

**A STUDY OF INTERRACIAL RELATIONSHIPS IN SELECTED
MIZO FICTION**

A DISSERTATION

**SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT
OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN MIZO**

BY

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**DEPARTMENT OF MIZO
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JANUARY 2021.**

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Submitted

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement of
the Degree of Master of Philosophy in Mizo of Mizoram University, Aizawl

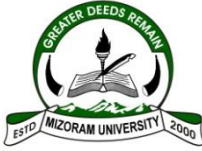


Department of Mizo

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “**A Study of Interracial Relationships in Selected Mizo Fiction**” is the bonafide research conducted by H. Lalawmpuia under my supervisor. H. Lalawmpuia worked methodically for his thesis being submitted for the degree of Master of Philosophy in the Department of Mizo, Mizoram University.

This is to further certify that he has fulfilled all the required norms laid down under the M.Phil regulations of Mizoram University. Neither the thesis as a whole or any part of it was ever submitted to any other University.

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JANUARY, 2021

DECLARATION

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

This is being submitted to Mizoram University for the degree of **Master of Philosophy in Mizo**.

Dated Aizawl

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The 28th January 2021

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Chapter – 1

Introduction

Among the Mizo community, cases of interracial marriage or conduct of courtship with non-Mizo people is not an uncommon occurrence. In recent times, however, the issue has become one of the most contested issues and has been strongly objected by Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP) and the Young Mizo Association (YMA), the two largest NGO's in the state. It has, therefore, become necessary to put an inquiry as to why this common opposition against interracial marriage has become a burning issue and to examine the hardships and adversities faced by such people who are involved in interracial marriage and its impact on their individual lives. The issue has seeped its way into debates, seminars, religious sermons, awareness campaigns and most significantly, literature. The aim of the study is to explore and examine how such issues have been reflected in Mizo fiction.

1.1. Meaning of Interracial Relationship

Interracial relationship, in the simplest term, refers to any kind of relationship built between two different races or ethnic groups. This includes any form of relationship from short-term courtship and open informal relationship to long term relationships such as marriage.

The Oxford Dictionary defines 'interracial' as 'existing between or involving different races' (474). According to Cambridge International Dictionary of English, 'interracial' is "involving different human races" (745). New Webster's Dictionary of the English Language also states that 'interracial' is 'regarding or involving persons of unlike races' (504). On a similar note, Random House Unabridged Dictionary defines 'interracial' as 'involving, or for members of different races' (998).

In light of the above definitions, interracial relationship points to a relationship built between different races, and when this relationship develops into marriage, it becomes an interracial marriage. Interracial marriage is defined by Richard C. Henriksen and Richard E. Watts in “Interracial Marriage” as, “Interracial marriage is the term used to describe marriages that take place between people who are from different racial or ethnic groups. Intercultural marriages are defined as marriages between people who come from two different cultural backgrounds” (n. pag.).

1.2. Interracial Relationships in Mizo Folk Narrative and Mizo History

The concept of interracial marriage can be seen in several Mizo folk narratives. In the popular story of “Mauruangi”, the girl Mauruangi is wedded to a certain non-Mizo Chief known as ‘*Vailal*’. *Vai* is a common term used to describe mainland Indians or foreigners. Even though the story does not provide further information regarding the detailed identity of the Chief, the word ‘*Vai*’ indicates that he belongs to another race. According to the story, the servants of the chief went in search of a wife for their master and eventually met Mauruangi. The servants said to her, “Our master is a powerful chief and we have travelled in search of the perfect wife for him. We will be pleased to have you as our queen, wouldn’t you like to be the wife of our master? You will have the luxury to eat and drink whatever you want, do whatever you please and you will never have to work again” (Lalthangliana, *Pi Pu* 427). Mauruangi accepted their offer and married the chief.

Listeners of the popular tale never blamed or condemned Mauruangi for her decision to be married to the *Vai* Chief because she was constantly tortured by her step-mother in the house. On the contrary, there is a sense of relief as her marriage provided her the much needed escape from the domestic abuse that she faced under her step-mother. Mauruangi’s involvement in an interracial marriage was never judged or condemned by the society.

In Mizo history, Lt. Col. Thomas Herbert Lewin is often claimed as the first foreinger to earn the genuine friendship and affection of the Mizo people, so much so that he was given a Mizo name “Thangliana” (*Thuhlaril* 126). Lewin came to India in 1957 and was appointed as the Superintendent of the Chittagong Hill Tracts in 1864 (126) where he came into contact with the people of Mizoram.

Lewin was married to a Mizo woman named Dari, whose full name is not known. Different sources claimed her full name as Darthuami, Darlaili or Darthangi and her correct full name is not known (Ralte, *Thangliana* 196). According to Lalhrualtuanga Ralte, “Thangliana never mentioned about his marriage in his autobiography or in any of the letters that he sent to friends and relatives. It can neither be found in any official government records” (196). However, countless oral sources confirmed Lewin’s marriage to a Mizo woman named Dari.

In 1872, Lewin was appointed as the Superintendent (*Bawrhshap*) of Chittagong Hill Tracts (Ralte, *Zoram* 106). It was said that he often paid a visit to Dari’s house. Initially, Dari was apprehended by the white-skinned man. However, Thangliana continued to show his affection through gifts. After a year of trying to win her favour, Dari eventually agreed to marry him with the consent of her family (Ralte, *Thangliana* 198). The wedding was said to have taken place sometime in mid-1872 (197). In the year 1873, the villagers built a house for the married couple in a hillock called *Sirte* in Tlabung village where they continued to live together. Dari bore him a son. However, tragedy befell them and their son died even before he was able to walk (197).

When the time came for him to return to his country, ‘Lewin attempted to take his Mizo wife to England. However, Dari could not bear the thought of spending her entire life in a

foreign country across the seas, and he had to go back home on his own' (219). They were happily married for three years and had to leave each other due to inevitable circumstances.

This was a period in history where people would not consent to the idea of being married to a foreigner, mainly because they were afraid of village gossips and small talks. This fear explains Dari's apprehensive attitude during the early stage of their courtship. Even during the early stage of their marriage, people often talk about it behind her back (198). When Thangliana left for England, she was an unpopular candidate even for a second marriage. Lalhruitluanga Ralte writes, "People often gossip about her in whispers, and she was not accepted in certain circles because she was the widow of a white man" (282). She could not find anyone willing to help her out in the farm activities and had to tend her farm alone throughout the year. Even during festivals, every family ate the festive feasts heartily while Dari, afraid to face the crowd, coiled herself up in her house all alone (2).

Years later, the English missionary Edwin Rowlands (Mizo named Zosaphara) married his young maid Thangkungi as a result of which the couple faced extreme condemnation. Edwin Rowlands was eventually banned by the Welsh Mission Board (Lalthangliana, *Zosap* 34).

Edwin Rowlands came to Aizawl on December 31, 1907 and served as a missionary in Mizoram for eight years (Keivom 93). A complaint was filed against him by his fellow missionaries for his clandestine relationship with his Mizo maid, Thangkungi. The complaint was ultimately sent to the Welsh Mission Board in Liverpool. In 1907, he was ordered by the Board of Directors to return to England (130). Edwin Rowlands, then, left Aizawl on 22, June 1908 (Lalthangliana, *Zosap* 36).

During their stay in Mizoram, the two missionaries Zosaphluia (D.E. Jones) and Zosaphara (Edwin Rowlands) built hostels near their bungalow. In these hostels, poor

children in and around Aizawl were sheltered and fed by the two missionaries who took great care of the children. Apart from the teachings of Christianity, the children were given formal school education. Among the students was a beautiful teenager named Thangkungi who earned the affection of Edwin Rowlands (29). He would look after her as a daughter and often hold her and kiss her on the cheek, gestures which were often regarded as a common show of affection in Western society. However, the church in Mizoram, still in its initial stage and thus maintaining orthodoxy, could not overlook such kind of publicly displayed physical contact between male and female. The church, in compliance with the other missionaries, consequently lodged a complaint against Edwin Rowlands to the Welsh Mission Board in England (Keivom 130).

However, Edwin Rowlands managed to come back to Mizoram after he was called back to England and he married Thangkungi. Though the exact date of their marriage is unknown, B. Lalthangliana states that ‘it is most acceptable to believe that they were married in the beginning of 1924’ (*Zosap* 94).

