Girls shouldn't do such thing or talk too much" (Jacob 43). The girl who had always been jovial turned into a moody and gloomy person because of her mother's condemnation. "Thus Zorami learned to be ashamed. And to keep quiet" (43). This suppression of feelings much affected Zorami and it had great consequences even after she was raped. She decided to remain silent and bear the pain and the trauma all by herself. The secret she kept to herself consumed her and it added to her pain even after the end of *Rambuai* "As time passed, the wounds on her body healed, leaving the scars. But her wounded psyche festered" (Jacob-197). When she reflected upon the past, she even questioned herself "Why am I so afraid of speaking out my mind?" (Jacob 43). J.Malsawma mentioned that while he worked as a Magistrate during 1962-1972, what we called rape case as of now, was very rare (Lalnungchanga 58). This statement clearly indicates that although there were many rape victims during *Rambuai* instead of filing cases in the District Court, they silently bore their pain rather than reporting the matter and filing a case at the District Court while there were many rape victims at the time of *Rambuai*. It is obvious that *Rambuai* illustrates the limitation of women's ability to express themselves in Mizo society, it also denotes the social stigmatization of the rape victims within Mizo society, Therefore, like the other rape victims, Zorami preferred to remain silent.

Regarding to the mental state of victims of sexual assault, humiliation has been associated with feelings of powerlessness, inadequacy, self-condemnation, disgrace, exposure, or feeling of damage. In his *Pu Khuma*, Vanneihluanga reflects how the survivors of rape victims during *Rambuai* were disturbed by self humiliation and feeling of damage through the female protagonist Lalmawii, the wife of the protagonist Khuma. Lalmawii suffered army gang rape on the way to the jungle on her attempt to escape from the army who unexpectedly infiltrated her village. After she was gang raped by the army, she was unconscious, and when she returned to her conscious state and recalled what had happened, she was mortified. She could hardly believe that she was already a raped victim. (79). The thought of being damaged due to army rape was too much for Lalmawii. She considered herself as one who completely had lost the dignity of human nature. She thought:

Once a reputed woman, she felt that she had fallen to a position lower than animals that do not even have a spirits. Lalmawii is the daughter of Chhingi, the loving wife of Khuma the chivalrious and prominent person of their village. Where is that Lalmawii who she once used to be? That Lalmawii is now dead. The present one is now full of dirt. These thoughts lingered on even if she tried to erase them from her memory. She covered her face, but it did not cease. The more she pondered over the past the pain hit her like a knife piercing through her heart. Whenever she remembered, she began to tremble, her heart beat faster and began to tremble, her heart beat faster and she was damped with perspiration. (79)

In *Rambuai* fiction, one of the responsible factors which commonly prevails and increases severity of trauma among survivors of rape victims is the fear of being rejected by both the society and their mates. Lalmawii also often thinks of committing suicide by hanging herself as she was too dirty to be treated as the wife of her husband Khuma, but she was prevented from doing such act only because of her newborn son and her husband Khuma. Khuma too had been in dire need of Lalmawii's help in order to recover from the tremendous wound that he had received due to the atrocity of the army (80). Regarding the way Lalmawii encountered her trauma, it is obvious that some women who had suffered army rape during *Rambuai* chose to be alive instead of committing suicide in order to look after their husbands who were severely wounded by the army. Similar to Lalmawii's fate some married women who survived from army rape during *Rambuai* seemed physically alive, yet the thought of suicide frequently intervened in their minds. This seems to signify that they were already emotionally dead. In Zikpui Pa's *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, one female character Pi Kungliani, who suffered army gang rape committed suicide by hanging herself as she believed that she had no reason to be alive since her husband was also brutally killed by the army. (110)

In her *Zorami*, Jacob seems to reflect that the feelings of shame and humiliation due to army rape can lead the victims to psychosis which is not less than committing suicide. Two women Rami and her sister Mawii were frequently arrested by Major Kohli and his men. They used to keep them in their barrack the whole night and for more than a day, and they would release them after they were raped by Major Kohli and his subordinate army personnel. The devastating results of these incidents

were that Rami and Mawii had lost their senses at which Major Kohli stopped arresting the two women:

The two sisters had forgotten to get back to their home. They forgot to take bath or to change their clothes. They roamed around day and night, crying, and sleeping on the roadside when exhaustion overcame them. No one could help them, though they tried. If anyone went close to them, they screamed at the top of their voices and ran away. They had stopped talking and they communicated only through screams. (131)

Another traumatic experience being depicted in *Rambuai* novel is the sense of loneliness and desolation. Many Mizo women suffered the pain of loneliness, as their beloved had to join the underground army during the conflict. As depicted in *Rambuai* novel, it is obvious that young maidens were more inflicted with loneliness than men. Murphy, a chartered psychologist, says that “Loneliness simply reflecting the degree of deficits in a person’s social environment. For example, someone with no deficits at all would not be lonely, whereas a person with a few deficits would mildly lonely. Similarly, someone experiencing severe deficits would be extremely lonely” (4). Murphy’s statement seems to support the incidents of *Rambuai* that narrowed down the system of everyday life. As the villagers had to move carefully in order to avoid offending the army and the underground army, every maiden was in need of someone to whom they could express their loneliness and desolation. Lalramliana, a survivor of *Rambuai* victim said “Since *Rambuai* automatically instilled the idea of keeping distance from one’s own relatives and acquaintances as

one of the best solutions to avoid intimidation and atrocity of the army, each person seemed to be isolated by an imaginary wall” (Interview). Moreover, Dokhuma states that in Mizo society women are dictated by Mizo culture; women were not expected to reveal their chosen man, and even when their beloved paid court in their house, they would never disclose it to others (*Hmanlai* 180). Accordingly in *Silaimu Ngaihawm*, Ramliani, the female protagonist silently suffered her loneliness when her beloved Sgt. Sanglura, an underground army died. Ramliani and Sanglura had met at Ramliani’s village, Hualtu, when *Rambuai* had set in. Since then, the two remained faithful during the conflict period and vowed to get married as soon as they had the opportunity. As Sanglura was an underground army personnel fighting for the cause of Mizoram independence, he always had to shift places when being called, and therefore he reassured Ramliani:

. . . in the mean time, wait for me calmly and faithfully. I will come and take you to the jungle camp as soon as I have the opportunity. When the time comes, we will love each other and bear poverty together for the sake of our country. (59)

Although, they were parted with a promise to be together, Ramliani’s village became one of the grouped villages, and the first news that she heard about Sanglura after they parted was about his death. Sanglura was severely wounded while exchanging fire between the army and underground army. He knew that he would not survive, and so he took out the bullet from his chest and told his friend Zaikima, “This is the bullet that has taken my life. Please give it to Rami” (179). Accordingly, Zaikima gave Ramliani the bullet that took the life of Sanglura. After the tragic news hit her,

Ramliani was filled with grief and loneliness. She could not find any other means to comfort her as she was in despair, and she remained hopeless during the turbulent *Rambuai* period. Murphy states that “feeling alone in times of difficulty would be likely to have a much greater effect on feelings of loneliness if a person felt there was no one to help them at all, than if they simply felt that there was no one to help them at the moment” (4). The female protagonist Ramliani remarkably seems to illustrate Murphy’s statement as she is unable to find any means of comfort after the death of her beloved.

After sometime, the villagers returned to their own village Hualtu. Ramliani loneliness grew stronger as her own village brought back memories and she re-lived the past. She went to the jungle with her friend Kimi to collect firewood. And without having a specific purpose, she went straight towards the *Keifang* tree where she had made a vow with Sanglura. She sat under the tree and stared blankly. She whispered to herself “I am ready now. I have no reason to live in this world. . . . I’d rather die than live a miserable life” (31). She silently lay under the tree and could not think about the firewood. In her article “Locating Trauma in Mizo Literature” Ch.Zama defines Ramliani’s trauma as “memory and silence, for her memory is internal and suppressed, and cannot tell about what she recalls because words fail her for the present” (71). Therefore, being bound by both Mizo society and *Rambuai* circumstance, Ramliani chose to remain silent and she preferred to interact with an object that could remind her of her beloved Sanglura. For her, the *Keifang* tree is very precious because it is an object that had witnessed the promise she had made with Sanglura.

Ramliani silently mourned the death of her beloved Sanglura. Even her parents did not know what their daughter had undergone. As Hawkley states in her article “Loneliness Matters” that “Depressive symptoms have been associated with loneliness and with adverse health outcomes” (219). Ramliani’s loneliness gradually consumed her physically and mentally and it made her more miserable each day. She never disclosed her agony and misery to others. She remained silent even when her parents asked her the reason of her miserable life. When she was overpowered with loneliness and grief, she took out the bullet that took Sanglura’s life from her trunk and embraced it fondly. The bullet wrapped with Sanglura’s handkerchief stained with his blood, was the most valuable possession Ramliani had in this world. The bullet had been her source of solace while at the same time it aggravated her loneliness. Consequently, her mental illness greatly affected her physical well being and she knew that her end was nearer each day. Therefore, she told Kimi all her secrets; her love affair with Sanglura and how he was shot dead.

Since Mizo maidens hardly revealed the male of their choice, similarly, Ramliani and Sanglura had a secret; the love between them, which was not even known by their parents. As she silently suffered her loneliness and grief, the agony she bore was more painful. Though, Sanglura had died, Ramliani identified the bullet with Sanglura and thus refused to marry when her parents told her to make up her mind to get married. Subsequently, Ramliani chose the bullet to give her comfort rather than marrying another man. However, though the bullet to a certain extent gave her comfort, the same bullet gradually sank her into loneliness, despair and thus eventually led her to death. When she died, her parents were not aware that their

daughter died out of loneliness and despair. It was only when Kimi confessed and informed Ramliani's account that her parents knew about their daughter's misery. On her funeral, her father stated "As you all know, we are not certain about the sickness that caused her death; her health had gradually declined without any ailment" (84). Through Ramliani's account it may be noted that the problems of women in Mizo society was degrading and *Rambuai* highlights the poor conditions and miserable status of women in Mizo society; a fact unrealized by the Mizo women.

*Rambuai* novel also delineated how men endured mental stress during *Rambuai* as illustrated in Zikpuii Pa's *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, Jacob's *Zorami*, Mafeli's *Nghilh Har Kan Tuar!*, and Vanneihluanga's *Pu Khuma*. During *Rambuai*, many men were physically tortured and many lives were lost in the hands of the army. Likewise, some civilians also died in the hands of the underground army. The written accounts of *Rambuai* period often focused on the physical torment inflicted upon Mizo men by the army and the underground army although writers hardly recount the mental sufferings that Mizo men endured during the conflict period. However, from the major and minor fictional characters in *Rambuai* novel and it may be observed that not only women experienced emotional pain during *Rambuai* as it had also impaired the men folks emotionally and psychologically.

Chhuanvawra, the protagonist of Zikpuii Pa's *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, was mentally tortured by *Rambuai*. Chhuanvawra, a reputed man of Zopui village was successful in his studies and he was considered as the champion of their village. His father Selthuama was a doctor and during the British rule in India, he joined the army as an army doctor. Besides, his sincerity and dedication earned him the title



Honorary Civil Surgeon when he retired. His mother hailed from one of the Mizo chief's family; Chief Rolura Sailo, due to which their family enjoyed a good relationship with Zopui abolished chief Khawpuithanga. Thus, brought up in an affluent family, with his amicable character, Chuanvawra enjoyed a respectable status in his village. He always held top position among the bachelors and even during his youth, his contemporaries viewed him as a leader and he was given the responsibility of a Sunday School teacher. He was one of the most excellent achievers in Class X Examination for which he continued his studies in Shillong. Before he went to Shillong, he had developed love affair with Ngurthansangi, the youngest daughter of Zopui abolished Chief. While he was in Shillong, the MNF movement had initiated the fight for the cause of Mizoram independence against the Government of India.

When the protagonist Chhuanvawra heard that the Government of India had announced Mizoram as a disturb area, he was worried and apprehensive, and he thought about his beloved Ngurthansangi as he knew that the Indian army raped women whenever they had the opportunity. Even old women were not spared. He was terrified at the very thought of it and was unable to eat and sleep. Though he attempted to apprehend what might happen to Ngurthansangi, at the same time, he was also afraid to hear the dreadful news and thus he restrained himself from hearing people's conversation about *Rambuai* (68-69). While he was filled with terrifying thoughts, Chhuanvawra learnt that Ngurthansangi was raped and that she was under the army custody. He was desperate on hearing the dreadful news; he almost burst out with anger:

My heart is filled with anger and despair. I am afraid that this anger might bring me shame! I stopped speaking altogether as I am not in the situation to speak. I don't want to accept and consider over how Ngurthansangi's chastity was stolen by the ungodly evil man. The heartache choked me and I have the urge to blow out Shillong with a bomb. My heart blames God and reproached God by praying "Oh God! How could you be so patient to the wicked people? If it has to be this way, I choose to be wicked." If not for the prayers of the angels, I would be condemned like the son of damnation. (173)

Besides, his suffering is doubled by the way Mizo society considers the rape victim. Chhuanvawra's family had already detested Ngurthansangi since she became the victim of army rape. Therefore, Chhuanvawra's father and her sister advised him to forget Ngurthansangi. His father told him, "There's nothing to conceal. Sangtei is a beautiful lady and so they imprisoned her . . . if she is lucky, some officer might accept her as a wife" (72). In the same vein his sister also advised him "Taia, forget Ngurthansangi" (70). The attitude of Chhuanvawra's family towards rape victim indicates that it was a disgrace for the family to accept the rape victim as their daughter-in-law. Therefore, when Chhuanvawra attempted to rescue Ngurthansangi from the army custody, none of his family members supported him and that added to his anger and despair.

When the chaotic *Rambuai* was at its peak, Chhuanvawra returned to Mizoram from Shillong without the consent of his parents. But, before reaching Zopui village he was captured by the army imprisoned him at Tawito camp for

nearly three months. He was beaten black and blue and he endured hunger and thirst. He was finally released and his imprisonment made him realize the supremacy of the Indian Government and its army. Although, his friend remarked “Chhuana, as your name signifies, you are the pride of our village, and you are capable of many things. You can easily convince people with your simple task while we are threatened with a machine gun. We are very proud of you” (130). However, the pride of Zopui village was reduced to a humble state as his love for Ngurthansangi compelled him to beg the *Bawrhsap* to release her. When he was asked to write a petition to go to Zopui village, he ended the letter by stating “If my niece Ngurthansangi is released, I will forever remain faithful to the Government of India” (86). Thus Chhuanvawra was inclined to do anything for Ngurthansangi. He would not hesitate even kneeling down before the *Bawrhsap* if it was required in order to set his beloved free from the army custody (87). As a result, *Rambuai* had stripped off all his pride. One who never learnt to be humble was compelled to be humble and he confessed that “Because of my upbringing, I never learnt to be humble as everyone thinks that I am above the common men. For this reason, it is very hard for me.” (87).

Since the olden days, it was accepted that Mizo men never weep except on the death of their family. Thus for a man, it is very humiliating to weep out of loneliness and weep over his beloved. However, when Ngurthansangi’s father told Chhuanvawra that she was given in marriage to Capt. Ranade and was taken along to his place, being frustrated and in despair, Chhuanvawra hugged Ngurthansangi’s mother and cried his heart out (106). It is understood that Mizo men seldom reveal their loneliness and feelings towards their lady love. Such things remained a secret.

However, Chhuanvawra's loneliness, hopelessness and anguish forced him to unveil his feelings for Ngurthansangi. Without taking the approval from Ngurthansangi's parents, he entered her room and slept on her bed and kept her picture beside him and he recollected their memorable past (116). The way Chhuanvawra expressed his heartache because of Ngurthansangi can be regarded as humiliating for him in view of the Mizo culture where men were always expected to be strong and courageous. To Chhuanvawra, it was as though Ngurthansangi was no more; it was as if she was already dead and buried in a grave and so he cried. Therefore, the pain *Rambuai* inflicted upon Chhuanvawra is too painful to bear silently. He preferred to be with people who treasured Ngurthansangi. He did not care if they were adult or children. As long as he could converse about Ngurthansangi, he was filled with calmness. When Ngurthansangi's niece Rozingi, a small child, uttered her loneliness during her absence, Chhuanvawra was much relieved from his distress (199).

During the turbulent *Rambuai* period, many maidens and bachelors who were in love were forcefully separated by *Rambuai* in different ways. The pains and heartaches they felt often recurred even after they get married. In *Zorami*, Jacob depicts the agony experienced by the protagonist Sanga; how lovers drift apart due to *Rambuai*. Sanga's lady love Dinpuii was killed by the army and subsequently, Sanga's life was devoid of joy and happiness, "he could not eat or sleep properly for weeks and months. And then exhaustion took over, and he gradually resumed life. But he lived with a gaping hole in his heart" (196). Sanga was a handsome and good natured man, and worked as a bank manager. Many women would have wanted to be his wife but no one could take Dinpuii's place in his heart. However, when he met

Zorami, he was hopeful that Zorami would be able to occupy his empty heart, and that she would take away his loneliness. Zorami thus became the first woman whom he ever loved after Dinpuii. Therefore, Sanga courted Zorami with his plan to marry her. Unfortunately, the woman whom he ever loved again was the victim who was assaulted by the atrocities and whose identity was shattered because of the affliction she had endured during *Rambuai*. When Zorami confessed all the pains she had suffered to Sanga, he was shocked with grief. The painful truth hit his heart and he found himself helpless; he thought that he was destined to live a suffering life. For several days, he had moments of quiet introspections related to the question of marrying Zorami. Finally, he made up his mind to marry Zorami as he realized that it happened to her not because of her own choice but because of her misfortune. He therefore, decided to forget the past and begin a new life with Zorami. However, being wounded by the tumultuous *Rambuai*, Zorami and Sanga were one entity who were not capable of giving comfort and solace to each other. Jacob states:

They truly care for each other at the beginning. Despite their different natures, they could have been happy together. However, she feared intimacy and recoils from becoming too close. He tries, she tries. But something holds her back. She can never give herself to him fully. There seem to be a cold, hard core inside her that nothing can melt.