It was not only the Mizo Christians who were vexed by the relationship between Edwin Rowlands and Thangkungi. According to L. Keivom, Rowland’s fellow English missionaries also kept a close eye on his affair with Thangkungi, among whom Katherine Ellen Williams (Pi Zawni), the wife of D. E. Jones (*Zosaphluia*) was considered to be the most active in spying and filing complaints against the couple (Keivom 133). In a letter that D.E Jones sent to Williams, he wrote, “Yes, European wife – then he be a good missionary” (140), expressing his wish for Rowlands to have a European wife. Therefore, this throws light on the fact that the English missionaries could not accept Rowlands’ affair with a Mizo girl as it seemed to bring down their honor and dignity as a civilized race and culture. This prompted them to take the necessary actions to intrude in the relationship between Edwin Rowlands and Thangkungi.

Commenting on the attitude of the English towards this interracial relationship between Rowlands and Thangkungi, L. Keivom observes, "... In the eyes of those who maintain rigid standards towards racial difference, Thangkungi was a Mizo woman and Edwin Rowlands was a European, both belonging to two separate worlds. And this demarcating barrier cannot be removed or erased as one pleases" (191). In this matter, the feelings of the Mizo people were no different from those of the English, which is evident in D. E Jones' remark, "Lushais were against his marrying a Lushai" (qtd. in Keivom 140).

Though the English missionaries catered to the spiritual needs of the Mizo people wholeheartedly, it was unacceptable for them to shift the racial hierarchy through such intimate acts as marriage. Their mission was to civilize the Mizo community and convert them to Christianity, not to equalize the racial and cultural hierarchy between them. This can be identified as the main reason behind their vehement opposition against Rowlands' relationship with a Mizo girl. However, as aforementioned, Edwin Rowlands and Thangkungi were married after his return to Mizoram and they continued their own missionary work in Burma (Myanmar).

T.H. Lewin and Edwin Rowlands were the first known Westerners who married Mizo women and they both faced harsh objection from their respective communities. Edwin Rowlands was expelled from Mizoram by the Welsh Mission Board because of his relationship with Thangkungi. This signifies that the British were against the idea of any form of intimacy and close domestic relationship with the people of Mizoram. The display of love and affection beyond the Christian principles was unacceptable and regarded as a form of cultural degradation. Similarly, T.H Lewin was immediately sent home to England because of his relationship with Dari. According to L. Keivom, "If we trace back Mizo history, they [Lewin and Rowlands] were the only ones who genuinely loved and cared for the Mizo people, so much so that they were willing to marry a Mizo woman, and it may have been the

case that any English man who was involved in such acts of intimacy was consequently disdained by his fellow English men” (141).

Dari and Thangkungi were the first known Mizo women to enter into an interracial marriage and they both faced adversities and difficulties on account of their marriage. It is evident that they were scorned by the society and disdained by the Mizo community.

1.3. Interracial Relationships in Mizo Fiction: An Overview

Within the paradigm of Mizo fiction, there are several traces of a Mizo man or woman in a relationship with members from other race or ethnic group. According to a Mizo fiction writer H.K.R. Lalbiakliana, “It seems that idea of interracial relationship appeals to all races and ethnic groups and not just the Mizo community” (Lalbiakliana 259). He is of the opinion that for any race or ethnic group, it is often extremely difficult to disengage oneself from an interracial relationship once it has been put into motion. Even within the boundaries of contemporary Mizo fiction, the theme of interracial relationship is frequently employed. Let us look at a brief analysis of such contemporary Mizo fiction.

In Mizo fictions involve the theme of interracial relationship, there are many characters whose relationship failed to develop into a successful marriage and the often reasons vary. On the other hand, there are also stories where the characters end up in a happy marriage while some faced separation even after marriage.

Firstly, let us take a look at Mizo fiction that employs the theme of interracial relationship where the characters are confronted with unfavourable endings.

The first Mizo novel to be published as a single work and the first to have an illustrated cover was *Maymyo Sanapui* by Capt. C. Khuma (1914-1990) in 1950 (Lalthangliana, *Mizo* 317). The novel tells the story of the relationship between a Mizo young

man Liana and a Burmese lady Ma Hla Kyi. Capt. C. Khuma started writing the novel in 1946 and was published in 1950 (317). According to B. Lalthangliana, this novel is the first in Mizo fiction to deal with the concept of interracial relationship (Lalthangliana *Hnuhma* 96). In the novel, the two characters, Liana and Ma Hla Kyi were deeply in love but could not be married to one another. However, the reason behind the impossibility of a married life was not because of any racial or religious issue but because Kyi was killed in the hands of the Japanese on the World War II setting of the novel.

This type of interracial relationship in a World War setting can also be found in several works of James Dokhuma. In Dokhuma's *Goodbye Lushai Brigade*, the narrative deals with the love story between a Mizo girl named Lallawmi and a British Army Captain Mark Martin. Though they were determined to get married, they could not fulfill their wish because Mark Martin's fellow Englishmen could not accept the thought of him marrying a Mizo girl. In the story, Mark Martin expresses his determination and willingness to marry Lallawmi, "I do not mind marrying a woman from any racial background and accept her as my better half, for that reflects the mind of the Creator who created us equally," (Dokhuma, *Goodbye* 68). However, his fellow Englishmen could not share his perspective on racial equality. He says, "They couldn't accept the idea of an English man, who belongs to the most superior of all races in the world, being married to a Lushai girl" (63). The racial supremacy mentality prevented his fellow Englishmen from accepting a girl from another race into their community, as a result of which his relationship with Lallawmi could not develop into a married life.

Another story by James Dokhuma *Irrawady Lui Kamah* (On the Banks of the River Irrawady) tells the story of Thanzinga, a Mizo young man who served as a soldier during the Second World War and his love affair with a Burmese girl named Ma Thui (Barbara). As we have seen in "Maymyo Sanapui", the reason for the impossibility of a married life for the two

lovers is not because of racial difference but because of the advancement of the Japanese army. The female protagonist Ma Thui was rescued by Thanzinga on the banks of the river Irrawady while she was running from the Japanese army. She felt immense gratitude towards Thanzinga for saving her life and she eventually converted to Christianity. They fell in love on the banks of the river Irrawady and were determined to get married. However, they were caught on by the Japanese army and were severely tortured. Thanzinga was then taken as a prisoner by the Japanese army and Ma Thui was killed.

In James Dokhuma's *Hmangaihna Thuchah*, we see the love story of a Mizo young man Lalthanpuia and a Marathi Christian girl named Agnes Sarah Bibi. Though they were deeply in love, Lalthanpuia could not give into the idea of marriage because he was disturbed by the thought of marrying someone outside their community. After much comparison with his Mizo girlfriend Lalrammawii, he chose to settle with Lalrammawii, whom he chose solely because they were from the same community. He said that, "Lalrammawii's Qualification is MIZO," (Dokhuma, *Hmangaihna* 86) and ignored Sarah Bibi from another community.

James Dokhuma, in his story *Kimoto Syonora*, employed the theme of interracial relationship. Here, we see the story of a Mizo young man Lalthawma and the Japanese girl Laura Kimoto Matshuda, whose relationship, like many of the lovers in Dokhuma's fictional works, failed to blossom into marriage.

In Khawlkungi's story titled *Chantawka Khawrel*, the female protagonist Lianmawii (Mawitei) finds herself in a messy situation when she finds herself carrying the child of her employer Mr. Chondola. She then, continues to face many hardships through the course of the story. Years later, her daughter Lianzikpuii goes in search of her real father but Mr. Chondola blatantly refuses to accept her as his daughter and this hurt her badly. On account of her father being a non-Mizo (*Vai*), Zikpuii faces difficulties in her search for the right

husband. She often refuses to reveal her father's real identity even among her friends. She exclaims, "It is most unfortunate that I had to be born of mix blood, no pure Mizo would accept me as a wife" (Khawlkungi 90). She has to suffer the consequences of her mother's actions throughout her life.

In another story by Khawlkungi titled *Duhtak Sangpuui*, a Mizo girl named Hmingi falls in love with Hussain, the Muslim Mathematics teacher in their college. They live together like a married couple in Delhi and eventually Hmingi becomes pregnant with Hussain's child. She is abandoned by Hussain during her pregnancy and has to go through many difficulties on her own. She tries her best to hide the truth from her fellow Mizo friends so much so that she leaves her son to be raised in an orphanage home. Here again, the son is doomed to reap the bitter seeds of his mother's actions.

In C. Laizawna's novel *Anita*, the protagonist is a young Mizo named Rina who falls in love with an Indian girl named Anita. Rina is deeply loved by Anita who is willing to leave behind her faith and family to marry Rina. However, the protagonist Rina is not willing to make the same commitment because of his fear that their cultural differences will create more difficulties in the future.

In C. Thuamluaia's much celebrated short story "Sialton Official", we see the love story between a beautiful maiden from Shillong named Dorothy and a Mizo young man. They, too, could not do away with the cultural barriers between them. They had to part ways because of the difference in culture, lifestyle and language, and eventually moved on to marry within their respective community. Unfortunately, they were both unable to continue with a happy life as they could not forget about each other. In the case of the male protagonist, the situation worsened and led to negligence on his part in looking after his own family as a result of which his wife and children were killed in the *Hotel Odyana* fire.

Lalengmawi Ralte's novel *A Tlo Lo* tells the story of a Bengali girl Mona Chaudhury, who is a doctor. She falls in love with a Mizo young man named Rinlungmuana. In the story, Mona is willing to give up her culture and society to pursue the man she loves, saying that 'cultural practices and religion have no say in the course of true love.' However, Muana is careful not to give his full commitment to a non-Mizo girl and he maintained a cautious attitude towards Mona who belongs to the Islam religion. In the end, Muana finally leaves Mona because of they belong to two different religion. Even though Mona is willing to leave behind everything for him, Muana cannot make the same sacrifice and says, "I want a Mizo girl to be my life, someone with whom I share the same faith and beliefs" (Ralte, *A Tlo* 140).

Further, he is determined not to have a non-Mizo girl even if she happened to be a Christian. He says, "I do not recommend the idea of interracial marriage even if he/she belongs to the Christian faith... many difficulties can arise from the differences in cultural practices and lifestyle. No matter how good and perfect she is, I am determined not to take a non-Mizo girl as my wife" (140).

Doma (A Tibetan Girl) by C. Vanlalmalsawma is another novel that deals with the theme of interracial relationship. The novel tells the love story of a Mizo young man, Lalrinfela Fanai, and Doma, a beautiful Tibetan girl who is a refugee in India. Doma's mother is a Tibetan and her father is an Irish. The characters in this novel are not only from diverse ethnic background but they are also from different religion. The male protagonist, Fela, is a devout Christian and Doma is a Buddhist. Similar to the case of many characters aforementioned, Fela and Doma had to go through hardships and obstacles because of their difference in culture and religion. They had to go against their own families, society and religious teachings. Fela converted himself to Judaism to marry Doma, but she tragically died before they could get married.

In this story, Fela also makes an attempt to marry the Jewish girl named Deborah. However, they could not go as planned because Fela converted back to his old faith. He, then, remarks that it is on religious grounds that he could not marry a girl from another ethnic community, he says, “I tried to marry a girl who worships a different god. Then, I lost my way. It is against the will of God to start a family and raise children with people outside my own community” (Vanlalmalsawma 361).

In H. Lallungmuana’s novel *Hara Kima (Son of a forgotten soldier)*, the protagonist Hara Kima is the son of a Japanese woman and a Mizo man. He finds himself in a love triangle with two Indian girls Sonali Kapur and Brigit L. Sharma. The two girls are both determined to marry Hara Kima and constantly fight over him. One of the girls, Sonali, remarks, “As long as we are all citizens of a global village, language and religion should not be considered as barriers when it comes to love” (Lallungmuana 108). However, things fail to work out between them because of the difference in geographical location, language, lifestyle and religion.

Tlaisun Lalnunsiamia’s novel *Sisil Hipson leh Kei* is about the love affair between a Canadian woman Sisil Hipson and the author, Tlaisun. Sisil Hipson is willing to leave behind everything to marry Tlaisun. Though the love is reciprocal, the male protagonist is not willing to go against his culture and religion to marry the woman he loves. He is in fear that the many differences in language, culture and religion will continue to create problems in the future. He is of the opinion that to marry a girl outside his own race and community is a sin against God and a betrayal of his own people. He says, “Sisil, it is not that I do not love you. There is no woman I love dearly more than you and I know I will continue to love you forever. But now I know that my love for my people and my culture is more than than the love I have for you” (Tlaisun 65).

There are several instances of interracial relationship in Samson Thanruma's stories. In *The Adventures of White Wasp – Hmai Thinghawng Phena Inlarna*, the story revolves around the relationship between a Pandit girl from North India named Sanjana Quadri and a Mizo young man, Hrangluta. The couple could not get married because of Sanjana's parents, even though they already have two children. They faced many hardships though the course of the narrative. In this story, the writer highlights how Mizo girls indulge themselves in relationships with wealthy men from mainland India. The story also highlights how certain non-Mizo businessmen, borrowing Mizo names for themselves, treat Mizo girls as mere commodities and sexual objects in Mizoram.

“Garden of Bliss-ah Lunglen Thlifim” is a short story by Samson Thanruma where Sanjana, a respectable Pandit girl from Kashmir and a Mizo young man are caught up in a love affair. They are deeply in love with each other, and like many of the characters discussed earlier they, too, could not end up in marriage because of religious and cultural differences. While Sanjana is willing to leave behind everything for her lover, the young man is not willing to make the same sacrifice and they had to leave each other in the end.

“Priya leh Kei” is another story by Samson Thanruma. The story tells the love affair between a Mizo missionary Vanlalsiami and a male nurse called Kishore. Vanlalsiami leaves behind her faith and became a Hindu to marry him. However, she is betrayed by Kishore and she ends up dead in his hands. Before her death, she bore him a daughter named Priya and Kishore did not live long after his murderous act.

Ka Duh Lo is a novel written by Lalremmawia Sailo. In this love story, the female protagonist Biakmawii fled from a group of thugs and she eventually jumped off a waterfall. She was found by Norento Singh who took her to his hometown, Silchar in Assam where he forced her to marry him. However, Biakmawii refuses to marry him saying that she would

never marry someone who belonged to another religion. She was then rescued by a Mizo young man named Lalkhuma, who came just in time to save her from the forceful matrimony.

In PC Lalbiakmawia's *Hnam leh I Tan*, the development of a romantic love between a Lushai young man, Lalrinmuana and a Kuki (Thahdo) girl named Jenny Nemngai. Muana and Jenny had to overcome many obstacles and hardships because they belonged to different tribes. They sought several ways to earn their parents' approval for marriage. However, they failed miserably and both the characters eventually died in the end.

Muana's parents were of the opinion that even though Kuki are one of the tribes in Mizo, they do not consider them as true Mizo blood. They refused to accept a Kuki lady as their daughter-in-law, saying that they wanted their grandchildren to have 'pure' Mizo blood. Jenny's grandfather held a similar view and said that even though the Kukis live among the Mizo and could speak Mizo language fluently, Muana's family would never welcome Jenny in their family. He also strictly advised Jenny to marry someone from the Kuki tribe. Even though the two lovers considered themselves to be both Mizo, they were separated by the different views of their family.

In Zirsangkima's short story titled "Amnesia", the narrative tells the love story between a Mizo young man named Zira and a Naga girl named Gabbie who are both journalists by profession. However, Gabbie's parents made an arrangement for her to marry a wealthy businessman and she had to leave Zira with a broken heart.

Thlahpawlh Nih Zet Chu is a work of fiction written by Lalthantluanga Chawngthu which deals with the story of Dintluanga, who is born of a Mizo mother and a Bihari father. Dintluanga faced many hardships and difficulties on account of his mixed parentage. He exclaimed in anguish, "I am a Bihari by ethnicity and my face and skin colour resembles that of a *Vai*. But in my heart, I am a Mizo. All the Mizo ways and mannerisms are inseparable

from me and Mizo is the only language I know. It is really frustrating to have born this way” (Chawngthu 64).

Even though Dintluanga identifies himself in his heart as a Mizo, he could not have a stable relationship with any Mizo girl because of his father’s Bihari identity. In the end, he gave up the idea of marrying a Mizo girl, saying that the only thing that always falls between him and the people who loved him is the fact that he was not a Mizo.

In F. Lalzuithanga’s short story titled “Babel Hmangaihna”, a Mizo young man falls in love with a woman from another state named Alan-i. They desperately tried to get married but were eventually separated by their parents and the many differences in their lifestyle and cultural practices. The woman then went on to marry someone from her own state.