(64)

Sanga hid his past with Dinpuii from Zorami. He did not tell her the despair and loneliness he went through after the army killed his beloved Dinpuii. Zorami did not know that she occupied a secondary role in her husband's life and that she was

being used to heal the emotional torment of her husband. However, both Zorami and Sanga failed to resolve themselves. Though, Sanga married Zorami with the hope of forgetting the painful past, he failed. In her book *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*, Caruth states:

In its most general definition, trauma describes an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena. (11)

In connection to the above observation, after seventeen years of marriage with Zorami, Dinpui reappears in Sanga's dream and he cried out "Dinpui, Dinpui, wait for me. Don't leave me" (193). Sanga therefore revealed his secret to Zorami as he could not hide it anymore. However, for Zorami, the truth is too painful to bear and eventually it cracked up their marriage life. Therefore, the study shows that some emotional pains endured during *Rambuai* period have lasting impact, and it cannot be healed through the passing of time. Its recurrence can be so painful not only for the survivors but also for others who have a close relationship with the survivors of the *Rambuai* victims.

*Rambuai* fiction also reflects the result of *Rambuai*; the endurance psychological pains due to the desire of taking revenge. In *Zorami*, Jacob also vividly reflects the desire of taking revenge through Hmingliana, one of the minor characters in her story. Hmingliana was accused of helping the underground army by giving them financial aid. As a result, he was arrested by the police and while he was questioned, he learnt that his trusted friend Rotluanga was the one who had accused

him. He was imprisoned at Nowgong jail for four years and after he was released, he learnt that his friend Rotluanga had closed his book stall and instead had opened a big stationery shop; the same stationery shop that Hmingliana had once owned before he was imprisoned. On seeing this, Hmingliana was filled with the desire to take revenge. However, during his imprisonment, Rotluanga had aided his family, thus his wife Lalfeli “was quite grateful to him, their sons liked ‘Uncle Tluanga’ and were glad to see him when he visited” (177-178). Though the malicious scheming of Rotluanga in giving aid to his family during his absence greatly angered Hmingliana, he knew that his wife would not understand and believe him if he told her that the person responsible for his imprisonment was Rotluanga. So, he decided to keep it to himself that he “had not told his wife that this kind and helpful friend was the author of his misfortune” (Jacob 178). Consequently, he chose to bear his pain silently while he was filled with the desire to take revenge. He had lost his playfulness; he was bereft of joy and eventually he neglected his responsibility as a father that caused heated arguments with his wife. Reflecting on his past, he was overpowered with anger and he felt the urge to commit murder. In order to avoid committing murder and to release his anger, he escaped to the jungle with his gun:

On the spur of the moment he decided to go hunting. To shoot a boar, a deer, a baboon, a bird, anything. He needed to shed blood, to fell a living being and watch the life ebb out of it. That was the only way to keep his sanity, to momentarily soothe the rage that was devouring him. The only way to hold himself back from slaying a human. (176)

Mizoram is predominantly a Christian state and the teachings of their religion dictates not to take revenge, as is written in *The Holly Bible* “Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord” (Rom. 12.19). Consequently, the teachings of the Bible greatly control their way of life and Hmingliana, though filled with the desire to avenge his foe stopped himself from shedding blood. He struggled to begin a new life but the thought of taking revenge had so much made him suffer mentally. However, after struggling several times he began a new life. From Hmingliana’s account, it can be said that the teaching of his religion seems to add to his suffering rather than console him; he did not seek a solution to avoid his suffering from the teaching of his religion, instead he just followed the teaching of his religion in order to avoid taking revenge. Therefore, he suffered more psychological pains due to the desire of taking revenge whenever he recalled his past “He ground his teeth. He could not forget, would not forgive. Recalling that long ago incident again, his eyes narrowed into mere slits and his handsome face contorted into malicious grimace” (Jacob176).

In Vanneihluanga’s *Pu Khuma*, the protagonist Khuma was filled with desire to avenge the army after he was tortured and assaulted. His wife was raped by the army and his mother-in-law was not only raped but also killed. His anger against the army was so deep but his disability restrained him from taking revenge. He lost his sense of self and worth for not being able to protect his own family. Though he craved for vengeance, the thought of his wife and son stopped him from avenging his enemy. The author narrates



If only his wife and son were not with him, it is his wish to hold a crutch with one hand, a dao with the other hand to slaying the first army man that he sees. He watches the passerby army men and presumes who could have raped his wife. He ponders over if this army man could be the one who killed Lalmawii's mother. He then longed for the days when he was strong and robust; and craved to join the underground movement to vent his anger and take his revenge on the army. (86)

The many civilians who were tortured and harassed during *Rambuai* had the urge of taking revenge on the army after the end of *Rambuai*. Pu Lalsawta, who is a *Rambuai* victim, delineates how he vents his anger towards the *vai* even after the end of *Rambuai*. He says "The harassment and torment inflicted upon me by the Indian army during *Rambuai* had resulted in the resentment of *vai*. Even after the end of the conflict, to vent my anger, I often visit the BRTF camp and threaten them" (Interview).

The patriarchal Mizo society mandated the superiority of male, thus man had always been the head of every Mizo family. It was therefore the duty of a wife and children to follow the dictates of the father and obey the rules that he laid out for his family. Therefore, in Mizo society, the father was expected to protect and safeguard the dignity of his home and family. If the head of the family failed to perform his duty it brought shame and disgrace to the family. Therefore, the father would attempt to prove himself worthy by protecting his family. However, the chaotic *Rambuai* reduce Mizo men to a helpless state where he was not in a position

to secure and protect not only his home but also his wife and children from the atrocities. This brought shame on him and he put the blame upon himself which eventually resulted in emotional torment. In *Zorami*, Jacob depicted how a generous and well-off man, Pu Vanmawia lost his Printing press in the bombing of Aizawl town by the Indian jet fighters. Besides, his house was also burnt down by the army even though he earnestly begged them to spare his house, thus Pu Vanmawia was compelled to live with his brother. Moreover, as he had witnessed the loss of many lives of innocent civilians, he attempted to convince the MNF leaders to search for peace and he earnestly worked for it. However, his enthusiasm was disregarded and he was even considered a traitor. Realizing his incapability in protecting his house and his enthusiasm to search for peace was in vain, he was deeply hurt and he regarded himself a failure (156). His sense of self worth was stripped off and when his daughter Mary returned from Shillong, he did not dare to look into her eyes while he welcomes her. Jacob states:

In a flash, it came across to her like revelation. Though she couldn't explain it, she knew it with a gut-feeling. *Her father was embarrassed. He was ashamed of himself.* But why? He had done no wrong. Perhaps he was ashamed that he did not protect his home. Perhaps he felt guilty that his daughter had been deprived of her home. (156)

Just like the other fathers in Mizo society, Pu Vanmawia was a source of inspiration, solace and strength for his daughter. He always helped her daughter whenever she faced difficulties. But, because of tumultuous *Rambuai*, “he had become weak and helpless. His self respect had been crushed” (156). Similar fate

was experienced by the protagonist of Vanneihluanga's *Pu Khuma*. As Khuma was tortured immensely by the army, he was physically impaired. Due to his physical disability, he relied solely on his wife who lived under the constant fear of the army since she was raped by the army. Khuma regarded himself as burden to his wife and he confessed "Mawii, even if I survive, I will always be in need of help and support; it would be much better if I were dead so that I would not be a burden" (80). Through the characters Pu Vanmawia and Khuma, it may be remarked that during *Rambuai*, many Mizo men were ashamed to claim the status of the father figure in their own home as they were unable to protect their families; it was shameful and it ripped their male pride. This inflicted emotional pain; tormented and submerged them while their hate for the armed forces was intensified.

Vanneihluanga's *Pu Khuma* explored how the underprivileged people suffered a more painful exploitation during *Rambuai* through the wretched condition of the protagonist Khuma. In 1935 during the gospel revival in Mizoram, there were some people who trampled in the wrong direction and erroneously used the gospel to satisfy their sexual pleasure. Among these people, there was Thantei who was pregnant with an illegitimate child. At first, the father of the child was thought to be a widower from her neighbouring village. But when Thantei gave birth, no one came forward to claim the child as Thantei proclaimed that the child was the son of the Holy Spirit. Thus, throughout his life, Khuma remained fatherless. His mother had forsaken him as she had joined others in the neighbouring village, who like Thantei had taken the wrong direction in their religious faith. Khuma was therefore, left in the hands of Zakhuma, his mother's brother and his wife. He was ill treated and he

never had the chance to go to school. Being an illegitimate child was painful for him. However, not knowing how to read and write was more painful to him (67). When he came of age, he married Lalmawii the daughter of a widow. Fortunately, Lalmawii was literate and during her first pregnancy she taught her husband. “For Khuma, it is like a dream come true to be an expectant father and being able to read and write” (71). However, while he was almost able to read and write, the army reached his village and he and his family were severely tortured by the army. Therefore, due to *Rambuai*, Khuma lost his chance to become literate and his self deprecation was much increased and it resulted in his severe suffering.

Due to the grouping of Khuma’s village, life was very difficult for them due to scarcity of food. Their distressed life compelled them to move to Aizawl where they rented a small house. Being illiterate and physically disabled, pacing in the street of Aizawl was a daunting task for Khuma., Gunn, a curriculum designer and teaching coach, reflects in her article “The Life Long Impact of Illiteracy” in *Resilient Educator*, “A person who is unable to read may have low self-esteem or feel emotion such as shame, fear and powerlessness” (n.pag). Similarly, Khuma was filled with despair and worthlessness on reaching Aizawl. And he thus felt Aizawl as Vanneihluanga states:

While he was in his village, the troubles he found was something which he could observe, which could be endured and instantly and it could be taken care of. On the other hand, in Aizawl town, there were many enemies whose identity he did not know. He had no idea of how to defeat his enemies. Though he was not known to many people,

there was no peace for him in Aizawl. He felt that he wrestled with a dark fog that enveloped him day and night. (93)

Khuma and his family moved to Aizawl with a hope to live a better life. Yet, from the day they set down their foot from the vehicle and anxiously searched for someone to rely upon, their search was in vain. To them, Aizawl was a town of misery and affliction (94). He worked laboriously whenever he had the opportunity and being crippled he was not in the position to choose the work that he could perform. He sometimes worked as a newspaper carrier and he found it more refreshing, but this work also became a daunting task for him. Being illiterate, collecting the fees at the end of the month was a great task. Though his wife, who was literate, helped him out at some point, yet he was not confident. Thus he soon could not work as a newspaper carrier (97). Due to his illiteracy, he felt uncomfortable in his surroundings, and felt that he was all alone among the many people who attended his wife's funeral. Khuma and his son thus remained timid because of their ignorance (104).

The story *Pu Khuma* clearly reflects the misery that an illiterate person undergoes especially during *Rambuai* period. Being illiterate, for Khuma, "Aizawl has a life of its own and gives the best to those who know how to please her, and to those who do not please her, they remain stranger. Those who violate against her are even reduced to corpse" (93). On the other hand, Sangliana who moved to Aizawl due to *Rambuai* was embraced by Aizawl and it gave him the best that she could offer a stark contract. Sangliana was also brought up without a mother and he was also forced to move to Aizawl during *Rambuai* period due to the poor condition in

his village. To his advantage, he had learnt how read and write; and he had the capacity to understand what Aizawl and its ambience had to offer him. Right after he settled in Aizawl, he got acquainted with influential people and he easily got the job of peon in the PWD office. He sympathized Khuma who was brought up in the same manner as he was brought up. Sangliana then enrolled the impoverish and destitute Khuma as labourer in PWD. Sangliana also helped Khuma by recovering the compensation given to *Rambuai* victims that was thought to be lost forever. Therefore, Sangliana though not highly educated, with his ability to read and write, and his ability to understand his environment saved the life of Khuma. Thus, the story *Pu Khuma* seems to depict that the illiterate persons had suffered *Rambuai* to a great extent in comparison to the literate persons during and after the end of *Rambuai*. Moving to Aizawl to escape the impoverish life in their village created by *Rambuai*, for Sangliana, his ability to read and write became a means of survival for his family. In *Resilient Educator*, in her article entitled “The Serious Lifelong Impact of Illiteracy”, Gunn observes how reading and writing ability gives enlightenment to an individual:

Literacy permeates all areas of life, fundamentally shapping how we learn, work, and socialize. Literacy is essential to informed decision making, personal empowerment, and community engagement. Communication and connection are the basis of who we are and how we live together and interact with the world. (n.pag)

The most fortunate aspect that happened to Khuma was having a job as labourer in Public Works Department (PWD). The job gave him monthly salary

without working exhaustively. However, Khuma could not get over with the thought of Aizawl town. He was alienated and estranged from it. He stated, “Aizawl is just a story. It is just a nightmare. The real is in my village” (101). Consequently, Khuma could have a sense of self and could identify himself only through his village. His own village comforted him and though unable to read and write, he was able to support his family with his dao and he envied no one. The feeling of contentment while he was in his village never left him after he settled down in Aizawl. Therefore, while performing his work as a labourer in the Public Works Department, he always carried a sharp dao in his bag (2). Consequently, the memory of his wife teaching him and his son the alphabets A AW B before *Rambuai* often resurfaced. Therefore, from the story *Pu Khuma*, the study reveals that people who are underprivileged and uneducated are more mentally traumatized during *Rambuai* period compared to people who belong to ordinary family and those who are educated.

The individual sufferings that are depicted in *Rambuai* novel vividly captures the emotional and psychological agony and misery that an individual undergoes which has often been overlooked by non-fiction writers. As *Rambuai* novel narrates how misery, pain, agony, despair, poverty, anger, unworthiness, loneliness, fear and loss of identity impaired an individual, on the other hand, it gives a new perspective in Mizo literature in relation to how one perceives the traumatic experiences of *Rambuai*. The Mizo culture prior to *Rambuai* which was regarded as a safe haven for Mizo women was contested and thus *Rambuai* novel significantly depicts the obtuseness of this conception. It shows how the concept of Mizo culture added to the sufferings of Mizo women. It coherently depicts the emotional turmoil

that men had undergone during *Rambuai* and how the underprivileged and uneducated had been inflicted with more sufferings.



### End Notes

- Bawrhsap* : The miss pronunciation of Bora Saheb, Mizo people usually used as alternate name for Superintendent of Lushai Hills. Lushai Hills denoted Mizoram.
- Keifang* : The name of tree and its fruit is edible and delicious..
- Mitthi Khua* : Resting place of the spirit of dead man. In olden days, Mizo believes that if an ordinary man dies, his spirit will rest.
- Nemrang puan* : It is a poetic term in Mizo language representing an ordinary woven cloth.
- Vai* : A word for the race of people known as ‘mainland Indian’, different from the Mongoloid group, to which the Mizo race belongs.

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## Chapter IV

### Patriotism in Rambuai Novel

This chapter examines the nature of patriotism during *Rambuai*. It seeks to analyze the various elements of patriotism displayed by the people within the Mizo society through the fictional characters of *Rambuai* novel. It also examines whether the idea of patriotism can be wrongly applied by the so called patriots. Further, this chapter attempts to locate the patriotic feelings of Mizo women during *Rambuai*. Therefore, through the fictional characters of *Rambuai* novel patriotism will be analyzed; how patriotism was instilled in the hearts of Mizo people.

Prior to the year 1966, there seemed to be no thematic of patriotism in Mizo fiction while some reflections of patriotism had already existed in both Mizo poetry and essays. However, the outbreak of *Rambuai* in 1966 brought patriotic fervour to some Mizo novelists. This in turn paved the way for the emergence of patriotism in Mizo novel, and the first *Rambuai* novel *Rinawmin* written by Dokhuma was published in 1976. *The Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus III* defines that patriotism is a person's readiness or devotion to defend his or her country (544). *Cambridge English Dictionary* also defines patriotism as "A person who loves his country, and zealously supports and defends it and its interests" (595). According to *Standford Encyclopedia of Philosopshy*, patriotism can be defined as love of one's country, identification with it, and special concern for its well-being and that of compatriots (n.pag). Though there are many definitions of patriotism, the commonness in each definition is the inclusion of one's feeling of love and faithfulness towards his or her

land. The way fictional characters in *Rambuai* novel reflect their love and devotion for their land is similar to the definitions of patriotism. Therefore, the aspect of such notions reflected in *Rambuai* novel will be termed as patriotism.

The conflict of *Rambuai* in question seems to be the direct result of the MNF movement, and as such, most Mizo people regarded the volunteers and supporters as patriots for the freedom of the land. Dictionary.com states “the word patriot could refer to a member of a resistance movement, a freedom fighter” (n.pag). R. Zamawia, a chronicler of the MNF movement said “The newly formed MNF simply reiterates the fact; ‘From the time of our ancestors, we had neither been a part of India, nor are we Indians. God made us to be Mizos and we are Mizos. The land belongs to the people, and thus, Mizoram is for the Mizo people. The identity of being a Mizo was awakened from its lethargy by the MNF movement” (173), and so the Movement itself and patriotism cannot be separated. According to Lalnithanga, when the MNF party submitted its memorandum asserting self government, they claimed it was consistent with the speech of the National Congress leader, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in a press statement on 19th August 1946; “The Tribal areas are defined as being those along the frontier of India which are neither part of India nor part of Burma nor of any Indian state nor any foreign power” (126). This statement seems to prove that the Mizo people have the right to claim independence. Lalnithanga further states, “From the foregoing statements made by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and the Government of India Act, 1935, it is quite clear that the British Government left the Mizo Nation free and Independent with the right to decide their future political destiny” (127). This Memorandum and the various



definitions in regards to patriotism seems to suggest that the MNF movement could be regarded as patriotism. Tottingham states “Patriotism, by definition, is love of one’s country. The passion, which aims to serve one’s country, defending it, protecting it, or maintaining it.” (26). Thus, all the actions in regards to Mizoram and the people depicted in *Rambuai* novel may be regarded as related to patriotism.