In some Mizo fictional narratives, there are non-Mizo characters who suffer and even die because of their relationship with Mizo men and women. In P.C Zosangliana’s novel titled *Doral Kara Hmangaihna* a French woman named Agnes falls in love with a Mizo man. Agnes committed suicide as a result of her obsession with John, an obsession which John came to realized only after her death.

In C. Hermana’s story titled *Vangkhawmawii*, an Arab businessman Tariq Hassan falls in love with a Mizo girl named Vangkhawmawii. She has many other eligible suitors like Mr. Larry Parker, a British firm owner and a Chinese man who later hanged himself because of his obsession with Vangkhawmawii. However, the story tells that Vangkhawmawii is not married to any of her non-Mizo suitors till the end.

Some Mizo fictional narratives that deal with interracial relationship do not give a closed-ending to their stories. In Thara Tlau’s collection of stories titled *A Hawlphum*, a short story titled “Number 5” tells the romantic story of a Gujarati woman, Krupali Shah and a

Mizo man named Thara. However, the author barely highlights the adversities and difficulties they might have faced because of their relationship.

“Maphasy” a short story by F. Lalzuithanga tells the story of a Mizo young man and a girl from Burma. The two characters faced difficulties in seeing each other because of their geographical location, however, the author does not provide a closed ending or a resolution about the two lovers.

In several Mizo fictional narratives, there are lovers whose relationship with someone outside the Mizo community failed to result in a marital union. However, there are several authors who write about Mizo characters who, in spite of the many challenges and difficulties that they had to go through, choose to cross borders and language and cultural barriers, forcing their way into marriage to be with the people they love.

In Samson Thanruma’s novel *Beiseina Mittui*, a Mizo woman named Lalduhawmi and a non-Mizo army captain Capt. Paul engages themselves in a romantic relationship which further developed into a marriage between the two. Lalduhawmi’s parents do not approve her marriage to a non-Mizo man but Lalduhawmi continued her relationship with Capt. Paul and marries him against her parents’ disapproval. Capt. Paul takes Lalduhawmi to Kolkata only to face another disapproval from Paul’s family and they plan to set up another marriage for him with a girl from their own community. Though Lalduhawmi is already pregnant with Capt. Paul’s child, their situation forced them into divorce and Lalduhawmi continued to suffer hardships and difficulties after their separation.

In another story by Samson Thanruma, *The Adventures of the White Wasp No 2 – Sulhnu Hliam*, the writer portrait the relationship between a Gorkha girl Dewa and a Mizo young man named Lalrosanga. They enjoyed a short marriage as they had to end it because Dewa is a Buddhist and the differences in their religion and cultural practices formed a gap

between them. Dewa turned out to be unfaithful to her husband and they eventually left him. Thanruma also highlight another interracial relationship between a Mizo girl, Baby Vanlalzarmawii and an Assamese businessman named Debajit. Baby faced many problems and difficulties because of her involvement with non-Mizo men and this eventually led her to commit suicide in the end.

Ram leh I Tan Chauh is a novel by H. Lallungmuana where the Mizo protagonist Julie Lalhrualtuangi marries an Arab man named H.H. Alnafasi. Julie leaves behind her religion, Christianity, and converts to her husband's religion, Islam. After their marriage, Alnafasi takes her to his home country and after a year as a married couple, Julie realizes that her husband did not really love her. She continues to suffer domestic abuse at the hands of her husband after she takes in another wife, an Arab woman. With the help of her father-in-law, Julie finally returned to her father's house in Mizoram where she continues to suffer humiliation and hostility from Mizo society as she was already pregnant with Alnafasi's child.

A Na Lua is Lalhmingliana Saiawi's novel where Hazel, the wife of Darchhuana, committed adultery with a non-Mizo man. Unfortunately, she gets pregnant with her child and gives birth to a girl named Darsawiveli. Hazel is divorced by her husband who refused to accept the child as his daughter. Hazel then marries another non-Mizo man, after much opposition from the man's family mainly because they did not want their son to marry a tribal who already has a child. They agreed to the marriage only after their son proclaimed his determination to marry her. On the other hand, Hazel's mother secretly hopes that her daughter would be able to convert her husband to a Christian (Saiawi 136). The marriage took place in a courtroom and after bearing two children, Hazel dies in a fire, which is suspected to have been the act of her sister-in-laws.

Runmawi Siali is a story written by F. Lalthankima. In this story, a Mizo widow named Mawizuali marries a Manipuri man named Biren Singh who works as a mechanic in Zoram Motor works, Chanmari in Aizawl. However, her husband is infatuated by Mawizuali's daughter Lalngaizuali and tries to have sexual relationship with her. Ngaizuali is forced to give up her schooling and continues to face many difficulties later.

In K.C. Lalvunga's (Zikpuii Pa) popular novel *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, Ngurthansangi is forcefully married by an Indian army captain, Capt. Ranade. However, not long after he took her back to his hometown, she is sold off to prostitution by her own husband. The story turns out in such a way that Capt. Ranade was already married to someone back in his home town. Ngurthansangi continues to face many difficulties and after years in the prostitution business, she is finally rescued by a Mizo man, Chhuanvawra Renthlei.

In V.L. Zaikima's *Bombay Fantasies*, a Mizo girl Catherine Zamveli is fooled by a young man from Bombay named James, who gave her the false promise of marriage. However, James sold her into prostitution for Rs. 5,000 and left her without saying a word. Zamveli, then, continued to face many difficulties.

Though many interracial relationships in Mizo literature failed to succeed, there are also some stories where the characters end up in a happy marriage and continued to live a peaceful life.

In H. Lalngurliani's novel *Zorinpari*, we see the love story between a Mizo missionary Vanlalchhuangi (VL-i) and Joseph (Manisana), a young man from the Meitei community. She reluctantly follows Joseph to marry him as a result of which she lost her job. "VL-i's family strongly opposed the relationship and they were furious when they heard of it.

But since the affair has gone public, the family was left with no choice but to half-heartedly accept the relationship” (Lalngurliani 73).

H.K.R. Lalbiakliana’s novel *Anpai Lanu* is about a Mizo young man Robert Zonunpara and Miss Nanda, a Gurkhali girl. They tried their best to marry each other and faced many obstacles because of religious and cultural differences. Their families strongly opposed the relationship and took measures to separate them. In the end, no hardships or difficulties could subdue their determination and their love for each other. They strongly believed that no one can draw barriers and boundaries in love and war.

Lalparmaui’s story *A Dang Si Lo* narrates the love story of a Mizo young man Thanpuia with a mainland Indian woman Sunita. Sunita possessed deep affection for Thanpuia, however Thanpuia held himself back from falling in love with her because of their different backgrounds; however, his ideals could not keep him away and he succumbed to his feelings. The difference in race and religion could not keep them apart, and no matter the differences, they came together in love and decided to get married. Sunita leaves her religion behind to join Christianity for Thanpuia’s sake, and for that reason she is disowned by her family. Thanpuia’s family on the other hand were happy with the belief that, “you have saved a lost soul and brought her to Christ”. Thanpuia and Sunita eloped and live happily ever after.

A story from one of T.N Vanlalṭana’s collection of investigative stories, *The Adventures of Sailo Khawma 3* called “Damlo A Khuangcher Bo” narrates the story of Rafael Lalbiakzuala, who after being admitted in the ICU at Guwahati Neurological Research Centre & Heart Institute, goes missing without a trace. Later investigations reveals that Kamala, a Kuki young lady hailing from Moirang, Manipur was deeply in love with Rafael and had taken part in his disappearance. The couple is revealed to have eloped; an agreement between

the two families of Kamala and Rafael allowed their union and Kamala would later convert to Catholicism, and in the end they get married in the Catholic church.

Mizo narratives about interracial love consists of characters that face varying levels of acceptance and adversity. While some characters face a lot hardships, some characters on the other hand are accepted by their families, where their interracial marriage ends up serving them a great deal of luck and blessings.

The aforementioned story, *Runmawi Siali* by F.Lalthankima, narrates the story of a Mizo woman Zorami, who is known to be of an unruly character falls in love with a French man named Inzaborough and married him. Inzaborough is a junior officer at the French Academy of Science & Research Institute at Bordough. Inzaborough and Zorami met in India while they were on vacation. Although Zorami's family was not completely happy with this union and yet the two get married anyway; as the story progresses Inzaborough would slowly prove to be an asset for Zorami's family, their son in law of a different race ends up being a great source of blessing for their family in the end.

Lalnunthara's story *Kaihranga* consists of a protagonist who marries Esther, a woman of mixed descent, with a Mizo mother and a Jewish father, and the couple unite without facing any adversity as a result of their race or religion.

Ulusury Chhawrthlapui written by H. Ralliantawna (Zochhumpuii Pa) narrates the story of a Mizo young man, Vanlalruata, who falls in love with a Chakma woman S.S Sona. Chakmas and Mizos are two races in constant conflict with each other, and being aware of this aspect, Sona hides her Chakma background out of fear. However, even on finding out about Sona's Chakma background it does not change Ruata's love for her in any way and they did not face any persecution from their families either. They get married peacefully and

later on it is revealed to the characters that Sona is actually of Sailo descent where her initials S.S actually stands for Sainguri Sailo. They live happily ever after.

C. Hermana's story *Vangkhawmawii* tells the story of a beautiful Mizo woman Vangkhawmawii, whose lover John from Bangkok helps her out of her sickness and hardships, John is also of mixed descent with his father being Mizo, and yet the story shows no instances of racism or adversity for John. They both marry in the end.

Rev. Zokima's story *Hmangaihna Lamtluang* narrates the love of Rohlua, a Mizo young man, and Margaret, a Scottish woman. The story reveals the sentiments of the society who are very proud of Rohlua for being able to marry a white woman, a race considered superior to the Mizo race, where the people of the community gathered at the town gates to welcome his return. A Mizo man from their small town marrying a white woman was considered a great achievement by the people. Their families were accepting of their relationship and caused them no opposition. The story shows Rohlua comparing Margaret and another Mizo woman – leading to his final decision to choose Margaret.

There are various other stories of interracial relationships between a Mizo and people of other communities and races, these stories reveal to us the opinions that people in the Mizo society hold when it comes to interracial relationships.

Mizo fictions reveal the reasons why many interracial relationships fall apart before marriage, most of them being – difference in race, religion and difference in communities and way of life. These aspects pose a big threat to their relationships and often tear them apart; while a few characters struggle to get married and then break up anyway, there are also a few characters who live happily ever after.

1.4. Classification of Interracial Relationships in Mizo Fiction

Interracial relationships portrayed in Mizo stories where the characters get married often end up facing many adversities, the adversities they face are clearly portrayed in the various stories mentioned and analysed above, and the opinions that Mizo writers hold with regards to such relationships is also clearly revealed in their stories. The hardships that follows the people involved in interracial relationships, their reasons for breaking up before marriage, and even if they did get married, the hardship that follows them all the way is clearly revealed in Mizo fictions.

Interracial relationships in Mizo fictions are all burdened with trials and tribulations as a result of their unaccepted union, and these fictions can be classified into three categories according to their adversities.

Firstly, relationships with people from a different community, race, religion and culture often cannot bridge their inherent differences and they fail to get married no matter how they wish to. For example – C. Laizawna's *Anita*, C.Vanlalmalsawma's *Doma*, James Dokhuma's *Goodbye Lushai Brigade* etc. are stories that deal with tragic relationships. The adversity they face is often from society and their parents who cannot accept their union.

Secondly, some interracial couples who strive through their adversity and get married despite many oppositions. These couples are bombarded with hardships from time of their courtship but they strive through together and get married in the end. For example. H. Lallungmuana's story *Ram leh I Tan Chauh*, *Anpai Lanu* by H.K.R Lalbiakliana and Lalhmingliana Saiawi's *A Na Lua* consist of such narratives.

Thirdly, some characters who face many adversities as a result of their interracial heritage; they often struggle when it comes to finding a spouse within the Mizo community.

Khawlkungi's story *Chantawka Khawrel* narrates the story of Zikpuii, a Mizo young woman who had never questioned her racial identity, but one day finds out that she has a *Vai* or mainland Indian father, as a result of this revelation she faces various adversities when it comes to her finding a spouse and getting married. Lalthantluanga Chawngthu's story *Thlahpawlh Nih Zet Chu* narrates a story where the protagonist Dintluanga, who has always lived in Mizoram and has a very Mizo mindset, and yet, as a result of his father hailing from Bihari, is unable to marry his Mizo girlfriend.

1.5. The Reason Behind Mizo Writers Presenting Interracial Marriage in a Negative Light

The various stories and characters presented in this research portray all the negative aspects of interracial dating, and even for those who pull through to marriage, their married life is wrought with adversity. And after all this, the reason for Mizo writers to present interracial relationships in a bad light and highlight only the negatives and urge their readers to marry within the community, is because of the many hardships that can rock their marriage and not only themselves, but hardships that extends to the life of their offspring as well, and therefore, Mizo writers just don't seem to dare present interracial relationships in a positive light.

Khawlkungi writes in an introduction to *Chantawka Khawrel*, "Strive to fall in love with people within your own Mizo community. Our God has made a specific place for each race, created boundaries for each of our lands, let us strive to not cross that boundary. This would only help evade so many hardships" (iv). In such ways did the Mizo writers of the past warn their readers; to prevent adversities they did all they could to present interracial marriages in a bad light.

The status of Mizo women with regard to interracial marriage is highly unfavourable as compared to that of Mizo men. In the Mizo Customary Law, it is written that “if a Mizo woman marries a man from outside the Mizo community, then she permanently belongs to their family” (30). Hence, according to the Mizo Customary Law, a Mizo woman is regarded to be within the jurisdiction of the non-Mizo family once she marries a man from outside the Mizo community, and their children are not regarded to be Mizo. This is another reason why Mizo fiction writers do not support interracial marriage in their writings.

Another reason why Mizo writers sought to prevent interracial marriages in their writing is because they all feared assimilation or mixing with other races. The Mizo race is yet a race of small numbers and considering the highly populated communities that surround them, their situation seems quite grave. Assimilating fearlessly with other races can soon lead to the Mizo race being overtaken and overpowered till the Mizo blood is slowly erased in the future. It is with this constant fear in mind that stories of interracial relationships are deeply frowned upon in many of the narratives.

C. Hermana’s story *Vangkhawmawi* has a paragraph spoken by the female protagonist Vangkhawmawii where she states, “Let us reckon that us Mizo women bear the sons of other races, and we love and raise that son just like a pure Mizo it would never change the fact that he is of another race and his children and grandchildren will all be of another race, in the long run this is what will lead to our extinction” (Hermana 238). These words reveal the sensitive situation of the Mizo tribe on the brink of extinction.

One of the important aspects of this issue is that interracial relationships are considered as a betrayal of one’s roots and one’s tribe. Mizo story writers also hold the belief that it is a betrayal of one’s race and as a result of their opinions shaped by this aspect, interracial marriages are often frowned upon in their narratives. Tlaisun Lalnunsiam’s story *Sisil Hipson leh Kei* portrays the protagonist as holding these views very firmly, where he

states, "... My love for you is simply not greater than the love for my land and my tribe," (Tlaisun 65) his love for his tribe is far greater than his love for Sisil Hipson and therefore chooses to leave her.

As it is the general opinion of Mizo writers that it is nothing short of betrayal to marry someone of another race, they use their stories as a medium to pass on that message. It is this same sentiment that is shared by members of politics such as Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP) and Young Mizo Association (YMA) and they fervently spread that message amongst the people, taking measures such as urging students to take oaths to never marry outside of their race. Samuel Lalrozama's essay "Hnam Dang Nupui/pasal Neih Hi" states, "... Marrying a man or woman of one's own race, taking measures to further one's own language is the key to protecting our race and culture" (102). It is this same sentiment that many Mizo writers hold, to protect their race and culture from extinction and to teach the people of the grave disadvantages of interracial marriage, their writings are the most common medium.

Another reason why Mizo writers narrate stories that go against interracial unions is because of religion. Mizo stories where the protagonists are in courtship with people of different communities often have non-Christian partners. The character Hussain from *Duhtak Sangpuii*, or Alnalfasi from *Ram leh I Tan Chauh* or the character Sisil Hipson from *Sisil Hipson leh Kei* or Anita from the story *Anita* are not only people from a separate community but also people of different religions, and it is this difference in religion that often lead to their separation.

Another important aspect that causes Mizo writers to show interracial marriages in a bad light is that it results in the Mizo person to lose face in society and to lose the respect of the community. Samuel Lalrozama Hmar with regards to interracial marriage writes, "A person of undecided race, unable to command the respect of members in society is what

interracial unions lead to. It births people of inconsistent personalities, with inconsistent minds and it is difficult for such individuals to grow and prosper” (101), revealing the disadvantages in his writing. Children born of interracial marriages often end up suffering from an identity crisis, and a sense of being unsure of themselves. It is these aspects that lead Mizo writers to not dare portray interracial marriages in a bad light.