Generally, in *Rambuai* novel, the male protagonists are strong supporters of the MNF movement. The MNF movement and its objectives deeply influenced them and they are also strongly bound by the MNF movement motto ‘*Pathian leh kan ram tan*’ (For God and our country). Their ultimate goal is to fight for Mizoram independence till their last breath. Therefore, it is obvious that their patriotic fervor was much inspired by the feeling of loyalty for Mizoram. During *Rambuai*, most of the Mizo people claimed the underground army as patriots. However, Vanchiau remarks that when the army captured some underground army, some of them were not able to stand faithfully for their land as the army severely tortured and threatened them to become informant in exchange of their lives (151). Besides, there were other informants who voluntarily decided to cooperate with the army due to the difference of opinion of the political movement. Therefore, in order to honour true patriots who stand faithfully for their land during *Rambuai*, *Rambuai* novel writers like Dokhuma, Laizawna and Lalnunthara so much valourised the spirit of loyalty to the country through their fictional characters in their novel.

The title of Dokhuma’s novel ‘*Rinawmin*’, may be translated as ‘faithfully’; ‘faithfully’ is used as a standard to measure the loyalty and patriotic feelings of his characters. The yardstick may be used for the Mizo characters as well as for what the

underground forces felt for the Indian military personnel. Rozuala stuck to his father's advice that he should remain loyal to the land and should not betray his comrades even in the face of death (77). Upon his capture and ensuing interrogation, his only answer to every question was "Major Rozuala, Mizo Army" (180). Even with a gun pressed to his chest, his retort was "Ask away, I will not tell a damn thing" (180-181), and so he was finally executed. Seeing his constancy, the Major who interrogated him could only say, "Whichever force he belonged to, such a loyal and courageous man deserves to be honoured" (181). The setting of *Rinawmin* dates back to 1965, before the insurgency. As the fiction progresses, it reaches the period of turmoil and confusion. Rozuala's family is a staunch supporter of the MNF movement, while Ramhluni the female protagonist is the daughter of a Mizo Union party leader. As political rivals of the time, the Mizo Union party and the MNF movement had differences of opinions on many issues. While the MNF was fighting for independence from India, it was vehemently opposed by the Mizo Union Party. Therefore, in *Rinawmin*, the lovers were stuck in a dilemma when the MNF called up for arms and the Indian government declared Mizoram as a disturbed area. Rozuala, along with most able bodied men went underground and he had to leave his beloved. There was no other motivation stronger than Mizoram's freedom. Rozuala tells his beloved "Hluni, I would like to see your face as much as I want to see the face of freedom, I yearn for you as much as I yearn for my land" (53). As Ramhluni tries to persuade him to surrender himself for the sake of their love, Rozuala replies:

Do I look like I can be persuaded to surrender? If you see me wearing such an expression, know that it is a countenance I abhor. Never

mention that idea in my presence . . . I will never capitulate. I can never be influenced by anyone to change my point of view and surrender myself to the Indians. Even the love I have for you will not change my mind and I will fight for my cause as long as there is breath in my body. (162)

Thus, Rozuala openly declares that he would rather lose his life fighting for the independence of Mizoram, instead of surrendering himself. Rozuala could not change life in Mizoram, yet there is no other place he cares for, and he does not want the land to bow down under the yoke of outsiders. His only motivation was to fight for the rights of Mizoram so that it can be a free land, and thus, he was ready to sacrifice his own comfort. He was satisfied by the fact that he could play a part for the freedom of his land. Inspired by the MNF movement motto 'I faithfully give my life for the glory of God and for my land' he uttered the same phrase as his last words before being executed. Dokhuma's other story *Silaimu Ngaihawm* also projected patriotism as the act of giving all for the people and the land. Receiving a fatal wound in a battle, Sgt. Sanglura's his final words were "Alas Kima, my time has finally come! Please follow my path faithfully, for God and the country" (77).

In *'Thuruk'* Laizawna also mentioned patriotism as the readiness to lay down one's life for one's country. It depicts how Lalmuana, an underground volunteer and his father tried to conceal an MNF secret document. When Lalmuana was wounded and captured by the occupying forces, he still would not give information about the location of the document. His mother urged him to reconsider

his situation by saying, “Son, I think it best for you to surrender. I cannot bear to see you wounded and interrogated at the same time” (187). Lalmuana replied:

Mother, there is no sense in giving in, I have already pledged my allegiance to my land and it is only befitting to give my life for it. Whether I live or die, it is for my people and my land; and that, is the reason for my being. Do not grieve for me, otherwise my resolution will be weakened by your suffering for my sake. (187).

When his interrogators started to physically torture his aged father in order to weaken Lalmuana’s spirit, both father and son were resolute not to reveal their secret. They stood by Horace’s quote “Lovely and honourable it is to die for one’s country” (203). Even the frail Pu Nuna could not be stirred and he encouraged his son to remain faithful to the end by saying “Son, do not be sorry. I have always wanted to die for a cause; and what better cause than to love for your land? Keep the secret till my death or your death, otherwise I will regard you as a traitor and my spirit will be ashamed to call you my son” (215). Even after much grilling, their only answer was “We have already agreed that you will get nothing from us” (216-217). Faced with certain death, they were ultimately rescued by their friends. But Lalmuana’s father ultimately succumbed to his injuries that he received from the torture. Yet his parting words were, ‘Son, for God and country ...’. These words, as well as the final words of the protagonists in Dokhuma’s *‘Rinawmin’* and *‘Silaimu Ngaihawm’* have the same value. Lalmuana’s friend, Lura’s eulogy for Pu Nuna ran thus:

Today marks the time never experienced, and not yet acknowledged by the coming generations; a time when someone special passed

away. Pu Nuna has given his life for the people, and we should never forget his ultimate sacrifice. We have to follow path he had set for us.  
(222)

It is not certain if Lamuana and his father had been successful in their endeavour for self governance or not, Laizawna had set a standard of patriotism through their characters.

In *Rambuai* novel, it is obvious that the condition of Mizoram on the eve and during *Rambuai* is similar to that of the American Revolution. According to Duckster, the American Revolution during 1775-1783, wherein The Revolutionary War split the people of America into two groups: the loyalists and the patriots. Patriots were people who wanted the American colonies to gain their independence from Britain. They wanted their own country called the United States while the loyalists did not want to break away from the British and wanted to remain as part of Britain and remain British citizens (n.pag). In Dokhuma's *Rinawmin*, it is observable that *Rambuai* split Mizo people into MNF movement supporters and Mizo Union party supporters. While the MNF movement wanted to attain independence from Indian Government, while the Mizo Union party preferred to continue to live under the Indian Union as they felt that their lives would be better if Mizoram remained under the Indian Government. Thus, the conflict between MNF movement and Mizo Union; the largest political party, gave rise to enmity among Mizo people. Similar to the war between the patriots and the loyalists in the American Revolution, in *Rinawmin*, the enmity between the MNF movement supporter and the Mizo Union

supporters; the patriots and the loyalists, depicts one of the yard stick from which the act of patriotism is measured.

In Dokhuma's *Rinawmin* Rozuala considered anyone who opposed the MNF movement as enemies and traitors of Mizoram. He believed that anyone associated with the Mizo Union was just a political fanatic who had no care for the welfare of the Mizo people as a whole, and who bears no love for the land. When he recollects the sacrifices he had made against the actions of those who had opposed the MNF movement under the protection of the Indian army, he would be angry with indignation. His rational mind in those times would be clouded by his patriotic passion. When his father mentioned that Kapmawia's family were ashamed of his actions as an informer, he was quite shocked. To his question "His families are 'Unionists', why are they ashamed of him?" (77), his father replied "Of course they feel humiliated! Them being 'Unionists' doesn't make them rascals" (77). This father and son conversation showed how even the hero's outlook can be lopsided. Being members of the Mizo Union and at the same time, opposed to the MNF movement does not simply qualify them as rogues. Since they were opposed in political ideology, they could never see eye to eye. Rozuala's patriotic opinion does not include each and every individual and so he could never imagine members of the Mizo Union as citizens in the new and free Mizoram. However, his ideals did not exclude his lover, the daughter of a well known Mizo Union leader; a secret supporter of MNF movement. "I have to leave you now for our better future, so that we can be united in our free nation. All our sufferings will be buried in the past and we will be physically and mentally liberated" (53). He sincerely believed that when

Mizoram becomes an independent nation, all his efforts would bring satisfaction to both of them. On the other hand, Ramhluni's brother Kapmawia, a Village Council Secretary under the Mizo Union had to be executed due to his role as an informer in opposing the MNF movement. All the confusions in Rozuala's mind shows that patriotism could bring selfishness and bring enmity to the people belonging to the same community. The same fate awaits Kapmawia's friend who helped the Indian Forces against the MNF. After his confession about all his crimes "Under the guidance of their C.O, they carefully judged his case. There was no other option but to execute him" (118). He was made to dig his own grave and buried therein. But for those who had no allegiance to the MNF movement, their actions were the embodiment of cruelty. Cursing the underground forces, Kapmawia's mother lamented over his death. "Our tragedy is only due to Laldenga. Son, his birth has indeed proved to be a curse for our family!" (142), the mother's lament suggests that the patriotic feelings of the underground army create nothing but anger and resentment for others.

*Rambuai* fiction also shows that patriotic zeal can trigger feelings of self-righteousness and arrogance in the mind that may prove to be a hindrance for others. Dokhuma's *Rinawmin* depicts the underground forces willing to undergo all kinds of hardships for their cause. Yet, they in turn believed that no one loved their land more than they do; they believed that their sacrifices would be appreciated by all and that all would be willing to help them in their times of need. It also made them believed that they held the power over all the Mizo people. On one occasion, Luaia a friend of Rozuala, was not able to buy any chicken for their meal. He was enraged as he

thought about the sacrifices that they had made, and how they could not procure even a single fowl. He came to the conclusion that the villagers were not patriotic enough. “Never caring for our hunger or thirst, we stepped out for the revolution... yet there is no chicken to buy! (130), so he ordered his men to shoot any chicken they could come across. The incident shows that Luaia’s sense of patriotism proves to be a burden for the villagers. In *Kim Leh Ni A Awm Ang Em? (The Lion Brigade)* written by Vanlalrawna, the underground returnee, also mentioned “I believe the patriotic passion, prevalent among the MNF forces, gave us a sense of superiority over the other Mizo people” (40). In *Nang Chauh Lo Chu*, Chenkual gives the description of some underground forces with domineering attitude towards the community. At the same time, he describes their leader; a drunkard and a womanizer that again proves to be a burden on the whole community. While the people tried to show their respect for their commitment, they had to turn a blind eye to their actions. Yet the whole community yearned for their departure from the village. (80) Chard, who is a psychotherapist, author and trainer, states “True patriots, then, do not serve egoism, blind nationalism or greedy self-interest. So, when those with political and economic power wield patriotic symbols, ceremonies and platitudes to divide us and turn us against our common humanity, they are not patriots” (n.pag). Therefore, it is quite obvious that, even though the Mizo people considered the underground army as patriots and exalted them as ‘freedom fighters and national heroes’, some of them were not worthy enough to be labelled as patriots.

The signing of the Peace Accord by the MNF and the Indian government in 1986 finally brought an end to the twenty long years of conflict, and saw the



homecoming of the MNF leaders and their forces. The treaty brought much relief to those who had suffered in those two long decades. While the Peace Accord brought an end to violence with the surrender of all arms by the underground forces, there were some who were not fully satisfied. They felt that the primary cause of the conflict; the independence of Mizoram had been exchanged with a mere truce. At the same time, since a majority of the Mizo people had grown weary of the conflict, those who felt betrayed just kept quiet. This feeling of disquiet sowed its seed in *Rambuai* fiction which can be seen in the character Zoramchhana, the protagonist in Laizawna's *Zalen Hma Chuan*, and the protagonist Kaihranga in Lalnunthara's *Kaihranga*.

Zoramchhana, Laizawna's protagonist, enlisted in the underground force at the onset of the conflict. Bidding farewell to his wife and children, he said, "We will not meet again till we gain freedom. I have pledged myself for independence and I will not return until it is achieved" (57). When the underground government ceased its struggle and signed the accord, it was not just the volunteers who felt deflated, many civilians who dreamed of self-government also felt dejected. When the revolutionary forces were given a hero's welcome after the Accord, there was a certain doubt in the hearts of many. "While they deserve their homecoming welcome for their entire struggle, it cannot be denied that they did not live up to their promises and did not keep their pledge." (47). When they were welcomed as revolutionary heroes in Aizawl, Zoramchhana could not help but think:

Many of our comrades in arms had given their lives for independence, out of respect for their sacrifice, I cannot accept to surrender myself to

be under the bondage of outsiders. There is indeed a betrayal among us, and our struggle for the people has come to nothing. Those fallen comrades did not lay down their lives for this status quo. If they had known this beforehand, they would not sacrifice themselves. Their hearts will not accept such surrender. (70)

So he made a decision not to return home. For Zoramchhana, those who claimed to be patriots, taking up arms in the name of Mizoram but never reaching the goal are simply traitors. He is of the opinion that these people should continue their struggle out of respect for their fallen comrades. Even when his son tried to change his mind to come back and live a normal life, his only reaction was: "I have sworn a blood oath to fight for independence. I will not surrender to those I swore to fight against nor will I return until that freedom is attained. I still have a land which is not claimed by anyone, in that land, I am free and there is much work to do. And my labour will be for the land." (71) For him, accepting the terms of the Peace Accord was simply to bow down again under the Indian regime and that could never be equivalent to freedom. He would rather break his ties with his own community than be governed by outsiders.

In Lalnunthara's *Kaihranga*, the protagonist Kaihranga is one who enthusiastically joined the MNF underground army from the beginning, carrying out his duties wherever necessary. But when he realized that there was a rift among the MNF leaders in regards to the continuation of their struggle, he was caught in a dilemma. When he found out that those who wanted to give up their struggle were holding sway, he was disheartened. He now came to the conclusion that every action

already taken in the name of Mizoram's freedom was all a lie and his sense of patriotism now slowly declined. He performed his duties just for the sake of doing something, but there was no longer any zeal. The worst part was that he had started drinking to numb his dejection and his pride as a freedom fighter was shattered. His belief of the MNF movement as a deception slowly devastated his mind that he gave up the Movement and surrendered himself to live a normal life. When the MNF leaders signed the Peace Accord with the authorities, he fully accepted that their leaders had no authentic patriotism. He totally despised anything connected with politics and he believed that all politicians and government officials have no genuine love except for themselves and were all double-faced. Yet, while he might have failed in his struggle for Mizoram, his sense of patriotism motivated him to use force to make a better Mizoram. He, therefore, established a clandestine group, armed with the state of the art weaponry available and he started targeting the corrupt politicians, officers and contractors.

It is obvious that the signing of Peace Accord could not suppress the patriotic fervor of Laizawna's protagonist Zoramchhana and Lalnunthara's protagonist Kaihranga even though the truce had been appreciated by almost all the Mizo people and they regarded it as the best solution for the conclusion of *Rambuai*. However, the way Zoramchhana and Kaihranga reacted to the signing of the Peace Accord seems to symbolize the followings: their rejection of the signing of Peace Accord, the untiring spirit of patriotism for Mizoram independence in the heart of some underground army and a fewer Mizo people, denunciation of underground army personnel who surrendered for the sake of the success of Peace Accord, and a

tribute to their compatriots who sacrificed their lives for the attainment of Mizoram independence.

The different kinds of patriotism shown in *Rambuai* novel is securely connected with independence for Mizoram and the mindset of its characters are also interconnected with Mizoram's freedom. For them, the attainment of freedom is equivalent to the glory of its revolutionaries. While freedom for Mizoram should be their primary motivation, dreams of personal glory are at most times, more prevalent. Laizawna's *In Hrang* relates the relationship of Thansiamia and Laltlani with the backdrop of the Insurgency. Since Thansiamia is a sympathizer for the MNF movement, he is ready to step out as soon as the MNF declares independence. He informs Laltlani of his unsure future, "I could be handicapped or dead any moment, but I could also be welcomed with full glory" (10). He states that it was not a mere pipe dream of his "Our leaders have clearly stated that we will be crowned as heroes next time we return home" (11). This greatly impressed Laltlani who could picture her beloved's glory, but jealousy, born out of love raises its head and she says, 'But, U Siam, you would not remember me then . . . should we wait for that grand return to marry?' (14), she asks when faced the uncertain fate of losing him. Thansiamia's sense of patriotism is supplemented by his love for Laltlani, and it also creates an atmosphere of trust between them. At the same time, Mizoram's freedom and Thansiamia's glory is difficult to differentiate. Thus, Thansiamia is able to occupy the deepest part of Laltlani's heart and he wholeheartedly joins the MNF movement. For him, attaining independence and winning the laurel is never to be erased from his mind.

As Thansiamia feels betrayed by the signing of the Peace Accord, he makes plans of his own to continue the struggle. He hatches a plan where bombs would be strategically blown up at the welcoming venues for the underground returnees in Aizawl. His plans are however foiled by Detective Ruata. The detective has great respect for Thansiamia's commitment to the cause, but he knows that the sense of patriotism and obligation felt by Thansiamia is tinged with a motivation to save face from his lover. He has already ingrained in Laltlani's mind that they will win freedom and that he will be glorified. But after two decades of fighting and not attaining freedom, but a surrender to the enemy; he has come up with this plan just to regain his honour.

Longing to see her face for 20 years, in an unexpected encounter in Aizawl, he can only talk to her as a casual acquaintance, let alone talk about independence. (69). Fear of being arrested as an underground person makes him lose his honour in front of Laltlani. The only option left for him to regain his honour is to continue fighting against the Indian authorities as best as possible. But this motivation is no longer driven by patriotism but to regain his lost glory in the eyes of his beloved. Therefore, after the signing of the Peace Accord between the MNF leaders and the Indian Government, the patriotic fervor of Thansiamia seems to be focused only for his personal benefit and interest. This aspect has a striking similarity with some patriots of the American Revolution. Some patriot according to Chard were "engaging in what George Washington called "the impostures of pretended patriotism"—feigning to be patriots in order to deceive us and further their selfish aims. (n.pag). It may therefore be assumed that Thansiamia like some of the other

revolutionaries of the world has his own selfish reasons in joining the MNF movement for which he may also be listed amongst the impostures of pretended patriotism.

Generally, in *Rambuai* novel, the reflection of patriotism is exposed through the underground army as the protagonist in *Rambuai* fiction usually belonged to the underground army. In Zikpui Pa's *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* the protagonist Chhuanvawra has no involvement in the MNF movement. He also believes that the MNF movement will not attain Mizoram independence from the Indian Government as easily as others may believed, yet he neither counters nor criticizes the movement. While some of his acquaintances enthusiastically discuss and share each other about their dream of the advantages of Mizoram independence that would be a pride for the Mizo people. Chhuanvawra carefully examines every corner of the present condition of Mizoram in order to seek compatible reasons to fight for Mizoram independence. Since the thought burdens and confuses him, he confesses:

Whatsoever, in my opinion, we have so many things to learn and experience before we get independence. Our Mizo rich men, big businessmen, top rank government officers are not admirable enough compared to that of other countries. I feel uneasy as I can neither express my mind nor dare to explain my vision. I even doubt whether I really love my country, but there is nothing else I long for other than Zoram development and her esteemed culture like *tlawmngaihna*, honesty, social harmony, all of them that I used to be proud of in my life. Though, no matter how narrow my land is, I know that we still

need so many things for the development of our country. In such condition, I wonder why I would not prefer an independent country.

(16)

The passage shows that Chhuanvawra believes that Mizoram is not economically fit to struggle for independence. His thoughts about the Mizo culture and the reason of his objection to Mizoram independence are reasonable. His sentiment also suggests that his patriotic feelings are no less compared to the many Mizo people who joined the MNF movement with the idea that Mizoram would soon be independent.

Even though Chhuanvawra refrained from the MNF movement, being a Mizo, his patriotic fervor was unveiled by the outbreak of *Rambuai* as he was one of the victims of army atrocity. He was captured by the army and imprisoned in Tawito Camp for almost three months. During his confinement, he discovered the cruelty and sexual perversion of the army upon innocent civilians and Mizo women; the army used to rape the Mizo women next to his room. While he was in prison, he organised a protest against the raping of the Mizo women by the army (82). After he was released from prison, he realized that the life of the Mizo women under the circumstances of *Rambuai* was quite vulnerable and that they were in need of protection and compassion. As a college student Chhuanvawra was much influenced and carried away by the idea of patriotism. In the train Chhuanvawra daringly confronted the army Major who was also on board the train with some Indian military personnel. While they were boarding the train, the Major accused the Mizo people of being bad and rebellious, and exclaimed that all of them deserved to be

hanged (91). Chhuanvawra fearlessly countered the Major and said, “The Indian army is no better than us since you have killed many innocent civilians, and have raped many women including married women” (91). When this incident took place Chhuanvawra was recently released from prison and some of his captors were still nearby. So, it was quite obvious that if he made any false move and argued with the Major he could be easily sent back to prison. Similarly, Chhuanvawra’s compassion and patriotic feeling for the Mizos is reflected in his accusation of the Major. He neither cared nor anticipated what could have happened to him as he only cared for the dignity of the Mizo people. Thus, Chhuanvawra’s devotion to safeguard Mizoram and her people was no doubt, a sign of patriotism and it can be related with what Annan, writer and Vice-Chancellor of the University of London, states “The cardinal virtue was no longer to love one’s country. It was to feel compassion for one’s fellow-men and women” (202).

Though Chhuanvawra was not personally involved in the MNF movement in the novel *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, the way he encountered the counter insurgency measures taken by the Indian Government in Mizoram was truly patriotic. He loved the Mizo people as much as he loved his land, he strongly protested against the brutal killing of innocent civilians and he openly condemned the act of sexual assaults committed by the army. He utilized every chance that he could get in order to proclaim and reveal the suffering of his people while he was outside Mizoram. Participating in a debate competition as the leader of the movers on the topic ‘Morality is more important than Arts and Science for the development of mankind’, he bravely and earnestly talked about the brutal actions of the Indian



army executed upon the Mizo people. This debate was jointly organized by St. Edmund's College and St. Anthony's College in Shillong and attended by the Governor of Assam, the Major General of the Indian army, and other government officials. He also goes on to say that these actions were executed under the command of the Indian Government in order to suppress the insurgency. In order to emphasize the lack of morality of the Indian Army, Chhuanvawra, without hesitation, condemned the actions of the Indian army upon the people of Mizoram in which many innocent civilians had lost their lives. He mentioned that women were raped and molested, and he related the incident of the snatching of civilians' goods by the army (98). Though the speech he delivered was only within the realm of a debate competition, the way in which he emphasized the importance of morality in this debate signified his admittance that the sufferings of the Mizo people was also his own sufferings. Therefore, Chhuanvawra's passion for the welfare of the Mizo people was no less patriotic in comparison to what Mahatma Gandhi said as quoted in Epigram From Gandhiji "By patriotism I mean the welfare of the whole people, and if I could secure it at the hands of the English, I should bow down my head to them" (n.pag). From the account of Chhuanvawra, it is obvious that without the influence of political movement if individual acquires a sense of belonging to his land, the spirit of patriotism involuntarily exists as the situation demands.

The unification of the various Mizo clans also can be attributed as the sign of patriotism in *Rambuai* novel. The Mizos are of the Mongolian stock, belonging to the Tibeto-Burman sub sect. It is believed that they had migrated from the north-western part of China; from the banks of the T'ao river around B.C.2000. Before

their entrance into the present Mizoram, they first settled down at Thantlang, Run valley, Lentlang and the banks of the Tiau river (Lalthangliana 1-2). From the Tiau river, they finally settled down in the present Mizoram. In *Mizo Poetry* Thanmawia related how the Mizo people finally settled down in Mizoram:

From here, they were said to have entered the present Mizoram in five successive batches. According to Soppit, the first batch of the Mizo clan, after crossing Tiau river settled on the present Mizoram sometime in the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. However, not all the Mizo clans entered the present Mizoram; many of them were left in Chin Hills, some of them moved towards the south while some towards the north. (12)

While most settled in Mizoram, some of the Mizo clans set their roots in the parts of Manipur and Burma. Those who had reached Mizoram still continued to wander westwards into parts of Tripura and Bangladesh and so we still see Mizo clans in areas outside Mizoram. The reunification of the various Mizo clans who had drifted apart and had lost their common roots was one of the driving forces for Mizoram's independence from India. "The Indian government should recognise the Mizo inhabited Indian areas as a part of Mizoram, the areas in Burma and East Pakistan populated by the Mizo clans should also be demarcated as within Mizoram" (Zamawia 177). So the unification of the various Mizo clans was one of the MNF's policies. But the signing of the Peace Accord made this dream of unification a mere pipe dream for the Mizo clans living outside Mizoram.

In *Kara Hla E Hnai Mah Se!*, Rema spoke out through his character Thanga states his longing for the unification of the Mizo clans. Due to shortages of essential commodities in Mizoram prior to the conflict, Thanga's family had migrated to *Hmunlai*, a village in Burma. His plans for marriage came to a standstill only because they were from different tribes. This caused much grief for Thanga and he resolved not to be married. During his heartache, he heard about the MNF's fight for independence of Mizoram and the proposed amalgamation of the Mizo clans. He thought "If Mizoram can gain independence; all the Mizo clans will be united as one. There will no longer be any classification along the lines of being a *Hmar*, *Fanai*, *Paite*, *Pawi*, *Lusei* or *Mara*. All will be one under a new Zoram" (29) Then he secretly left the Burmese Army and joined the underground movement in Mizoram. He worked diligently for the MNF, but the signing of the Peace Accord saw his inspiration for unification come to an end and he thus left the movement with a heavy heart.

However, after many years of wandering he met the protagonist Ruata, with whom he was once acquainted and he decided to stay with Ruata's family. There were different Mizo clans residing in Ruata's house; Ruata, a member of the *Hmar* clan, his wife of the *Lusei* clan, and three other people who were not his relatives such as Nguni of the *Falam* clan, Dari of the *Fanai* clan and Thanga of the *Paite* clan. Thanga realised that the other residents of of Ruata's house were from different Mizo clans, and unexpectedly brought together by *Rambuai* to live under one roof. He also realised that there was harmony and unison amongst them though they were from different clans. He enthusiastically says "We are all Mizos, so we name our

house as ‘MIZO RUN’ (Mizo home). We all come from different backgrounds, but we are family. No one is particularly Mizo and no one is particularly non-Mizo” (12). However, the feeling of patriotism that *Rambuai* inculcated in the heart of Thanga is mainly focused on the unification of the various Mizo clans. Though the struggle for Mizoram's independence was not successful, yet he understood that if there is no discrimination among the various Mizo clans, there will always be a mental and sentimental bond amongst them. No geographical boundary would prove to be a barrier that would hinder the unification of the various Mizo clans.

In view of *Rambuai* and its related writings in Mizo literature, majority of the scholars and writers seldom include women's participation and their patriotic fervor during the insurgency period. Though it is often mentioned orally that women also paid a high price for the sake of the expected Mizoram independence, it is usually the undocumented portion. In her article “Memory, Trauma and Resistance”, Hmingthanzuali states “the patriarchal dominance society that assumes only patriarchal ideals and experiences as valid and substansive” (169). When Mizo National Front party published a souvenir *Mizoram Independence Puan Kum 50-na* (2016) in respect of their fiftieth anniversary declaration of independence, no women writing on female performance during *Rambuai* was included in this souvenir except a short message of Mrs.Lalbiakdiki, wife of Laldenga (L), the founder of MNF movement while the souvenir contains forty two articles about the MNF movement history and other political issues. In another souvenir *MNF Golden Jubilee* in commemoration of Mizo National Front's fiftieth anniversary, published by MNF General Headquarters, Christina Malsawmkimi Pang is the only female contributing

writer among writers of the thirty articles and essays in this souvenir. In *Documentary of Mizoram War of Independence (1966-1986)* published in 2017 by MNF General Headquarters, which contains one hundred ninety one articles and essays about the MNF history, ex-underground armys' experiences, and different experiences of *Rambuai* traumas, B.Vanlalzari and Lalzawmliani are the two female contributing writers, who wrote about their personal sufferings for the sake of Mizoram independence. Besides, R.K.Rothuama is the only contributing writer who wrote a few lines about the valuable contributions of Mizo women during the struggle of Mizoram independence. Moreover, apart from the influence of MNF party, the Mizoram Upa Pawl (MUP) General Headquarters also published the book entitled *Rambuai Lai Leh Kei* in two volumes, a collection of personal experiences of *Rambuai* and its related issues collected from different villages of Mizoram, amounting to seventy three articles including only one female writing. However, there are some writers who wrote about the history of *Rambuai*, and the MNF movement history from their personal experiences and perspective. In those writings, some reflections of women's participation in the struggle for Mizoram independence is documented, but the women accounts never occupy many pages in the writings. Therefore, *Rambuai* fiction is an important narrator of women's attitude towards patriotism as the fictional women characters in *Rambuai* novel represent the Mizo women's patriotic fervor in accordance with the situational demand.

Mizo society is a patriarchal society due to which men and women are unable to share equal status in all respects. In the ancient days the division of labour demarcates the lines where men and women should limit their respective

responsibilities. While Hunting, agriculture and defence were men's jobs, bringing up children and household chores were women's responsibility (Rokhum 41). This patriarchal system has also created limitation of women's patriotism in *Rambuai* novel. In the Mizo culture, women were never expected to take part in war and raid since the time of their ancestors; they were supposed to perform the maternal role at home. Dokhuma's *Rinawmin*, illustrates that almost every maiden of the village of the protagonist Rozuala is enrolled as MNF Volunteer, but they were not allowed to interfere in actual combat and Rozuala was informed to gather all the male volunteers of his battalion excluding the female volunteers, to approach the appointed location and was informed to be always ready to attack the army as soon as he received the order from his superior (29). Though, women volunteers were forbidden to join the underground army, yet it may be noted that women had performed many patriotic deeds for their land as they were always ready to help the underground army in one way or the others. In Dokhuma's *Rinawmin*, the female protagonist Ramhluni's father; the Mizo Union party leader, firmly believed that there was no chance of independence from the Indian Government, and he strongly opposed the MNF movement. But Ramhluni secretly supported the MNF movement even though she did not enroll as an MNF Volunteer. When her beloved Rozuala left her to fight for Mizoram independence, she wrote a letter to him and she confessed her passion for Mizoram independence. She informed that she was always ready to join the underground army if Rozuala gave his consent (85). Ramhluni's letter so much encouraged Rozuala as her patriotic fervor for Mizoram independence was unveiled by her letter. On the other hand, Rozuala could not be sure of Ramhluni's attitude towards the MNF movement since her father was a supporter of Mizo Union

party. The letter also implied that Ramhluni's desire to join the underground army as a passive woman was not enough to be a patriot in order to serve the country. Besides Ramhluni, a divorced woman, who was captured by the underground army was accused of having affair with an army officer. Her confession during the interrogation conducted by the underground army officers seems to express her patriotic fervor during *Rambuai* as she confessed:

Prior to and after *Rambuai*, I used to render my time and worked diligently for the MNF movement; if I did not have to take care of my child, I would have already joined the underground army. . . . I don't want to betray my land and I will never do it. Till now, I have always been ready and have never attempted to avoid anything I can do for my country (111).

In Dokhuma's *Silaimu Ngaihawm*, the female protagonist Ramliani belonged to the family of a strong supporter of MNF movement. She was both useful and helpful for the MNF movement in her village Hualtu (58). She wanted to be more active in the MNF movement and she decided to join the underground army. But the responsibility imposed upon her by the society in respect of family maintenance becomes one of the obstacles that made her unable to be more patriotic for her land and her father said "How do we survive if you walk away from us. Only your elder alone will not be able to look after us. There will be a better opportunity if we wait a little bit longer" (62). From the story *Rinawmin* and *Silaimu Ngaihawm*, it seems that women's patriotic feelings during *Rambuai* was somehow constrained by their responsibility at home. This aspect seems to be directly related to Rokhum's

remark “men and women in the traditional Mizo society formed different strata having specific responsibilities to perform different functions in various capacities in the society” (41).

However, under the social restrictions regarding work ethics many women during *Rambuai* expressed their feelings of patriotism against all odds. Many women tried to back up the underground army, although their contributions might seem trivial and less noticeable, yet, under the oppression of the army, the things done by Mizo women in support of the Mizoram independence could not be too little. It signifies their loyalty to their land and encouragement for the underground army. Moreover, similar to the patriotic deeds of many women during *Rambuai* reflected in *Rambuai* novel, the deeds of British women during World War I through their maternal role was also highly appreciated and regarded as patriotic deeds. In relation to this, in “Female Patriotism in the Great War” Gullace states:

Women’s patriotic activity during World War I began in the home. Government propaganda persuaded women to conserve food, to buy war savings bonds, and to encourage their men to enlist. Both pronatalists and feminists regarded motherhood as a contribution to the State, and a variety of organizations encouraged women to bring up boys fit to become soldiers. These traditional activities turned the home itself into a sort of surrogate battle-front as women were reminded that “The Kitchen” was “Key to Victory,” or that she who saved two slices of bread helped “defeat the U-boat.” (3)



In *Silaimu Ngaihawm*, the female protagonist Ramliani sent a letter to her beloved Sanglura who was a lieutenant officer in the underground army; to receive and welcome some of her village young men who were approaching him to join underground army (67). In *Rinawmin*, during her visit to Aizawl, on seeing some underground army personnel who were arrested and guarded by the police, sitting in the verandah waiting for their time to appear before the District Council Court, Ramhluni pitied them and bought for them the local cigarette and *pan* while many passersby did not even dare to gaze at them (144). Since showing any moral support and sympathy to the underground army could easily lead to the suspicion of the army during *Rambuai*, therefore, the way Ramhluni expressed her sympathy for the arrested underground army is no doubt the consequence of her patriotic feeling that had been rooted inside her heart which she did not dare to expose in her village as her parents were strongly against the MNF movement. Though what Ramhluni had given to the arrested underground army seemed very little, they were very glad as the gift they received carried the moral support for those who were fighting for Mizoram independence under the MNF movement.

In *Nghilh Har Kan Tuar*, written by Mafeli, the way *Rambuai* instilled the patriotic fervor of two women Thuami and Kapmawii is remarkable. As women are less prone to suspicion Thuami, Kapmawii, and three other women were appointed to deliver food and other needs to underground army, who were hiding at the outskirts of their village. An hour before dusk, the women set out towards the direction of the underground army hideout. In order to avoid mandatory checking at the exit and entry gate of the village, they hid their food under their baskets and containers as if

they were going to fetch water and wash their clothes in the water point. Just as they feared they were troubled by two army men on duty at the gate. The two army men ignored their excuse and instead they followed them. At this very moment, two women Thuami and Kapmawii realised that they would not be able to reach the underground army hideout unless they stopped the two army men from following them. Therefore, the two women seduced the two army men while the rest of women safely reached the underground army hideout, and gave them food and their other needs.

The way Thuami and Kapmawii kept the two army men away from their friends is indeed because of their patriotic fervor as Thuami whispered to Kapmawii “My friend, our underground army had suffered too much for our country till now. So that, I have made up my mind to sleep with these army men in order to save the lives of our underground army” (114). Kapmawii was much confused at the moment when she heard Thuami’s patriotic words. She knew that women who used to sleep with the army were condemned and despised by the community, and they were considered as traitors. However, Kapmawii quickly understood Thuami’s patriotic words, and she agreed with her to divert the two army men’s attention by fulfilling their sexual. She thought “This is my country and my nation, why should I betray at this very moment” (114). In view of women’s status in Mizo society where women’s chastity is highly valued, the way Thuami and Kapmawii showed their loyalty to their country is both patriotic and heroic since sleeping with the army can result to many questions which they may not be able to answer convincingly. Would the three women, who reached the underground army hideout, believe in the way they diverted

the attention of the two army men as an act of patriotism? It is true that some women used to sacrifice their bodies to the army for the sake of their own benefit. Therefore, would public and their family honour and understand Thuami and Kapmawii if they conceive a child of the army as the sign of their patriotic fervor? If they conceive a baby due to their sexual act will they still be worthy to become the wife of their own clan? Would the society discriminate or accept their child as their own brother and sister? Thus, regarding all these questions and the possibility of things that might happen to them in their future; Thuami and Kapmawii had sacrificed their chastity to the army. It may be remarked that their actions are no less patriotic than those who had struggled with arms for the independence of Mizoram.