An important reason is that people who marry into different races are simply not accepted or welcomed in the Mizo society. The people who go through with such marriages are often alienated and looked down upon in society, this alienation and unacceptance continues to their offspring who are teased for their race, marriage opportunities are challenged because of their status.

Also, even real life stories and situations often proof that interracial marriages are faced with adversity and as an accumulation of all this information, Mizo writers warn their readers of the disadvantages of interracial marriage.

1.6. The Varying Social Situation of Men and Women When It Comes to Interracial Relationships

Mizo fictions consist of situations where both men and women get involved in interracial love stories. It is the most common narrative that Mizo men do see women of other races as potential lovers but hardly do they see them as potential wives. Those who do wish to marry them are often faced with so much adversity that their wishes are often unfulfilled. Rina from C. Laizawna’s *Anita*, the protagonist from C. Thuamliana’s “Sialton Official”, the protagonist from Tlaisun Lalnunsiam’s *Sisil Hipson leh Kei*, Lalrinfela Fanai from C, Vanlamalsawma’s *Doma*, the protagonists from James Dokhuma’s War novels (*Irrawady Lui Kamah*, *Goodbye Lushai Brigade*, *Kimoto Syonora*, etc.) and various other male protagonists

often fall in love with women of other races and yet, are not completely willing to go as far as marrying them.

The reason as to why the male protagonists never really agree to marry their foreign lovers is already mentioned above, however, in contrary to them, female characters in Mizo stories are often shown to be much more willing to enter into marriage with their foreign lovers.

James Dokhuma, a writer who has written four stories in relation to interracial relationships states that, “Mizos and foreigners will fall in love and date, our Mizo women are worthy of being courted by white men; Mizo men are also worthy enough to court Indian women, Burmese women and Japanese women. But amongst all this, ‘are we to accept a marriage between a Mizo and a foreigner?’ is what I wonder,” (qtd. in Lallianzuala 113) is his comment when it comes to this issue. Courtship and dating are still acceptable to him, but to go as far as marrying other races just don’t seem easily acceptable to him. With these opinions in mind, characters in stories often end in separation.

In this way Mizo writers allow and accept interracial courting, however, to go as far as marriage is unacceptable to their sentiments, and various obstacles are presented that tear the characters apart.

All the while, there are also Mizo stories where characters end up happily married with their foreign partners. H.K.R Lalbiakliana’s *Anpai Lanu* portrays a character Robert Zonunpara, or Lalpawmawii’s protagonist Thanpuia from *A Dang Si Lo*, Rev Zokima’s protagonist Rohlua from *Hmangaihna Lamtluang* are the few stories where interracial marriages are thriving and successful.

Looking at the female characters in these stories, it can be concluded that they take on a more careless and carefree stance when it comes to marrying foreigners. Chuauṭhuama states in a *Vanglaini* article “Hnam Humhalh” about tribe preservation, “Interracial marriages in Mizo culture is not a novel idea. In most cases, Mizo men are more unwilling to marry outside their tribe... amongst Mizo women, on the other hand, we often find women who are willing to marry outside their tribe” (8). It would seem that it is more common amongst women to marry outside than it is amongst men. In a few cases it is a result of great misfortunes (As in the case of Ngurthansangi from *Nunna Kawngṭhuam Puiah* by Zikpuii Pa), while in many cases it is a case of personal choice. Successful marriages are often found and yet there are also many cases of the marriage failing.

H. Lallungmuana’s female protagonist Julie Lalhruitluangi from *Ram leh I Tan Chauh*, H. Lalngurliani’s Vanlalchhuangi from *Zorinpari*, Lalhmingliani Saiawi’s Hazeli from *A Na Lua* and F. Lalthankima’s Mawizuali from *Runmawi Siali* are all female characters who marry foreigners. Those characters who don’t marry their lovers, such as, Khawlkungi’s Hmingi from *Duhtak Sangpuii* and Lianmawii from *Chantawka Khawrel* end up pregnant out of wedlock.

Most female characters from Mizo stories involved in interracial relationships all end up making a mistake getting involved. Although there are a few whose marriages are happy and successful, many characters are faced with divorce where their husbands have left them. Even those who did not get married are alienated and looked down upon by the society for getting involved with foreigners in the first place. It is not just the female characters but their children that continue to face animosity from the society. This reveals how strongly Mizo writers object to interracial marriages, and that women are even more keenly warned.

Lalrammuana Sailo, in his essay, “Mizo Thawnthua Mizo leh Hnam Dang Inkawpna” reveals the dominantly prevailing ideas about the issue that, “The society will never accept a Mizo woman who has married outside her race, and the writers do not agree either. Even those relationships between a foreign man and a Mizo woman often portrays the Mizo woman as a person of loose character, a person of low character who is not worth being looked up to...” (37) in such ways do the Mizo society and Mizo writers portray the unwavering objection to women marrying foreigners. “In cases of premarital sex and interracial relationships, there is a wide difference in what is acceptable for Mizo men and what is acceptable for Mizo women, while the path is much more wide and forgiving for men the same actions are unacceptable when it comes to women where women fall under societal judgement much faster than Mizo men” (40) revealing to readers that the treatment of men and women when it comes to interracial relationship is great unfair and unequal. Involved in the similar situations, women fall under harsh criticism much faster than men.

Sawmtei Chongthu writes about this issue, where we can easily overlook a Mizo man in love with a foreigner, but feel possessive and jealous when it comes to a woman in love with a foreigner, in her essay “Sialton Ka Fang Ve” published in *Lengzem Monthly Magazine* July 2014, voicing her critical opinion in this manner:

The non-Mizo women that Mizo men engaged themselves with are highly regarded and endowed with positive qualities while Mizo women are not allowed to even look at or talk about men from outside the Mizo community. Even those who are brave and daring enough to follow the steps of Mauruangi are marked and labelled by society as sinners who betray their land and culture. We talk about protecting our Mizo identity and culture, which is the right thing to do. However, this protection of cultural identity is marked by a gender bias attitude where the women are barred from the many things that are allowed for men such as dating someone from outside the Mizo community (45).

Mizo writers never reveal, in good light, interracial relationships. Especially women who fall in love and marry out of their race are demeaned and insulted much more so than men. This reveals the deep rooted inequality and oppression of women in Mizo society.

Apart from story writers, songwriters also seem to share this view as revealed in their lyrics, where they glorify courting a person of their own race. Lalsangluaia Renthlei's song "Zohnahthlak Lanu" reveals these sentiments

Thlang Sappui lanu ka thlang nem le,

Thlang Kawrvai lanu ka ngai bil lo;

Lianchhiari sakmel ianga zozam par mawi te,

Zohnahthlak lanu, nang ngei ka thlang ber che. (Lalhmingthanga 480)

Expressing his preference of a pure Mizo woman over any number of beautiful white women.

The same goes in C. Durthanga's song:

Kei zawng ka thlang Mizo val ngei,

Rilru hmun khat duh thuhmun si;

Mihrang sahrang hmaa zam lo,

Chhuihangyala lo zam suh aw. (231)

Portraying that she would choose a Mizo husband over anyone else.

The above assessed various stories of interracial relationships from Mizo Folk narrative, Mizo History and Mizo fictions. The next chapter will assess specifically chosen stories and analyse in greater detail the various aspect of interracial relationships in Mizo stories.

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Chapter – 2

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Chapter – 2

Interracial Relationships in C. Laizawna *Anita* and C. Thuamluaia “Sialton Official”

This chapter will deal with the various aspects of interracial relationships as portrayed in the story *Anita* by C. Laizawna and “Sialton Official” by C. Thuamluaia. These two stories portray the love story between a Mizo man and a woman of another race, narrating their courtship and their immense love for each other to the point that they contemplated marriage. However, the difference in communities, difference in culture and religion had created such a wide rift that they couldn't overcome it, and despite their love for each other they had to separate in the end. The various aspects as to why Mizo young men fell in love with foreign women and the aspects that opposed their marriage and the consequences of these situations will be carefully assessed.

2.1. Life and Works of C. Laizawna

C. Laizawna the author of *Anita* was born on 10 January 1959 at Tualpui village in Champhai District, his father was Manvela and his mother was Lalduhi. He married his wife Aumawii in the year 1983 and had four children with her. Now he lives with his wife and kids in Ramhlun North, Aizawl.

C. Laizawna passed Pre-University from Champhai College in 1983, and from here continued his career in writing. He took part in maintaining newspapers and worked for various newspaper companies and he continues to write till today (*Thuhlaril* 177). Most of his early works appeared in the Central Young Mizo Association Monthly Magazine called *YMA Chanchinbu* in 1982. He is also remembered as freelance writer and between 1995 - 2000 he worked as a freelance writer in *Hnehtu* daily newspaper (*Zoramdinthara* 187).

He started his writing career in the year 1982 and published his first book, *Kan Tiam Tawh Si* that every same year. He has written up to a hundred articles and thirty novels, forty translations and seven biography; including all his works of translation he has published about a hundred books.

Hmangaihzuli (1990), *Zizyphus* (1990), *Ka Phal Lo* (1991), *K.S Min Ti Maw?* (1992), *Ka Thlang Zawk* (1993) and *Anita* (1998) are a few of his most memorable and successful books. Due to his successful and valuable works in Mizo literature, Union Biblical Seminary (UBS), Yangon conferred Doctoral degree in 2020.

His work *Hmangaihzuali* was given the ‘Book of the year’ award in the year 1990 from the Mizo Academy of Letters (MAL). The novel in focus *Anita* was also selected as the Book of the Year by the Mizo Academy of Letters (MAL) in 1998 and the reason for the selection was stated as follows:

This book highlights the many trials one faces when one’s relationship is bombarded with disappointments and setbacks and how this can easily result in a lack of self-control and regrets. The book is a valorization of Mizo values and the importance of being loyal to one’s culture amidst the tempting offers of material wealth and comfort. The author is able to pen down his imagination in a realistic and structured narrative and the language of the text is also of high literary value. Hence, the Mizo Academy of Letters has selected this book as Book of the Year 1998 (*Thu leh Hla* 26).

C Laizawna has a prestigious collection of works, and a few of his most successful works are as follows:

Drama/Play:

1. *Kan Tiam Tawh Si* (1982)

2. *Nunna Hrui* (2014), etc.

Moral themes:

1. *Fa Enkawl Dan* (1984)

2. *Chhelna Rah* (1987)

3. *Nupa Thuruk* (1996), etc.

Romantic Novels:

1. *I Ta Ka Ni Si* (1985)

2. *Hmangaihzuali* (1990)

3. *K.S. Min Ti Maw?* (1992)

4. *Anita* (1998)

5. *A Thlawn Mai Maw?* (1999), etc.

Detective (*Chemte Thla*)

1. *Zungbun Chu* (1986)

2. *Pari Zun* (1987)

3. *Sulhnu* (1988) etc.

Biography:

1. *Pasaltha Hranghleia* (2003)

2. *Pastor Chhawna* (2009),

3. *C. Rokhuma* (2017) etc.

Translation:

1. *Tom Sawyer* (2010)
2. *The Invincible Man* (2010)
3. *Robinson Crusoe* (2011), etc.

2.2. Summary of *Anita*

Anita, as the name suggests is the love story of a *Vai* (mainland Indian) young woman Anita and a Mizo young man Rina (Rinawma), and how the adversities that arise out of their separate backgrounds causes them to separate without ever getting a chance to get married. If we assess why they separate, we see that it not because they do not get along well, or out of anger and quarrels, hatred or because they fell in love with someone else, but because of the great barrier of difference in culture and religion between them.

Anita is a Hindu lady residing in Bombay born of a rich businessman, while Rina is a Mizo man of Christian faith. The great barrier between them is not one erected out of their personal faults but only because they had no say in the culture and religion they were born in and had no choice but to follow the culture and religion passed on from their parents. This barrier of difference – of culture and religion is one they could not overcome or break down. And so, despite their deep love for each other, they had to part ways in the end.

Rina and Anita are clearly aware of their separate cultural backgrounds; Anita first fell in love with Rina, however, Rina had his own relationship at the time and most of all, did not want to get involved with a non-Mizo and kept his distance as much as he could. But as the story goes, Rina's partner at the time abandons him and because Anita was doing all she could to win his heart Rina could no longer keep his distance and succumbs to her affections. Rina considers Anita to be a charming beautiful woman and yet, kept his distance as long as

he could because of their different ethnic backgrounds. He states his predicament in this manner:

She is tall, almost as tall as me, with a very beautiful face; she has a charming strong headed personality, I can't really seem to explain, she is of a beautiful countenance. I reckon she has feelings for me, and because of that I keep my distance from her, mostly because I almost seem to have feelings for her as well, I try to not talk to her too much, even if she starts a conversation with me I reply only as is necessary, and go on to keep my distance from her. (Laizawna 13)

In this manner, Rina tries his best to keep away from her affections, no matter how beautiful she is, Rina did not want to get involved with her, most of all because Anita is of a different ethnic background. "I have looked at her both from afar and close by, but I keep myself from looking too closely, to be captured by her charms is what I fear the most" (46), expressing his fear of developing strong feelings over Anita. However, because of uncontrollable consequences, they meet again on a beach, with no place to run, they had no choice but to finally get close.

No matter how beautiful Anita is, Rina has made up his mind to not fall for her and this becomes one of Rina's most difficult tasks to uphold, even before they ever got in a relationship Rina could already foresee all the obstacles that would come their way, even claiming that this situation would be a "trap" for him to get caught in, "This trap, I should make sure that I do not get caught in this perilous trap, I should make her my friend and nothing more" (51), expressing his troubled mind in these sentences. "If I get caught in this trap, I would have to break free, an animal caught in a trap hardly ever gets out again" (84), are words that he tells himself to warn him of the danger ahead. The reason why he did want

to meet her anymore is because, “nothing good will come of this” is what he adamantly believes.

Anita hails from a rich prestigious family, and it is not simply her wealth that poses a problem to their union, but “the biggest adversity” between them is that she is of a “different ethnic background”. For Rina, Anita is ‘someone he is sure he could never marry’ because “for sure, she would never abandon her culture and religion for someone like me” (51). He broods over how unfortunate it is that he and Anita are not of the same race, “If only Anita and I were of the same race...” (97) Rina laments the rigid condition of India where the boundary between races is so strictly maintained.

Rina did his best to keep afar from Anita and not fall in love with her, he knows for a fact that their different ethnicities would pose a threat for them later on. But Anita would not hold back from him and followed him wherever he went. Anita and her sister Pinky are kidnapped and Rina risks his own life to save them, it is from here on that they get closer to each other. Anita’s family feels extremely grateful towards Rina for saving their daughter and embrace him like their son for his actions. Anita could no longer be held back from falling in love with Rina and even he finally gave in.

In this way, Rina finally gets himself caught in the ‘trap’ he was so afraid of getting caught in and even ends up sleeping with her. It is this union that convinces Anita that Rina is the one she wants to marry, the wide “boundaries” between them – tribe, culture and religion has now become nothing but mere obstacles to be conquered for her. She adamantly states “Rin, I want to become your wife” (114), and despite all the obstacles that Rina puts forwards that they are sure to face, she adamantly states, “Rin, as long as you want me to be your wife, everything else does not matter to me” (115), she professes the strive through all hardships as long as he is by her side. She bravely continues to claim, “Rin, I will live for your sake. You

too risked your own life to save mine, I love you, and if you love me just the same then that is enough. Things like culture and tribe, I've got it all sorted out. We're all the same humankind anyhow" (155), and stands firm on her wish to become his bride.

Rina on the other hand is not as sure and headstrong as Anita, his mind is in constant conflict, "Anita, how I truly wish to make you my bride" (118), although he does often claim, "I do want to marry you..." (154) at the core of his conscience he believes that marrying a woman of another race is just something that cannot be accepted. Therefore his mind contemplates on every possible hardship that can come their way and tries to make Anita understand. Although he is willing to lay with her, he cannot bring himself to make her his wife.

Anita, on the other hand, puts forth her best abilities to convince him, "I am your wife. I would not simply give myself up to someone who is not my husband, I love you, and you want me to be your bride just the same, you love me too don't you?" (154) she stated adamantly. Rina on the contrary presents to her all the possible conflicts that would come their way, trying his best to convince Anita but Anita wants nothing but to give up everything for him, "Rin, I would give up everything for you. Do you really not want to marry me? Why can't we just make it happen? Your tribe will be my tribe, your religion will be my religion, and I will follow you wherever you go. As long as you remain faithful to me, Rin, I am willing to sacrifice it all for you. You do not seem to comprehend it, my willingness to give up everything for you" (157) putting up her best fight with nothing but to win his heart, even for Rina it is not an easy proposal to reject.