However, many women enrolled themselves as Mizo National Volunteer, but they were not allowed to join the underground army. But the wives of some MNF leaders and few women were trained to be capable to perform as nurse and to do other female works (Zama 78). Only very few women were selected for signal training and the method of guerrilla war (Hmingthanzuali 168) were allowed to join the underground army. Besides, some women joined the underground movement in order to avoid the army capture and atrocity. Moreover, there were also women who had joined the underground movement by their own will and they could not be denied due their patriotic fervor. However, the reasons of women participation within underground movement may be varied. The way they served for the underground movement represented in *Rambuai* novel shows that their contributions for their land are indeed very patriotic.

In his novel *Rose Par Vul Ve Ta Rih Lo Chu!*, L.Z.Sailo also unveiled the patriotic contribution of women during *Rambuai* through his female protagonist Thansangi who joined the underground movement after she worked diligently as secret agent in Aizawl city for the underground army. Thansangi and her mother migrated to Silchar due to *Mautam* famine when she was a little girl. Thansangi started her education in Bengali school and she almost forgot her mother tongue. She was gradually influenced by the Bengali culture and their practices. When she was fifteen years old, she was informed about Mizoram disturbance through the Bengali daily newspaper. Her spirit of patriotism was aroused by the news about the fight between the MNF underground army and the army; a struggle for the independence of the Mizoram:

From the moment when she heard that Mizoram was facing the problem of insurgency, she was able to recall many words of the Mizo language that she had quite forgotten. She could now recall the name of certain things that had occupied her mind as a little child, as though some unknown force was faintly prompting it to her. Thoughts of her Mizo identity began to fill her with a fervent love for her land, and she could not stop thinking about Mizoram even while she studied her lessons in the school. (25)

Due to the strong compulsion of her patriotic mind, she left her mother and returned to Mizoram in order to join the MNF movement. At first, she was assigned to perform the work of secret agent for the underground army. She was very useful as she was fluent in both Bengali and Hindi language. The MNF leader assigned her

to work as a secret agent in a tea stall where the army personnel often had their tea. She would then report the conversations she overheard to the MNF leader (29). After she had worked diligently as secret agent for the underground army, her performance was known by the army. Working as a secret agent over ground is no longer safe for her, the MNF leaders allowed her to join the underground army and she was assigned to propagate the MNF policy among different Mizo clans who settled around the bordering countries of Mizoram. She was very useful in the underground movement and she was respected by her compatriots. When she was asked to give a report about her mission in underground officers meeting, her report was highly appreciated by the underground officers. They realized that the MNF movement would be stronger if they could establish a good relationship with the Mizo clans who dwelt in Tripura, Burma, Bangladesh and Cachar (129).

Patriotism in *Rambuai* novels studied in this chapter reveals that *Rambuai* had instilled patriotism in the hearts of Mizos in various ways. The most distinct facet that defines patriotism during *Rambuai* period is related to how one do fights for the cause of Mizoram independence and the attempt in fighting back the ones who violate against the movement. While many patriotic youths fight with honour and dare to sacrifice their own life, there were some patriots who took pride in their command. Hence such persons become a burden for the civilians. However, every Mizo is unable to make sacrifices for Mizoram independence if they do not corroborated with the MNF movement. Besides, patriotism could be one of the most brutal act for civilians who were being assaulted by the underground army. The study of *Rambuai* novel clearly shows that among the patriots who fervently fight for the

cause of Mizoram independence, some patriots attempted to derive honour and gainful advantages that could be achieved through Mizoram independence. This sentiment had its own consequences in their life. Among the patriots, some yearn only for Mizoram independence and were dissatisfied with just the signing of Mizoram Peace Accord. As their patriotic fervor for their country still lingered in their heart, they were compelled to rebel against their own people. *Rambuai* novel also vividly shows that the people who did not support the MNF movement were nevertheless inspired to love their homeland as the struggle takes its toll. Consequently, *Rambuai* did not only sow the seeds of patriotism among men, it also encouraged women to be patriotic. Therefore, *Rambuai* novel coherently depicts that though women were not armed with weapons during *Rambuai*, their patriotic zeal and silent works are worthy of mention.

### **End Notes**

*Tlawmngaihna* : A Mizo ideal of character. It includes being brave, able to endure hardship, humble and altruistic.

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## Chapter V

### Conclusion

The protagonists of *Rambuai* novel reflect the traumatic experiences of individuals and of the community during *Rambuai*. Thus, the present study carefully examines the felt traumatic experiences of individuals and of the communities, depicted in *Rambuai* novel. The protagonists also depict to a great extent the real life concept of patriotism felt by the Mizos and the helpless state of the Mizo communities during *Rambuai*.

*Rambuai* has a great impact in the life of Mizos till date. The anguish, pains and sufferings that over shadowed the life of the Mizo community at the time of *Rambuai* is reflected in Mizo literature in various ways. In spite of the painful experiences, *Rambuai* certainly contributed to the richness of Mizo literature, especially Mizo fiction as the affliction, agony, distress, and torment in respect to Mizo community are poignantly depicted. Within five decades since the outbreak of *Rambuai* in 1966, fictions that deal with *Rambuai* and its related issues may be termed as *Rambuai* novel as the influences of *Rambuai* are depicted in the fictions. Mizo fictions of different kinds have been written till date and amongst the writings, it seems that *Rambuai* fiction will continue to be written even in the future years. Moreover, among different literary genres that deals with *Rambuai*, *Rambuai* novel is the most flexible and wide ranging. It contains different approaches and interpretations which brings to light multiple and distinctive pictures of Mizo insurgency and its impact.

Drawing a fine line for classification of *Rambuai* novel becomes very important as *Rambuai* novel seems to fall into two types. Therefore, *Rambuai* fiction in this study is categorised into two kinds: *Rambuai* based novel and *Rambuai* related novel. In *Rambuai* based novel, the writer uses *Rambuai* as the setting of the novel wherein *Rambuai* exerts a huge impact in the life of the characters. The characters live under the gloomy atmosphere of *Rambuai* that simultaneously results in both negative and positive impacts. The ambiance of the narratives is usually dark and gloomy. The setting and characters are usually taken from real life and historical fact is given importance. Writers like James Dokhuma, C.Chhuanvara, C.Laizawna, Zikpuii Pa, K.Hawlla Sailo, Zothansangi Pa, Lalhmingliana Saiawi, V.L Rema, Mafeli, FLC Sanga, Capt. L.Z. Sailo, C.Ringzuala, C.Chhuanvawra, Lalthangliana Sailo, Vanneihluanga, Samson Thanruma, Lalengzauva, and Malsawmi Jacob, can be categorised as *Rambuai* based novel writers. In *Rambuai* related novel, the novelist depicts *Rambuai* atmosphere and its related aspects. In such fictions, some *Rambuai* issues are reflected by the characters, although such reflections do not determine the deep impact of *Rambuai*. The plot of the narrative utilizes *Rambuai* in order to make the story interesting. Thus, such fictions can be categorised as *Rambuai* related novel.

The collective trauma in *Rambuai* novel reveals that *Rambuai* had multiple effects in Mizo society and community. Since the exposure of the sufferings depicted by the writers are taken from accounts that they themselves have experience, or based on the narratives of those who have been victims, *Rambuai* novel is therefore, able to convey a clear and precise picture, of how the minds of the people have been

deeply affected by the insurgency. While Mizo historians who wrote about *Rambuai* have stressed on the various physical sufferings endured by the people, they have been neglectful in highlighting how the grouping of the villages have deeply affected the minds of the people and thereby have changed their mindset. On the other hand, *Rambuai* novel exposes how the Mizo people are greatly affected socially and mentally by the grouping of villages which most historians have failed to mention. In fact, *Rambuai* novel portrays the different perspectives and new insights on the grouping of villages, and its effects upon the Mizo people. In Dokhuma's *Rinawmin* and *Silaimu Ngaihawm*, it is seen that due to the village grouping, many Mizo people suffered the psychological dilemma of loneliness and nostalgia; compared to the youth the elderly people had suffered more loneliness.

Mafeli's *Nghilh Har Kan Tuar*, Vanneihluanga's *Pu Khuma*, and Zikpuii Pa's *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, depict the excruciating despair and hunger suffered by the civilians due to village groupings which eventually resulted in the emergence of pointer, prostitution, robbery. Due to their impoverish states many people betrayed their own people. This subsequently increased the level of severity of trauma suffered by Mizo community. It may also be stated that the effect of *Rambuai* can still be seen in relation to the degradation of honesty from which Mizo society till today has not yet recovered. People of grouped villages were insecure and submissive. Even their freedom to talk about their own rights was taken away. Men who were once able to express their thoughts and feelings had to suppress their feelings and bear their heartaches alone under the subjugation of the army. Unity in the society was fractured and people became selfish. Therefore, grouping of villages

seems to be one of the most traumatic events that Mizo people suffered during *Rambuai*; grouping of villages greatly annihilated Mizo traditional, cultural norms, and it invariably seems to result in many adverse effects on the social structure.

The night curfews imposed by the army during *Rambuai* caused a desperate quiet and restlessness among Mizo people who love to socialize since Mizo society is a closely knitted society from their ancestors. The people socialise in the form of dances and singing. The curfew thus violated Mizo community values, cultural and traditional norms. On the other hand, the violation of curfew by civilian had to be met by punishments. In L.Z.Sailo's *Rose Par Vul Ve Ta Rih Lo Chu*, while curfew was a heavy burden especially for the people who lived in rural areas, yet in Lalhmingliana's *Nukawki Fanu*, it is seen that curfew was only a mild restriction for some wealthy people who lived in urban areas, especially people who lived in Aizawl town. This indicates that the consequences of the night curfews were quite different because of location, social and economic status of individual in the community.

Another trauma which is collectively suffered by the Mizo people is fear of the army and the underground army. Mizo people were said to be courageous, but with the outbreak of *Rambuai*, Mizo people gradually lost their courage due to the horrendous military actions taken by the Indian Government. Prior to *Rambuai* men in the armed services were highly regarded and Mizo men in the armed services were especially admired by the society and the community. Thus Mizo men in the armed services also believed that they were above the common people, and the civilians did not consider them as dreadful. But when *Rambuai* eventually broke out, the people's

admiration towards the army was completely changed into fear, dread and horror as the army burned down villages, tortured and killed innocent people even when they were merely suspected. The dread and horror turned to hate when Mizo women of varied ages were mercilessly raped by the armed personnel. In Vanneihluanga's *Pu Khuma*, the author remarks that the army need not set out their foot in search of people who were hiding in the forest; a slight rumour was enough to drive them home.

In Jacob's *Zorami* and Laizawna's *Thuruk*, it is seen that adult and children feared the army alike. The phobia for Indian army ousted the father from his role as guardian of the family, since the family no longer found comfort in him. People who found safety in their family before the uprising no longer could sleep in peace. Further, this shows that it was shameful and painful for the Mizo men; the fear for the army made the Mizo men lose their traditional position of guardians of the community. It is interesting to note that fear in the Mizo mindset was doubled as the Mizo people also suffered at the hands of underground army. Although this area is sadly neglected by many writers, yet one can understand the trauma of fear and horror imposed on the Mizo people through the writings of few novelists who mentioned the civilians' fear of the underground army. In Mafeli's *Nghilh Har Kan Tuar*, it can be observed that all villagers would be in distress if there was any rumour regarding the presence of an underground army personnel and the whole community would wish for their speedy departure. If the army knew the mere presence of underground army personnel in the village, the village could face many consequences; the village could be burned to ashes, they could be caught in crossfire,

the men could be captured and interrogated and even the women would not be safe. Since all these factors were in the minds of the people of the community, they felt much agitated. Dokhuma's *Rinawmin* depicts the actions of radicals among the underground forces. Differences of opinions towards political outlook between civilians and underground volunteers also sowed terror of the volunteers among the people. No one dared to show any displeasure against the MNF movement. The underground army were quite resentful towards anyone against them. They also captured and silenced the few against whom they had their grudges. Therefore, it may be assumed that due to the fear of the army and the underground army, the civilians lived their lives as if they were trapped in between the hammer and the anvil during the conflict period.

The study also finds that besides the fear of the military presence and the underground army, many of the *Rambuai* novel depict the presence of 'kawktu' which means 'informant or informer'. These people belonged to the same community and the result was that there was suspicion within the community. Everyone had to be cautious of even their close relatives. *Rambuai* novel writers all seem to echo the peoples' scorn and condemnation of the *kawktu* that extend to the families of *kawktu* who also had to undergo public condemnation, loss of trust and dignity within the Mizo community. This seems to indicate the fact that the *kawktu* had wounded many Mizo hearts and the wound is like an ongoing process that does not heal even after the end of *Rambuai*.

The findings of this research also show that all farmers, servicemen and merchants were affected by *Rambuai* in their respective economic system. The social



equilibrium was affected since many men had joined the movement. On the other hand, many others were imprisoned or had to lose their lives in the hands of the resultant military operation with the result that the women folks had to look after the family affairs. In Jacob's *Zorami*, it is seen that due to the death of Kimi's father, Kimi's mother had no other choice but to sell rice beer in order to provide for her family as the Mizo traditional jhuming cultivation system was quiet inappropriate for women folks. In Laizawna's *In Hrang*, the widow Laltlani was also forced to sell rice beer in order to survive in Aizawl town where life was not easy due to the tumultuous *Rambuai*. For the Mizo community who were converted to Christianity, selling rice beer is strongly opposed by the Mizo community and their religion. Yet, both Kimi's mother and Laltlani had to reluctantly choose to sell rice beer in order to earn their daily living, and it consequently caused them mental suffering as they thought that they had committed crime before God and the Mizo community.

During the period of political turbulence faced by the Mizos, big merchants and businessmen left Mizoram and sought refuge in various parts of the North Eastern regions, simultaneously many villagers in Mizoram migrated to Aizawl during the absence of the big merchants and businessmen in Aizawl due to scarcity of food and starvation because of the grouping of villages. This in turn provided the necessary step for the villagers to assimilate in Aizawl as businessmen. This is illustrated in Lalhmingliana's *Nukawki Fanu*; many tough villagers who migrated to Aizawl in order to seek survival from *Rambuai* consequences utilized the opportunity in the absence of the permanent businessman of Aizawl, and they captured the situation for their benefits. Therefore, it may be surmised that for some families

*Rambuai* is a road to perdition, while it proved to be a means to climb the social ladder for some others.

It is also found that both within and outside Mizoram, the insurgency affected learning and education in different ways. All educational institutions had to be closed down for almost three years and a majority of the youth who had joined the MNF movement were students. In Jacobs's *Zorami*, it is seen that many students joined the MNF movement. Among them, Dinpuui, was a brilliant student and she had a bright future, and her intention was to become a medical doctor. She joined the underground army and while serving as a nurse, she was killed in the military operation carried out by the army. Ralkapa, a strong supporter of the MNF movement was also a student. He discontinued his study and joined the underground army. But unfortunately, he was captured by the army and later he became an informant and lived a miserable life. In *Zorami*, it is also seen that Mr. George, a South Indian teacher was killed by the underground army in front of his students. The action was so traumatic for the students, that all the students who witnessed the brutal killing quit their study. In Zikpuui Pa's *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, it is seen that the Headmaster of Zopui village high school and other five students were shot dead by the army. The female protagonist Ngurthansangi, who was a high school student was captured and raped by the army. In this circumstance, she could not continue her studies and Capt. Ranade illegally sold her to a brothel in Bombay (Mumbai), where she had to take up prostitution as her means of living. Therefore, *Rambuai* novel illustrates that *Rambuai* had many adverse effects in the sphere of

education; many students forfeited their studies while some others took up unintended paths, and many others died.

The *Rambuai* trauma is examined on the basis of the sufferings of men and women echoed in the *Rambuai* novel. Generally, writers of *Rambuai* novel are very keen towards individual sufferings and such descriptions are more elaborate compared to the collective sufferings portrayed by the writers. The traumatic experiences of the community during the insurgency are utilized as a backdrop to their stories in which real life individual sufferings are emphasized through fictional characters. The study denotes that one of the most traumatic experiences endured by Mizo women during *Rambuai* is army rape, and the attitude of Mizo society towards such rape victims. In Zikpui Pa's *Nunna Kawnghtuam Puiah*, and Jacob's *Zorami*, the study finds that women who were victims of army rape during *Rambuai* were mentally traumatized. They felt that their dignity had been ripped off violently that in turn simultaneously afflicted the victims with horror and fear. Thus, they were eventually deprived of their sense of self worth, morals and values, while some of them instantly suffered from psychosis.

Due to the affliction, even after the end of *Rambuai*, the scar lives on and such victims are emotionally tortured to the extent of having the desire to commit suicide. Apart from their physical sufferings, the rape victims experienced double burden; the continual subservient role given to women by Mizo culture, and the burden of rape upon the unmarried women. The female protagonists; Ngurthansangi and Zorami in both fictions, after they were raped by the army felt insecure and had guilt feelings of self detest. They thought that they were no longer worthy of being

someone's wife. Both Zorami's father and Ngurthansangi's father treated their daughters as damaged goods after they were rape victims. Therefore, it may be assumed that the attitude of Mizo community towards rape victims is one sided; social discrimination of the rape victims, and on the other hand, the misfortune of rape (not by choice) faced by the victim is often neglected. At the same time, it is also found that Zikpuii Pa, Jacob and Vanneihluanga represent the male protagonist as the protector and saviour of the rape victims in their stories in order to show that Mizo men are responsible in safeguarding the dignity of Mizo women.

*Rambuai* novel also denotes that suicidal tendencies were often exhibited by married women who were victims of army rape. In Vanneihluanga's *Pu Khuma*, the female protagonist Lalmawii felt that after she was a victim of army rape, she often thought of committing suicide; hanging herself as she thought that she was too dirty to be still treated as the wife by her husband Khuma. Yet, she was prevented from committing such action only because of her newborn son and her husband Khuma who needed her care and attention as he was severely tortured by the army. In Zikpuii Pa's *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, one of his female characters Pi Kungliani, who suffered army gang rape committed suicide by hanging herself. This drastic act was committed by her as she thought that she had no reason to live after her husband was brutally killed by the army. Therefore, it may be assumed that many married women who survived the army rape during *Rambuai* although physically alive, exhibited suicidal tendencies. Since such negative psychological desires frequently recurred in their thoughts, it may be assumed that such victims were already emotionally dead.

It may also be remarked that the researcher finds that many Mizo women suffered the pain of loneliness, as their beloved(s) had to join the underground army during the conflict. As depicted in *Rambuai* novel, it is obvious that young maidens were more affected with loneliness compared to men. Dokhuma's *Silaimu Ngaihawm*, reveals that due to the influences of Mizo culture and the dark circumstances of *Rambuai*, the female protagonist Ramliani silently mourned her beloved Sanglura, who died during the exchange of gun fire between the army and the underground army. Ramliani could not find any other means of comfort other than the bullet that had taken the life of her beloved Sanglura. She had kept the bullet as a souvenir and it dearly comforted her. She remained hopeless and in despair during the turbulent *Rambuai* period. Moreover, as dictated by the Mizo culture, a single woman could not reveal her chosen man in the midst of other male contenders even if her chosen was present amongst the others who courted her. Such secrets are not to be disclosed by Mizo women. Therefore, Ramliani could not go against the traditional order; openly reveal her innermost feelings as it would harm her reputation as a young woman. Therefore, being bound by both Mizo culture and *Rambuai* circumstances, Ramliani chose to remain silent, and she preferred to console herself with an object that reminds her of her beloved Sanglura. Thus, it is obvious that Ramliani's account reveals that the status of women in Mizo society was a heavy burden for Mizo women during the turbulent *Rambuai* period.

It may also be noted that from the major and minor fictional characters in *Rambuai* novels, not only women underwent emotional pain during *Rambuai*. It had also impaired the men folk emotionally and psychologically. In Zikpui Pa's *Nunna*

*Kawngthuam Puiah*, it is seen that the protagonist Chhuanvawra was mentally tortured when he heard that his beloved Ngurthansangi was raped by the army. His heart was filled with anger and despair and he was afraid that his anger might bring him shame. He seldom talked, and he was unable to eat and sleep. Besides, his suffering was doubled by the way Mizo society viewed rape victim; his family had already detested Ngurthansangi after she was raped by the army personnel. The study also shows that Chhuanvawra had lost his pride due to *Rambuai*. He was imprisoned for nearly three months; beaten black and blue he endured hunger and thirst. He then realised the supremacy of the Indian Government and its army and his pride was reduced to a humble state.

In Jacob's *Zorami*, it is found that during the turbulent *Rambuai* period, many maidens and bachelors who were in love were forcefully separated by *Rambuai* in various ways. The pains and heartaches that were experienced often recur even after they were married. The protagonist Sanga hid about his past life with Dinpuii from his wife Zorami. He did not tell her the despair and loneliness he went through after the army killed his beloved Dinpuii. But after seventeen years of married life with Zorami, Dinpuii appears in Sanga's dream and he cries out her name. Sanga could no longer keep his secret from his wife for which their married life suffered. Sanga's dream seems to suggest that some emotional pains endured during *Rambuai* period have lasting effects also on men and they cannot be healed only by the passing of time. Such emotional pains recur and they can often be bitterly painful not only for the survivor of *Rambuai* but also for those who are close relatives of the survivors.

Jacob's *Zorami* and Vanneihluanga's *Pu Khuma*, both depict the human psychological conditions of *Rambuai* victims, and the reaction of some survivors. Through the life-like characters it is seen that some endure their psychological pains due to the desire of taking revenge. In *Zorami*, the writer Jacob reflected the desire of taking revenge through the character Hmingliana who was accused by his trusted friend for helping the underground army by giving them financial aid that resulted in his four years of imprisonment. Since Christianity forbids taking revenge and it also teaches to leave revenge to the wrath of God, therefore, being bound by the teachings of Christianity, Hmingliana could not avenge his foe. Thus, he psychologically suffered due to the urge of taking revenge. Therefore, Hmingliana's suffering is an instance of desire to take revenge within the Mizo community; between Mizo and Mizo among survivor of *Rambuai* victims. Those who had the desire of taking revenge emotionally suffered and their sufferings were doubled by the teachings of Christian religion that forbids taking revenge; many Mizos by then had converted to Christianity. Besides, within Mizo community, the desire to take revenge upon the army also affected the mentality of many *Rambuai* victims. Vanneihluanga's protagonist Khuma depicts that amongst the *Rambuai* victims, the desire to take revenge upon the army was much deeper for those who were severely tortured by the army, and those who lost the lives of their relatives in the hands of the army. Yet, the responsibility and the positions they held in their families prevented them to take revenge. Thus, they were more psychologically traumatized as they could not physically vent out their frustrations.

The chaotic *Rambuai* reduced the Mizo men helplessly to a state where he was not in a position to defend and protect not only his home but also his wife and children from the atrocities experienced during *Rambuai*. This brought guilt and shame on him and he put the blame upon himself for which he eventually suffered emotional torment. In Jacob's *Zorami*, one of her male character Pu Vanmawia, who is a generous and well-off man, lost his Printing press during the bombing of Aizawl town by the Indian jet fighters. Besides, his house was also burnt down by the army even though he earnestly begged them to spare his house, and thus he was compelled to live with his brother. Since, the patriarchal Mizo society mandated the superiority of male, the father was expected to protect and safeguard the dignity of his home and family. If the head of the family failed to perform his duty it brought shame and disgrace to the family, therefore, the Mizo father will attempt to prove himself worthy in protecting his family. Reflecting on the position of the patriarch in Mizo society, Pu Vanmawia the character in *Zorami*, thought himself as incapable of protecting his house and his family. He therefore, was deeply hurt and regarded himself as a failure since his sense of self worth was stripped off and his self respect was crushed before his family. Similar fate was experienced by Khuma, the protagonist of Vanneihluanga's *Pu Khuma*. As Khuma was tortured immensely by the army, he was physically impaired. Due to his physical disability, he relied solely on his wife who lived under the constant fear of the army ever since she was raped by the army. Khuma regarded himself as a burden to his wife and he confessed that even if he survived, he would always be in need of help and support; it would be much better if he were dead so that he would not be a burden for his family. From the account of the characters Pu Vanmawia and Khuma, it is obvious that during



*Rambuai*, many Mizo men failed to retain the supreme patriarchal rights of fatherhood which in turn inflicted emotional pain upon many patriarchs as they deeply felt that it was shameful and dreadful not to be able to protect their own families in times of troubles.

*Rambuai* is more hurtful for those who were underprivileged and uneducated. *Rambuai* compelled many villagers to migrate to seek shelter and food in Aizawl town due to scarcity of food in the grouping villages. While many villagers who thereby settled down in Aizawl town had found comfort and better chance of survival under the turbulent *Rambuai*, still, for some, life was not as easy as their expectations in Aizawl town, especially for persons who were underprivileged and lacked education. In *Pu Khuma*, the protagonist and his family migrated to Aizawl town with the hope that they could find better chance of survival; their village was grouped and they experienced deprivation of food and several other problems. The protagonist Khuma was an illegitimate child and an illiterate person and his wife Lalmawii was the daughter of a widow and so they were unable to adjust themselves in Aizawl town. It was dreadful for them as their upbringing hindered them to immediately adjust their life in accordance with the life style of Aizawl town. The contentment Khuma felt in his village was irreplaceable and the feeling and nostalgia of his village never left him after he settled down in Aizawl town. Therefore, while performing his work; labourer in Public Works Department under Mizoram Government, he always carried a sharp dao in his bag. It was the sole treasure he had even after they migrated in Aizawl town; the sharp dao was once the best material that enabled him to look after his family before they migrated in Aizawl town. While

Khuma felt lost and miserable in Aizawl town, Sangliana another character in the story, who moved to Aizawl due to *Rambuai* embraced Aizawl as it offered him the best opportunity for his future; a stark contrast to the fate of Khuma in Aizawl. Sangliana was also brought up without a mother, yet he had the advantage of having learnt how to read and write. Like Khuma he was underprivileged and he was also forced to move to Aizawl during *Rambuai* period due to poverty. To his advantage, his education provided him the capacity to understand what Aizawl and its ambience had to offer him. Soon after he settled in Aizawl, he was acquainted with influential people and he easily acquired a job as peon in PWD office, and he later became a well established contractor in Aizawl. Therefore, from the story *Pu Khuma*, it may be noted that people who were underprivileged and uneducated were more psychologically traumatized during and even after the end of *Rambuai* period compared to people who belonged to ordinary family who were simply able to read and write.

In *Rambuai* novels, most of the male protagonists are strong supporters of MNF movement. The MNF movement and its objectives deeply influenced them and they are also strongly bound by the MNF movement motto '*Pathian leh kan ram tan*' (For God and our country). Their ultimate goal is to fight for Mizoram independence till their last breath. During *Rambuai*, most of the Mizo people assumed the underground army as the patriots. However, when the army captured some of the underground army, some of the men among the captives could not remain faithful to their land (Mizoram) as the army severely tortured and threatened them to be informants in exchange of their lives. Therefore, in order to honour the true patriots

who remained faithful to their land during Mizoram disturbance, *Rambuai* fiction writers like Dokhuma, Laizawna and Lalnunthara so much valorised the spirit of loyalty to the land in their fictions through their fictional characters. The last words of the dying protagonists in Dokhuma's *Rinawmin* and *Silaimu Ngaihawm*, and Laizawna's minor character in *Thuruk*, all uttered 'Faithfully, for God and our country', during the last minutes of their lives in the hands of their captors. Therefore, it may be remarked that *Rambuai* fiction writers set a standard of Mizo patriotism through the faithfulness of their characters.

*Rambuai* novel illustrates that the conflict between the MNF movement and the Mizo Union; the largest political party during *Rambuai*, gave rise to enmity among Mizo people similar to the war between the patriots and the betrayers. The enmity between Mizo and Mizo is one of the yard stick from which the act of patriotism is measured in *Rambuai* novel. In Dokhuma's *Rinawmin*, the protagonist Rozuala's patriotic opinion does not include each and every individual, so he could never accept members of the Mizo Union as citizens in the future Mizoram that would be free and independent. On the other hand, Rozuala's ideal did not exclude his beloved, a secret supporter of MNF movement; the daughter of a well known Mizo Union leader. Yet, Rozuala and his subordinates executed Ramhluni's brother Kapmawia, a Village Council Secretary under the Mizo Union as he was an informer and an opposer of the MNF movement. Therefore, Rozuala's thoughts show that patriotism could bring selfishness and enmity to people belonging to the same community. For those who opposed the MNF movement, the action of characters like Rozuala and other MNF supporters who depicted in their own ways their idea of

patriotic feeling, were the embodiment of cruelty and it brought the supporters of Mizo Union party nothing but anger and resentment towards the underground army. Therefore, the underground army were no patriots in the eyes of the opposers.

*Rambuai* instilled patriotism yet the patriotic zeal displayed by some underground army personnel triggered off feelings of self-righteousness and arrogance which can prove to be a hindrance for others. Dokhuma's *Rinawmin* depicted underground forces who were willing to undergo all kinds of hardships for their cause, yet they in turn believed that no one loved their land more than they did; they believed that their sacrifices would be appreciated by all and that everyone would be willing to help them when they were in need. Such notions made them believe that they held power over all the Mizo people. If the people failed to help them, they thought that such persons were not patriotic enough. Therefore, they often exercised their underground army power over such persons. Thus, most of the patriotic fervour of underground army reflected in *Rambuai* novel is a heavy burden for the fictional characters that runs parallel to the feelings of real people who lived during *Rambuai*.

While the signing of Peace Accord between the MNF leaders and the Government of India seems to be the best solution for the conclusion of *Rambuai*, nevertheless, *Rambuai* novel proves that there were some who were not fully satisfied. Many felt that the primary cause of the conflict brought about by the desire for the independence of Mizoram had been exchanged with a mere truce that silenced the strife for independence. At the same time, since a majority of the Mizo people had grown weary of the conflict, those who felt betrayed just kept quiet, and this

feeling of disquiet sowed its seed in *Rambuai* novel. In Laizawna's *Zalen Hma Chuan*, it is seen that the protagonist Zoramchhana refused to surrender as the terms of the Accord was simply to bow down again under the Indian regime, and that could never be equivalent to freedom. Thus, he broke his ties with his own community rather than being governed by outsiders. In Lalnunthara's *Kaihranga*, the protagonist Kaihranga abandoned the underground army as soon as he realized that the MNF leaders had intended to sign the Peace Accord with the Indian Government as he realized that their leaders had no authentic patriotism. Yet, while he failed in his struggle for Mizoram, his sense of patriotism later motivated him to use force in order to make a better Mizoram. He, therefore, established a clandestine group and started targeting the corrupt politicians, officers and contractors. It may, therefore, be assumed that characters like Zoramchhana and Kaihranga reacted against signing of the Peace Accord that obviously represent: repulsion of the signing of Peace Accord, the untiring spirit of patriotism for Mizoram independence in the heart of some underground army and a fewer Mizo people, denunciation of underground army personnel who surrendered for the sake of the success of Peace Accord, and a tribute to their compatriots who sacrificed their lives for the attainment of Mizoram independence.

The different shades of patriotism shown in *Rambuai* novel is firmly connected with independence for Mizoram and the mindset of its characters are also interconnected with the freedom of Mizoram. While freedom for Mizoram should be their primary motivation, nevertheless, dreams of personal glory also dominated the minds of many underground army personnel. In Laizawna's *In Hrang*, it is seen that

the protagonist Thansiamia strongly believed that his patriotic fervour for Mizoram independence would glorify him when Mizoram attain its independence from the Indian Government. Due to the certainty of his belief, he promised his beloved Latlani, that he would come back gloriously. But the signing of the Peace Accord eradicated his dreams of personal glory, and the promise he had made to Laltlani consequently caused him pain and shame. The only option left for him to regain his honour was to continue fighting against the Indian authorities as best as he could. This motivation was no longer driven by patriotism but to regain his lost glory with his beloved. Therefore, it can be remarked that the patriotic fervour of Thansiamia suggests the idea that during the fight for Mizoram independence, there were some patriots who pursued glorification in the name of patriotism.

Generally, in *Rambuai* novel, the reflection of patriotism is exposed through the underground army as the protagonists in *Rambuai* novel usually belonged to the underground army. In Zikpuii Pa's *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* the protagonist Chhuanvawra has no involvement in the MNF movement, but his love for his country is no less patriotic than those of the underground army. He courageously encountered the counter insurgency measures taken by the Indian Government in Mizoram. He loved the Mizo people as much as he loved his country, he strongly protested against the brutal killings of innocent civilians and he openly condemned the act of sexual assaults committed by the army. He utilized every chance that he could get to proclaim and reveal the suffering of his people even while he was outside Mizoram as he admitted the suffering of the Mizo people was also his own suffering. From the account of Chhuanvawra, it is found that without the influence of

political movement, if an individual acquires a sense of belonging to his nation, the spirit of patriotism involuntarily comes into existence as the situations demands.

It has often been orally narrated that women also paid a high price during the struggle for Mizoram independence. Since Mizo society, the narration of female participation in the struggle for freedom is often left unappreciated. The dominant male role exalts supremacy of patriarchal ideals as valid and substantive. Therefore, *Rambuai* novel plays role as it narrates women's' attitudes toward patriotism; the fictional women characters in *Rambuai* novel represent how Mizo women showed their patriotic fervour in accordance to the situational demands. In Dokhuma's *Rinawmin* and *Silaimu Ngaihawm*, the female protagonists and other minor female characters silently show their patriotic fervour for the land and show their support for the underground army by passively acting as encouragers, supporters and providers of their needs. In Mafeli's *Nghilh Har Kan Tuar*, it can be observed that two women Thuami and Kungliani sacrificed their chastity to the army in order to save the lives of some underground army who were nearly starved to death. In L.Z.Sailo's *Rose Par Vul Ve Ta Rih Lo Chu*, the protagonist Thansangi joined the underground movement and she was very useful for propagating the MNF movement policy amongst the various Mizo clans who dwelt in the bordering country of Mizoram. Therefore, the study discloses that women characters who risk their lives in supplying foodstuffs and supporting the underground army for the sake of Mizoram independence represent the fact that the often neglected Mizo women have their own stories of insurgency that are worthy of studying and retelling just as the patriotic stories of the Mizo men.

The collective trauma studied in *Rambuai* novel shows that people had undergone loneliness and bereavement due to village grouping. The night curfews almost became a norm in Mizoram and the Mizos experienced a drastic change in their lifestyle; it changed the social structure and traditions and simultaneously, night life was frightfully quiet with the expectation of ensuing dangers. This change also resulted in the double fold sufferings due to deaths in the family, caused either by the armed forces or the underground army. The trauma further brought about different social vices to the fore resulting in social degeneration. The people who earlier had idolized the army personnel were petrified of them. On the other hand, wherever the underground forces set foot, the people were always filled with unease and dread due to their own sufferings for the sake of the volunteers. For the Mizos such psychological experiences were amplified since there was the ever present danger of angering the underground forces. Since every action taken by the civilians was at the risk of their own lives, their burden was therefore double fold. Almost every neighbour was suspected of being an informant and such suspicions broke the social spirit of integration that had always existed earlier. In the economic sphere, women folks were frequently forced to look out for the family which often forced them to practice anti-social activities. Many established merchants lost their livelihoods as their merchandise were seized by tough villagers who seek survival in Aizawl town. Since educational institutions had to be closed down, students having bright futures lost not only their careers but also their lives as some had joined the underground force.



The individual sufferings that are depicted in *Rambuai* novel vividly capture the emotional and psychological agony and misery that an individual had to undergo; it has been often neglected and silenced by non-fiction writers. *Rambuai* novel narrates how misery, pain, agony, despair, poverty, anger, unworthiness, loneliness, fear and loss of identity impairs an individual while these elements at the same time gives a new perspective in Mizo literature in relation to how one perceives the traumatic experiences of *Rambuai*. The Mizo culture, prior to *Rambuai*, was regarded as a safe haven for Mizo women. This was again, contested by *Rambuai* and its ill effects; the significant obtuseness depicted through the fate of the characters in the *Rambuai* novels. *Rambuai* novels further show how the concept of Mizo culture adds to the sufferings of Mizo women during *Rambuai*. It may also be noted that *Rambuai* novels coherently depict the emotional turmoil that man undergoes during violent and restless times and how education is discontinued due to the sufferings and poverty of the people encountering the violent phase.

Prior to the year 1966, the element of patriotism as a genre in Mizo fiction was not focused by fiction writers although some reflections of patriotism were from time to time inserted in other Mizo literary genres. However, the outbreak of *Rambuai* in 1966 brought patriotic fervour to some Mizo fiction writers which in turn paved the way for the emergence of patriotism in Mizo novel. The most distinct facet that defines patriotism during *Rambuai* period is related to the question, how does one wins in his fight for the independence of Mizoram, and one's attempt in fighting back those who violate against the movement. While many patriotic youths dare to fight with honour and dare to sacrifice their own lives, there were some patriots who

took pride in commanding the underground forces. Hence the idea of patriotism turned to be a burden for the civilians. However, the fight for the cause of independence had its marginality; every Mizo could not yearn for Mizoram independence if they did not corroborate with the MNF movement. Besides, patriotism could be one of the most brutal act for civilians who were being assaulted by the underground army; the informers' plight. The study shows that among the patriots who fervently fight for the cause of Mizoram independence, some patriots attempted to derive honour, and gain advantage of the independence achieved by Mizoram, and this sentiment could had great consequences in their lives. Among the patriots, some yearn only for Mizoram independence and were dissatisfied with just the signing of Mizoram Peace Accord. As their patriotic fervor for the independence of their land still resided in their hearts such perceived notions compelled some underground personnel to rebel against their own people. *Rambuai* novel also vividly shows that people who did not support the MNF movement were nevertheless inspired to love their homeland as the struggle takes its toll. Consequently, *Rambuai* not only sow seeds of patriotism among men but also among many Mizo women. Many Mizo women were ardent supporters; although loyal to the movement they did not exhibit their loyalty in the physical fights. They on the other hand encouraged the men to move forward in order to reach the goal. Therefore, *Rambuai* novel coherently depicts that though women were not armed with weapons during *Rambuai*, the way they struggled for their land is no less patriotic than the struggles of men. Therefore, Mizo women of the *Rambuai* era also deserve to be regarded as patriots as they have their own story of insurgency that are worthy of mention.

Comparatively, all the select novels depict fictitious characters yet to a great extent relate the real life incidents of the *Rambuai* era. In *Zorami* written by Malsawmi Jacob, the perspective highlighted is on the female issues in connection with the *Rambuai* incidents. This feminist perspective especially focuses on the rape of Zorami by an army personnel at the young age of thirteen. Due to the rape the protagonist Zorami is distraught and faces many difficulties; psychological worries and anxieties, social stigmatization, alienation and self degradation. Her own father degrades her as an unworthy human garbage, that offensively and painfully add to the sufferings of the young woman. Jacob depicts the injustice, especially the rape of women by the army that remains silent in many orally retold and written stories about *Rambuai*. These untold stories about the army rape obstruct the progress and development of the victims who have outlived *Rambuai*. Through the protagonist in her novel, Jacob stresses the importance and deliverance of help and assistance during the *Rambuai* era.

James Dokhuma in *Rinawmin* as an ardent supporter of the MNF Movement focuses on the incidents at the Nowgong Jail in the 1970's during his time as a prisoner. Since he writes under the pressures of the ongoing *Rambuai*, he is careful and about the setting of the novel. The author omits citing the real names of the characters involved and places where the incidents have occurred. On the other hand, in *Rinawmin*, Dokhuma illustrates the hardships and difficulties faced by the Mizo people during *Rambuai* and its after effects. Through Rozuala, the author stresses the importance of true patriotic zeal in order to gain freedom. In his fight for the freedom of Mizoram Rozuala faithfully upholds the MNF motto '*Pathian leh kan ram tan*';

‘For God and the land’, and he die fighting for Mizoram. The author also depicts the enmity that can arise amongst the different Mizo tribes due to the ideal and ideals of patriotism.

*Silaimu Ngaihawm* is written by James Dokhuma after the end of Rambuai in 1992. Through the life of female protagonist Ramliani, the author depicts the hardships and distressful plights of the Mizo women after Rambuai. The subordination of women in Mizo society adds to the horrible situation of *Rambuai* turmoil. The novel through the protagonist Ramliani denotes how the women experience double alienation; the inexpressibility Mizo unmarried women to declare the man they love and the inability grieve for the person they love.

*Nunna Kawng Thuampuih* written in 1989 by Zikpuii Pa is the only first person narration among the select novels. Zikpuii Pa depicts the terrible, deplorable anxiety ridden plight of the Mizo women during and after *Rambuai*; apprehension of the armies and the Mizo male degradation, humiliation and scorn focused and delivered on the Mizo female army rape victims. The female mental and physical distraught experienced by the raped victims are clearly focussed the author. Further, Zikpuii Pa narrates the incident of the raped victim who is sold to a Bombay brothel where she serves as a prostitute, and later sent to a Bombay Five Star Hotel as a prostitute for three years.

C. Laizawna in *Thuruk* focuses on the importance and necessity of maintaining secrecy, faithfulness, and to stand firm to the pledge that has been taken by the underground army. He highlights the greatness of the patriots through the character of the protagonist Lalmuana. Focus is also made on some of the

underground army men who have forsaken their pledge and surrendered to the Indian army. Since the novel is written during the *Rambuai* era, the actual sites; names and places of the setting is concealed throughout the novel.

C. Laizawna's *In Hrang* is about the contemporary issues of *Rambuai* written 1986. The protagonist Thansiamia is unable to comprehend the futility of the freedom struggle that finally culminates in the Peace Accord that is signed between the MNF and Central India. Thansiamia is heartbroken and he feels dejected on the whole issue of the struggle for freedom. He remains a fighter for the freedom of Mizoram till the end of the novel.

Vanneihluanga's *Pu Khuma* written in 2002, deals with the current issues of *Rambuai*; grouping of villages, social demoralization and disheartenment, fear of the army, famine, and female prostitution to the army due to want of food. The author also denotes the mental anxieties of the Mizo males who are unable to protect their families and land.

In *Nghilh Har Kan Tuar* written in 2010, the female author Mafeli focuses on the disparity face by the people of East Lungdar due to *Rambuai*. She highlights incidents experienced by Mizo women; degradation, subordination and humiliation. Focus is also given on the betrayers of the MNF and the Mizo people and how many women helped the underground forces in the fight for the freedom of Mizoram.

Finally, *Rambuai* based and its related novels are not merely reflection of *Rambuai*, it also stand as the consolation for both the readers and the writers, especially who have gone through the dark twenty years of *Rambuai*. *Rambuai* had left an indelible scar which might not be visible to the public eye. Readers of *Rambuai* novel, most of whom have not experienced the suffering of the time, will be able to share empathy for these sufferings, unfelt by those who have not experienced it. In conclusion, it is found that patriotism affects males and females differently. The females being ardent supporters, although loyal to the movement do not exhibit their loyalty in the physical fights. They on the other hand encourage the men to move forward to reach the goal.

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- (iii) *Mizo Hlaa Mizo Hmeichhe HLa Phuah Thiamte Dinhmun Thlirna* in *Mizo Studies* (A Quarterly Refereed Journal) Vol.1 No.2, July – September, 2013.
- (iv) *Emergence and Development of Rambuai Fiction in Mizo Literature* in *Mizo Studies* (A Quarterly Refereed Journal) Vol. IX No.3, July-September, 2020.

A CRITICAL STUDY OF RAMBUAI IN SELECTED MIZO NOVELS

ABSTRACT

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## A Critical Study of Rambuai in Selected Mizo Novels

### Abstract

The word *Rambuai* is very popular among the Mizos as the term has significant and poignant meaning in the hearts of the Mizos. In the Mizo language *ram* means land and *buai* refers to disturbance. Therefore, the word coinage *Rambuai* may mean land disturbance. Thus, for the convenience of this research, the word *Rambuai* will particularly refer to Mizoram disturbance during 1966 to 1986. David Truman, in his *Disturbance Theory*, expresses the word disturbance as:

A political postulation that states that interest groups form primarily when there are changes in social environment that upsets the well beings some groups of people. An example could be scarcity in resources, a change in power/policy that some people object to, etc. In addition, interest group can form in opposition to other interest groups so as to counteract in their respective political domains. (n.pag)

As Truman states in his theory that the main reasons of *Rambuai* is the negligence of the Government of India to support the needy people of Mizo District who suffered a great famine due to *Mautam* in 1959. *Mautam* means bamboo flowering and it generally occurs in Mizoram after every fifty years. *Mautam* is invariably followed by a plague of rats that devour the rice crops and cause famine. Since the famine strikes at regular intervals, it is certain to the Mizos that the next *Mautam* famine will certainly fall in the year 1959 as the last *Mautam* occurred in Mizoram in 1911. Due to this certainty of *Mautam* famine in the near future, the anti-

famine campaign organization was established and immediately a campaign was launched against the *Mautam* famine, This campaign was not successful as both the Central Government and the Government of Assam did not take the situation seriously. For this reason, frustration towards the Indian Government was instilled in the hearts of the Mizos, and they started to question why they were so neglected and abandoned by the Government of Assam and the Central Government. Besides, Chawngsailova states, “the feeling of separatism which had been nurtured so long in the mind of the people got erupted taking advantage primarily of the economics discontent” (44).

In his *Untold Atrocity*, Zama, the writer of MNF movement history states that in 1960 a new organisation called Mizo National Famine Front (MNFF) was formed to effectively counter the *Mautam* famine in 1960. Consequently, after the end of *Mautam* famine, the MNFF was formed as a political party on 22<sup>nd</sup> Oct. 1961 and named Mizo National Front (MNF). The main objective of the Mizo National Front party is to struggle for the independence of Mizoram as a sovereign state and to unite all Mizo clans under one political umbrella (8).

Since the MNF party had started functioning as a political party, it carefully studied the political history of the Mizos and eventually decided that if it still remained as a part of India, it would be due to political immaturity, ignorance and lack of consciousness of Mizo fate. The MNF thus decided that there were only two options, either to remain as a part of India or to live as a free nation. Chawngsailova says, “Therefore, the MNF launched an armed struggle movement on 28<sup>th</sup> February,

1966 in order to free the Mizos against the oppression of the Indian Government”

(41). And he further states:

By the midnight of 28 February 1966, the *Operation Jericho* was carried out as planned simultaneously at Aizawl, Kolasib, Serchhip, Lunglei and many other places capturing Indian army posts, security posts, police stations and 5<sup>th</sup> BSF Camp, . . . Within a few moments after *zero hour*, the MNF declared Mizoram Independence. (51)

No sooner had the Mizo National Front declared independence against the Indian Government; the Central Government was immediately alerted about the armed revolt in the Mizo District. In urgent response to the MNF’s armed struggle and to control the situation of Mizo District:

The Government of India sent military forces to counter the MNF movement in Mizo District. The whole district was declared a ‘Disturbed Area’ under Assam Disturbed Area Act of 1955. Besides, the Armed Forces (Assam and Manipur) Special Power Act of 1958 was also in force in the District. (53)

The thesis is divided into five chapters as follows:

### **Chapter I: Introduction**

This chapter deals with the introductory aspects of *Rambuai* with a brief outline of *Rambuai* novel writers and their works. Consequently, this chapter focuses

on the overview of *Rambuai* discourse and a brief history of *Rambuai* issues. Thus the scope of *Rambuai* novel is quite vast and there are different kinds of *Rambuai* novel; therefore, the study propose to examine and analyze select *Rambuai* novel namely: *Rinawmin* (1976), *Silaimu Ngaihawm* (1990) written by James Dokhuma, *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* (1989) written by Zikpui Pa, *Thuruk* (1985), *In Hrang* (1986) written by C.Laizawna, *Rose Par Vul Ve Ta Rih Lo Chu* (2005) written by Capt.L.Z.Sailo, *Pu Khuma* (2002) written by Vanneihluanga. *Nghilhar Kan Tuar* (2010) written by Mafeli, and *Zorami* (2015) written by Malsawmi Jacob. *Rambuai* may be considered as an important milestone of the political history of Mizoram, but the result was devastating as the whole land was engulfed by the atrocities that Mizo history had never witnessed. Finally, after many attempts and efforts to have the peace talks; the political leaders, representatives of Non-Government Organization like Church, the student organisation called Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP), and Young Mizo Association (YMA) etc. *Rambuai* came to an end when the Peace Accord was signed between the Mizo National Front movement and the Government of India in 30 June 1986.

In view of the world literature, war and its related events are no doubt important factors that enriched different genre of literature. The French Revolution, The American War of Independence, The Glorious Revolution, The October Revolution, The Revolt of 1857, World War I and II are well known historical events that produced numerous literary works in the form of poetry, fiction and non-fiction. Dickens wrote his famous novel *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) based on The French Revolution, *A Farewell to Arms* (1921) is a novel by Ernest Hemingway set during

the Italian campaign of World War I. *All The Lights we Cannot See* written by Anthony Doerr is a novel based on World War II and won 2015 Pulitzer Prize for fiction, and *The Siege of Krishnapur* (1973) is a novel by J.G. Farrell set during The Revolt of 1857, inspired by events such as the sieges of Cawnapore (Kanpur) and Lucknow. Significantly, *Rambuai* and its related aspect that are reflected in Mizo fiction contributed to the richness of Mizo literature. Moreover, writers who had written *Rambuai* novel have elevated the value of Mizo novel. The Mizo Academy of Letters had even awarded the Book of the Year title to four fictions based on *Rambuai* such as: *Beiseina Mittui* (2010) written by Samson Thanruma, *Thinglubul* (2013) written by Lalpekkima, *Kawlkil Piah Lamtluang* (2015) written by C.Lalnunchanga, and *Falung* (2019) written by Lalengzauva.

In Mizo literature, war and its related incidents are also important sources of literary works, and the reflections of such wars and its related events can be seen in poetry, drama, and fiction. In *Mizo Poetry* Thanmawia says:

One of the forces which did most to shape Mizo life for nearly three centuries was the frequent war with the neighbouring tribes or the wars among themselves. As such, the Mizos have several war chants and songs on the triumph over their enemies. If the Mizo pasaltha killed his enemy, he had to trample the dead body under his foot, declaring his own name and would chant Bawhhla (War chant). (49)

In his article “The Other Side of Silence: Women’s Narratives within Rambuai Literature” published in *Emergent Identities in Literature*, Vanchiau says:

The Mizo National Front independence movement of 1966, commonly known as ‘rambuai’ (years of trouble), has generated a strong body of ‘Rambuai Literature’, covering both ‘MNF narrative and ‘non-MNF narratives in the form of fiction and non-fiction. (63)

Subsequently, some Mizo writers were of the opinion that it was time to classify the different kinds of *Rambuai* depicted in Mizo fiction. Vanchiau opined that “All Mizo fiction related to Rambuai can be termed as Rambuai Fiction” (81). Vanchiau further noted that one aspect of creative writing; *Rambuai* fiction will in future encapsulate all fictions that are written in relation to the insurgent period. The coverage of *Rambuai* novel is thus quite vast as the nature and importance of *Rambuai* in Mizo novel differs in myriad ways; therefore, it would be better to classify them into two kinds; (i) fiction based on *Rambuai* as *Rambuai* based novel, and (ii) *Rambuai* related novel. In *Rambuai* based novel, the writer uses *Rambuai* as the setting of the novel wherein *Rambuai* has a huge impact in the life of the characters. The ambiance of the narrative is usually dark and gloomy. The setting and some characters are usually taken from real life and the historical fact is given importance. In *Rambuai* related novel, the author of the novel depicts some *Rambuai* atmosphere and its related aspects. In such writings, some *Rambuai* issues that do not have deep impact of *Rambuai* are depicted through the characters. The plot of the narrative utilizes *Rambuai* in order to make the story interesting. Thus, such fictions can be categorised under the umbrella of *Rambuai* related novel.

The publication of *Rambuai* and its related novels were much greater in number during the 21<sup>st</sup> century than the 20<sup>th</sup> century (during the year 1976 to 1999).

During these 34 years, twenty fictions of *Rambuai* and its related novels were published. Nevertheless, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, during the year 2000-2019, there were publications of forty *Rambuai* and its related novels. Therefore, between 1976 and 2019, all together there were 65 *Rambuai* and its related novels. However, with all the other *Rambuai* novels which were published through hard work, there seemed to be eighty published *Rambuai* and its related novels. Thus, it may be noted that during the span of five decades (1976-2019), there had always been an average publication of one or two *Rambuai* based or *Rambuai* related novels in a year.

The individual sufferings and collective sufferings endured by the people was what brought about the birth of *Rambuai* novel. The ensuing destitution was not of someone's choice, but due to a just cause; that the assault on personal rights, and all the mental stress may be pardoned was one of the intent in *Rambuai* novel. What most writers have omitted in regards to Mizoram disturbance was how a majority of the Mizos had suffered.

## **Chapter II: Collective Trauma in *Rambuai* Novel**

This chapter focuses on the elements of collective trauma in *Rambuai* novel; the predominant feature that exposes the psychological and physical hardships endured by the Mizo community during *Rambuai*. It discusses the issues connected with trauma; village grouping, army rapes, armed forces and underground forces. It also examines *Rambuai* effects on farmers, merchants and students. The night curfew and its consequences that changed the traditional, cultural and social norms of the Mizos are also discussed. It also shows how collective trauma has created vices like distrust, selfishness, and other negative psychological attributes.

The collective trauma in *Rambuai* novel reveals that *Rambuai* had multiple effects on the Mizo society and community. Since the exposure of the sufferings depicted by the writers are taken from accounts that they themselves have experienced, or based on the narratives of those who have been victims, *Rambuai* novel is therefore, able to convey a clear and precise picture, of how the minds of the people have been deeply affected by the insurgency. Ganie and Jaishri Chouhan in their article entitled “Insurgency has Generated a State of Mental Trauma in Kashmir” state, “Globally, mental health disorders are the chief causes of illness and disability. Mental illness leads to declined productivity and also put adverse impact on the quality of life effected individuals and their families.” (33). Further, Mizo historians who wrote about *Rambuai* have stressed on the various physical sufferings endured by the people, they have been neglectful in highlighting how the grouping of the villages have deeply affected the minds of the people and thereby have changed their mindset. Alexander states, “When members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways.”(304). Therefore, *Rambuai* novel exposes how the Mizo people are greatly affected socially and mentally by the grouping of villages which most historians have failed to mention.

### **Chapter III: Individual Trauma in *Rambuai* Novel**

This chapter deals with the psychological aspect of *Rambuai* related to individual trauma. It examines the traumatic experiences of the community at large and narrows down to the individuals as the *Rambuai* experiences are utilized in the



*Rambuai* novel; real life sufferings are depicted and emphasized through the fictional characters; loneliness, anxiety, fear and poverty. Suicidal tendencies exhibited by the rape victims during *Rambuai* are reflected by the life-like caricatures in the *Rambuai* novels. It also notes the various kinds of sufferings that women undergo during the *Rambuai* period. The chaotic experiences that reduced man to helpless state is also discussed.

*Rambuai* trauma is examined on the basis of the sufferings of men and women echoed in the *Rambuai* novels. Generally, writers of *Rambuai* novel are very keen towards individual sufferings and such descriptions are more elaborate compared to the collective sufferings portrayed by the writers. The traumatic experiences of the community during the insurgency are utilized as a backdrop to their stories in which real life individual sufferings are emphasized through fictional characters. The study denotes that one of the most traumatic experiences endured by Mizo women during *Rambuai* is army rape, and discusses the attitude of Mizo society towards such rape victims. In Zikpui Pa's *Nunna Kawnghtuam Puiah*, and Jacob's *Zorami*, the study finds that women who were victims of army rape during *Rambuai* were mentally traumatized. They felt that their dignity had been ripped off violently that in turn simultaneously afflicted the victims with horror and fear. At the same time, it is also found that Zikpui Pa, Jacob and Vanneihluanga represent the sufferings of male protagonists and other minor male characters. They also depict Mizo males as the protectors and saviours of the rape victims in their stories in order to show that Mizo men are responsible in safeguarding the dignity of Mizo women.

*Rambuai* novel also denotes that suicidal tendencies were often exhibited by women who were victims of army rape. In Zikpuii Pa's *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, one of his female characters Pi Kungliani, who suffered army gang rape committed suicide by hanging herself. This drastic act was committed by her as she thought that she had no reason to live after her husband was brutally killed by the army. In his article "Insurgency in Mizoram: Causes and Consequences", Zahluna states, "The atrocities committed by the security forces on the Mizos were innumerable. The security forces acted without limitation upon the Mizos by killing, raping girls and even married women, . . . ." (229). Therefore, it may be assumed that many married women who survived the army rape during *Rambuai* although physically alive, exhibited suicidal tendencies. Since such negative psychological desires frequently recurred in their thoughts, it may be assumed that such victims were living a dead life.

#### **Chapter IV: Patriotism in *Rambuai* Novel**

This chapter analyzes the element of patriotism displayed by Mizo men during the *Rambuai* period through the study of the various male characters of *Rambuai* novels. Women's participation and contributions during *Rambuai* that has often been a silent area is discussed; depicted by the *Rambuai* novels female characters. The study through the fictional characters also highlights the lingering patriotic desire to fight for Mizoram independence that the Peace Accord did not fulfil.

Prior to the year 1966, the element of patriotism as a genre in Mizo novel was not focused by fiction writers although some reflections of patriotism were from

time to time inserted in other Mizo literary genres. However, the outbreak of *Rambuai* in 1966 brought patriotic fervour to some Mizo fiction writers which in turn paved the way for the emergence of patriotism in Mizo fiction. In *Rambuai* novels, most of the male protagonists are strong supporters of the MNF movement. The MNF movement and its objectives deeply influenced them and they are also strongly bound by the MNF movement motto ‘*Pathian leh kan ram tan*’ (For God and our country). Their ultimate goal is to fight for Mizoram independence till their last breath. Therefore, in order to honour the true patriots who remained faithful to their land during Mizoram disturbance, *Rambuai* novel writers like Dokhuma, Laizawna and Lalnunthara so much valorised the spirit of loyalty to the land in their fictions through their fictional characters. The last words of the dying protagonists in Dokhuma’s *Rinawmin* and *Silaimu Ngaihawm*, and Laizawna’s minor character in *Thuruk* was ‘Faithfully, for God and our country’, that was uttered by the protagonists even in the last minutes of their lives while they were in the hands of the army. Therefore, it may be remarked that *Rambuai* novel writers set a standard of Mizo patriotism through the faithfulness of their characters.

## **Chapter V: Conclusion**

This chapter derives to the summation of the research in the discourse of *Rambuai* in Mizo novel. The chaotic *Rambuai* that reduced the Mizo community to a helpless state is discussed and the findings of the research are highlighted in this concluding chapter.

In spite of the painful experiences, *Rambuai* certainly contributed to the richness of Mizo literature, especially Mizo novel as the affliction, agony, distress,

and torment in respect to Mizo community are poignantly depicted. Within five decades since the outbreak of *Rambuai* in 1966, fictions that deal with *Rambuai* and its related issues may be termed as *Rambuai* novel as the influences of *Rambuai* are depicted in the fictions. It contains different approaches and interpretations which brings to light multiple and distinctive pictures of Mizo insurgency and its impact.

Most of *Rambuai* novels depict the sufferings of the Mizo people in general, and grieves of individuals who had suffered at the hands of the Indian military, and the underground volunteers, and those that rose against the underground volunteers due to personal hatred. Many years have elapsed after these incidents, but the trauma still lingers for the victims and even their descendants, and that is one of the important reasons why such life like incidents and characters have emerged again in *Rambuai* novel.

The rise of *Rambuai* novel under Mizo fiction may be attributed to patriotic fervour and reunification of the various Mizo clans who had drifted apart and had lost their common roots. The first *Rambuai* novel, *Rinawmin* published in 1976 written by James Dokhuma was the first Mizo novel which related the element of patriotism. The element of romance between young people mostly occupies a significant place in *Rambuai* novel. However, the element of romance is highly significant in illustrating the life-changing aspects affecting the individual and the society, by clearly highlighting the struggles and hardships faced by the people. They also depict to a great extent the real life concept of patriotism felt by the Mizos and the helpless state of the Mizo communities during *Rambuai*.

The fictional characters of the *Rambuai* novel reflect the traumatic experiences of individuals and of the community during *Rambuai*. Thus, the present study carefully examines the felt traumatic experiences of individuals and of the communities, depicted in *Rambuai* novel. *Rambuai* novel portrays the different perspectives and new insights on the grouping of villages, and its effects upon the Mizo people. In Dokhuma's *Rinawmin* and *Silaimu Ngaihawm*, it may be noted that due to the village grouping, many Mizo people suffered the psychological dilemma of loneliness and nostalgia; compared to the youth the elderly people had suffered more loneliness.

Due to the impoverish conditions during the grouping of villages, many people betrayed their own people. This subsequently increased the level of severity of trauma suffered by Mizo community. It may also be stated that the effect of *Rambuai* can still be seen in relation to the degradation of honesty from which Mizo society till today has not yet recovered. People of grouped villages were insecure and submissive. Even their freedom to talk about their own rights was taken away. Unity in the society was fractured and people became selfish. Therefore, grouping of villages seems to be one of the most traumatic events that Mizo people suffered during *Rambuai*; grouping of villages greatly annihilated Mizo traditional, cultural norms, and it invariably seems to result in many adverse effects on the social structure.

The night curfews imposed by the army during *Rambuai* caused a desperate quiet and restlessness among Mizo people who love to socialize since Mizo society is a closely knitted society from their ancestors. The curfew thus violated Mizo

community values, cultural and traditional norms. On the other hand, the violation of curfew by civilian had to be met by punishments. In L.Z.Sailo's *Rose Par Vul Ve Ta Rih Lo Chu*, while curfew was a heavy burden especially for the people who lived in rural areas, yet in Lalhmingliana's *Nukawki Fanu*, it is seen that curfew was only a mild restriction for some wealthy people who lived in urban areas, especially people who lived in Aizawl town. This indicates that the consequences of the night curfews were quite different because of location, social and economic status of individual in the community.

Another trauma collectively suffered by the Mizo people is fear of the army and the underground army. Mizo people were said to be courageous, but with the outbreak of *Rambuai*, they gradually lost their courage due to the horrendous military actions of the Indian Government. The dread and horror turned to hate as Mizo women of varied ages were mercilessly raped by the armed personnel. In Vanneihluanga's *Pu Khuma*, the author remarks that the army need not set out their foot in search of people who were hiding in the forest; a slight rumour was enough to drive them home.

In Jacob's *Zorami* and Laizawna's *Thuruk*, it is seen that adult and children feared the army alike. It is sad to note that fear in the Mizo mindset was doubled as the Mizo people also suffered at the hands of underground army. Although this area is sadly neglected by many writers, yet one can understand the trauma of fear and horror imposed on the Mizo people through the writings of few novelists who mentioned the civilians' fear of the underground army. In Mafeli's *Nghilh Har Kan Tuar*, it may be observed that all villagers would be in distress if there was any

rumour regarding the presence of the underground army personnel; the whole community would wish for their speedy departure. If the army knew the mere presence of underground army personnel in the village, the village could face many consequences; the village could be burned to ashes, they could be caught in crossfire, the men could be captured and interrogated and even the women would not be safe. Since all these factors were in the minds of the people of the community, they felt much agitated. Dokhuma's *Rinawmin* depicts the actions of radicals among the underground forces. Therefore, it may be assumed that due to the fear of the army and underground army, the civilians lived their lives as if they were trapped in between the hammer and the anvil during the conflict period.

Apart from the fear of the military presence and the underground army many of the *Rambuui* novel depict the presence of 'kawktu' which means informant or informer. These people belonged to the same community and the result was that there was suspicion within the community. Everyone had to be cautious of even their close relatives. *Rambuui* novel writers all seem to echo the peoples' scorn and condemnation of the *kawktu* that extend to the families of *kawktu* who also had to undergo public condemnation, loss of trust and dignity within the Mizo community. This seems to indicate the fact that the *kawktu* had wounded many Mizo hearts and the wound is like an ongoing process that does not heal even after the end of *Rambuui*.

All farmers, servicemen and merchants were affected by *Rambuui* in their respective economic system. The social equilibrium was affected since many men had joined the movement. On the other hand, many others were imprisoned or had to

lose their lives in the hands of the resultant military operation with the result that some women folks were forced to look out for their families which often forced them to practice anti-social activities.

Big merchants and businessmen left Mizoram and sought refuge in various parts of the North Eastern regions, and simultaneously many villagers in Mizoram moved to Aizawl during the absence of the big merchants and businessmen in Aizawl due to scarcity of food and starvation because of the grouping of villages. This in turn provided the necessary step for the villagers to assimilate in Aizawl as businessmen. This is illustrated in Lalhmingliana's *Nukawki Fanu*; many tough villagers who moved to Aizawl in order to seek survival from *Rambuai* consequences utilized the opportunity in the absence of the permanent businessman of Aizawl, and they captured the situation for their benefits. Therefore, it may be surmised for some families that *Rambuai* is a road to perdition, while it proved to be a means to climb the social ladder for some others.

It is also found that both within and outside Mizoram, the insurgency affected learning and education in different ways. All educational institutions had to be closed down for almost three years and a majority of the youth who had joined the MNF movement were students. Therefore, many students forfeited their studies and while some took up unintended paths, others lost their lives.

It may also be remarked that many Mizo women suffered the pain of loneliness, as their beloved(s) had to join the underground army during the conflict period. As depicted in *Rambuai* novels, it is obvious that young maidens were more affected with loneliness compared to men. Dokhuma's *Silaimu Ngaihawm*, reveals



that due to the influences of Mizo culture and the dark circumstances of *Rambuai*, the female protagonist Ramliani silently mourned her beloved Sanglura, who died during the exchange of gun fire between the army and the underground army. Therefore, being bound by both Mizo culture and *Rambuai* circumstances, Ramliani chose to remain silent, and she preferred to be consoled with an object that reminds her of her beloved Sanglura. Thus, it may be stated that Ramliani's account reveals that the status of women in Mizo society was a heavy burden for Mizo women during the turbulent *Rambuai* period.

It may also be denoted that many women suffered individual trauma as they were victims of army rape during *Rambuai*. They were mentally traumatized as they felt that their dignity had been ripped off violently. Since the rape victims suffered double burden, it may be assumed that the attitude of Mizo community towards rape victims is one sided; social discrimination of the rape victims, and on the other hand, the misfortune of rape (not by choice) faced by the victim is often neglected. The study also finds that army rape victims of the *Rambuai* era often exhibited suicidal tendency. Thus, it is found that such negative psychological desires frequently recurred in the thought of female rape victims and it may be assumed that such victims were living a dead life. In Zikpuii Pa's *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, and Jacob's *Zorami*, the female protagonists; Ngurtahnsangi and Zorami in both fictions, after they were raped by the army, both Zorami's father and Ngurthansangi's father treated their daughters as damaged goods after they were rape victims. At the same time, it is also found that Zikpuii Pa, Jacob and Vanneihluanga represent the male

protagonist as the protector and saviour of the rape victims in their stories in order to show that Mizo men are responsible in safeguarding the dignity of Mizo women.

Jacob's *Zorami* and Vanneihluanga's *Pu Khuma*, both depict the human psychological conditions of *Rambuai* victims, and the reaction of some survivors. Through the life-like characters it is seen that some endure their psychological pains due to the desire of taking revenge. In *Zorami*, the writer Jacob reflected the desire of taking revenge through the character Hmingliana who was accused by his trusted friend of helping the underground army by giving them financial aid that resulted in his four years of imprisonment; Hmingliana could not take his revenge due to his Christian belief. On the other hand in *Pu Khuma*, the character Khuma was unable to take revenge against the army personnel who gang raped his wife as he was the sole provider of his family.

It is found that the chaotic *Rambuai* reduced the Mizo men to a state where he was not in a position to defend and protect not only his home but also his wife and children from the atrocities experienced during *Rambuai*. This brought a sense of shame and subordination to the male that faced such situation during *Rambuai* as depicted by the character Pu Vanmawia in Jacob's *Zorami* and *Khuma* in Vanneihluanga's *Pu Khuma*.

The individual sufferings that are depicted in *Rambuai* fiction vividly capture the emotional and psychological agony and misery that an individual had to undergo; it has been often neglected and silenced by non-fiction writers. *Rambuai* novel narrates how misery, pain, agony, despair, poverty, anger, unworthiness, loneliness, fear and loss of identity impairs an individual while these elements at the

same time gives a new perspective in Mizo literature in relation to how one perceives the traumatic experiences of *Rambuai*. The Mizo culture, prior to *Rambuai*, was regarded as a safe haven for Mizo women. This was again, refuted by *Rambuai* and its ill effects.

The different kinds of patriotism shown in *Rambuai* novel is firmly connected with independence for Mizoram and the mindset of its characters are also interconnected with the freedom of Mizoram. Generally, in *Rambuai* novel, the reflection of patriotism is exposed through the underground army as the protagonists in *Rambuai* novel usually belonged to the underground army. In Zikpui Pa's *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* the protagonist Chhuanvawra has no involvement in the MNF movement, but his love for his land is no less patriotic than those of the underground army. From the account of Chhuanvawra, it is found that without the influence of political movement, if an individual acquires a sense of belonging to his nation, the spirit of patriotism involuntarily comes into existence as the situations demands.

*Rambuai* instilled patriotism yet the patriotic zeal displayed by some underground army personnel triggered feelings of self-righteousness and arrogance which can prove to be a hindrance for others. Dokhuma's *Rinawmin* depicted underground forces who were willing to undergo all kinds of hardships for their cause, yet they in turn believed that no one loved their land more than they did; they believed that their sacrifices would be appreciated by all and that everyone would be willing to help them when they were in need. Such notions made them believe that they held power over all the Mizo people. If the people failed to help them, they thought that such persons were not patriotic enough. Therefore, they often exercised

their underground army power over such persons. Thus, most of the patriotic fervour of the underground army reflected in *Rambuai* novel is a heavy burden for the fictional characters that runs parallel to the feelings of real people who lived during *Rambuai*.

It has often been orally narrated that women also paid a high price during the struggle for Mizoram independence. Since Mizo society, the narration of female participation in the struggle for freedom is often left unappreciated. The dominant male role exalts supremacy of patriarchal ideals as valid and substantive. Therefore, *Rambuai* novel plays an important role as it narrates women's attitudes toward patriotism; the fictional women characters in *Rambuai* novel represent how Mizo women showed their patriotic fervour in accordance to the situational demands. In Dokhuma's *Rinawmin* and *Silaimu Ngaihawm*, the female protagonists and other minor female characters silently show their patriotic fervour for the land and show their support for the underground army by passively acting as encouragers, supporters and providers of their needs.

The most distinct facet that defines patriotism during *Rambuai* period is related to the question, how one wins in his fight for the independence of Mizoram, and one's attempt in fighting back those who violate against the movement. While many patriotic youths dared to fight with honour and dare to sacrifice their own lives, there were some patriots who took pride in commanding the underground forces. Consequently, *Rambuai* not only sow seeds of patriotism among men but also among many Mizo women. Many Mizo women were ardent supporters; although loyal to the movement they did not exhibit their loyalty in the physical fights. They on the

other hand encouraged the men to move forward in order to reach the goal. *Rambuai* fiction coherently depicts that though women were not armed with weapons during *Rambuai*, the way they struggled for their land is no less patriotic than the struggles of men. Therefore, Mizo women of the *Rambuai* era also deserve to be regarded as patriots as they have their own story of insurgency that are worthy of mention.

Further, *Rambuai* based and its related fictions are not merely reflection of *Rambuai*, it also stand as the consolation for both the readers and the writers, especially who have gone through the dark twenty years of *Rambuai*. *Rambuai* had left an indelible scar which might not be visible to the public eye. Readers of *Rambuai* novel, most of whom have not experienced the sufferings of the time, will be able to share empathy for these sufferings even though they have not experienced it.

Finally, it may be remarked that *Rambuai* based novels and *Rambuai* related novels provide a vast area that still remains unravelled. Thus it is worthy of mention that it is an interesting area of study for future research.

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