Rina feels no disapproval when it comes to Anita, and despite being deeply in love with her, he keeps himself from giving into their relationship because of their difference in culture and religion.

But for Anita, no matter how much Rina tries to convince her that their marriage would be a bad idea she still holds on to her ideals, she is always ready if at all Rina is willing to elope with her. “If you want to marry me than its all good, let me not return home for that matter and just go home to your land instead” (212), always willing to follow Rina to his land as well. Anita has revealed again and again the love she harbors for Rina and expresses it in her actions and words, “Oh, If only I could become your wife” (181).

Unable to bridge the wide gap of ethnicity, Rina decides that he cannot marry Anita, on the advice of her parents Anita finally let go of Rina with a broken heart. Finally, they both end up marrying people of their own tribe and their own religion.

2.3. A Comparison Between Mizo and Foreign Women in the Story *Anita*

In the story *Anita*, the protagonist Rina’s life is intertwined with two women, a Mizo woman and a foreign woman, and at their own time he felt very deeply for both of them.

His first lover Thansangi, is a woman of small build, a beautiful lady who is also a teacher. Rina developed feelings for her from the moment he saw her, he was immediately mesmerized by her beauty and claims, “She is probably even more beautiful than the widely proclaimed Cleopatra” (6). Rina is captivated by her character and her charm, “If it would mean that I could make this woman mine, I would be willing to bet anything” (8), he claims sincerely. Since she is someone Rina wants to marry, he dare not take away her purity by taking part in pre-marital sex with her, and for that same reason he keeps himself committed and faithful by keeping away from other women. However, it turns out that Thansangi becomes the one to break this trust by being unfaithful, and Rina decides he must leave her no matter how painful. Sangi would come back begging for forgiveness, and even asking him to lay with her, but Rina stands firm on his decision even amidst his heartbreak.

It is after this that Rina met Anita, and despite all his efforts to keep away from her, he finally succumbed to her charms. Even with all his resolve to himself, that “I will not lie with anyone but my wife” (42) he could help himself when it came to Anita. The both gave their ‘virginity’ to each other.

Rina truly believes that Anita is a true beauty, even his quiet comparisons of Anita and Thansangi, he concludes that Anita is surely the greater beauty. “On comparing her with Sangi, safe the fact that she is of another race, she is superior in physique and beauty” (49) even in comparison with someone who truly held his affections, his love for Anita has overpowered his love for Sangi. If not for the fact that Anita is of another ethnicity, Rina’s affections for her is far greater than his affections for any Mizo woman he met before.

Considering all the adversities that would come their way as an interracial couple, though with an aching heart, they both decide to part ways. Before going back home, Rina gets drunk one night and ends up sleeping with Mina, his cook Patel’s daughter; a one night stand that was instigated by Mina as well for she was very fond of Rina and wanted to comfort him now that love of his life is married to another man.

Rina goes back home to Mizoram and gets married to a Mizo girl Betsy. Rina declares that Betsy, his wife, is even more superior to the women he met before, more to superior than, Sangi and even Anita.

When I look back and think of Sangi and Anita, I may have loved them dearly at the time, I could never marry Sangi because I could not forgive her, and I did not dare marry Anita... when I combine both of their charm and beauty it is still inferior to the charm beauty of Betsy, I could not envision it before but I feel I have found a precious thing that is more unique than what I had before (299).

He claims singing her praises. They get married and live happily "... Someone who embraces the same religion that I embrace, a Christian woman, the kind of purity I have always searched for, someone who shares the same Mizo characteristics, a woman accepted by parents, whom I love and loves me back just the same, is now in my hands" (310), he expresses with contentment.

Rina has met three women who greatly impacted his life; Sangi who he loved but betrayed his trust, who begged for forgiveness but whom he could no longer forgive, and left her side despite her pleadings. While he truly loved Anita, she was of a different ethnicity and could not bring himself to marry a foreigner. Finally he meets Betsy, a Mizo woman whom he married with a happy contented heart.

Rina is able to maintain and uphold his purity when it comes to Mizo women such as Sangi and Betsy; Sangi even implored him to sleep with her and forgive him but he does not give in. On the other hand he gives himself up to foreign women like Anita and Mina and engaged in pre-marital sex with them.

Rina is faced with situations where he has to make very crucial decisions. In the end, he is able to make the right choice of letting go of Anita, a woman of a different community, and he eventually marries a Mizo woman, inspite of his immense love for Anita.

A woman of a different ethnicity could not simply overpower his allegiance. He finally married a Mizo woman accepted by his tribe and his people, accepted by his friends and family and someone accepted by his religion.

2.4. The Reason Why Rina Could not Marry Anita

Let us assess in detail the various reasons why C. Laizawna portrays a forbidden love between Anita and Rina:

2.4.1. Religion and Ethnicity

One of the main reasons is that their difference in religion and ethnicity created immense adversity in between them. It is safe to say that perhaps being of the same religion, even though their ethnicities are different, would have eradicated many of their problems.

Anita follows Hinduism, a Hindu woman brought up in Bombay while Rina is a Mizo man, a person of the Scheduled Tribe, a follower of Christianity. Their place of birth and growth, culture and religion are poles apart, and for that adversities in their relationship is inevitable.

Being of such vastly opposing backgrounds, even if they sought to get married, hardships and adversities are sure to come their way and because Rina is so clearly aware of this aspect he does not bother to go as far as marrying Anita. “Even though Anita somehow agrees to marry me, I will not comply... I am a Mizo, and will be so forever, I am a Christian and I will not let go of my faith” (100) claiming that he is a “Mizo” and a “Christian” and thus will not marry anyone who worships another God.

Rina went through deep contemplations, setting Anita against his tribe and religion and made a very difficult decision to not marry a foreigner no matter his love for her, and tells Anita, “... I simply do not want to marry anyone of a different race, I am a Mizo, and as such I should marry a Mizo girl. I love you dearly, but when I set you against my tribe and religion, despite my love for you, you still cannot compare to them. I know how this will break your heart. It seems that I truly love my tribe and my race much more” (156). Expressing his immense loyalty to tribe and his religion, he simply could not bring himself to marry a woman who bows before another God, championing his love for his tribe and religion.

Anita could not compare to his love for his homeland, although he would have married her if he could, but to champion his love for Anita while betraying all else felt unacceptable to his sentiments, for he considered that marrying another race was the same as “betraying your tribe and your religion” (220), and for all this he claims, “Anita, I think of all these aspects because I love you, but I have come to the conclusion that I will have to let you go...” (220) telling her that he cannot marry her. “I am my father’s son, and I always will be, I am a Mizo, I will protect my tribe and not let it fall. I am a Christian, and I will not let go, I will return and live in my own homeland Mizoram” (242) is his final conclusion with an aching heart.

And finally, it is so Rina reveals his allegiance to his home and even Anita, though with a broken heart, accepts his predicament, “You cannot marry me not because you love someone else, but because of your loyalty to your tribe, you simply wish to protect your identity and your image, and all the same it is perhaps better for me as well, I cannot be truly happy with it now, but I am aware that you stand for what is right and true” (162).

2.4.2. The Concept of Family

One of the main obstacles that can come between Anita and Rina is their families or their parents. This aspect can also withhold them from ever getting married.

Rina experienced immense guilt after he engaged in pre-marital sex with Anita, when he looks back on to his family, he says, “I feel like I am truly lost, I don’t even feel like myself anymore” (129), conveying his guilt ridden mind, “I feel like I have betrayed my mother and father, my own tribe and betrayed even myself” (129) lying with a foreigner has caused him to be so ridden with guilt, because of his impression that he is now a traitor of his own people.

When it comes to Rina and Anita in their perception of love, love is the most important of all for Anita, that is she is with her love, she can withstand and strive through all the disparity and adversity that surrounds them. Rina on the other hand takes on a more practical stance and speculates all the things that can go wrong in their union, and he does not dare jump into something that can bring on so much hardship. Therefore, the further convinces Anita to think like him, "... You will be as happy as you think if you marry me. Marry someone that your parents accept and can embrace, you will go with immense celebration and jewels, your parents and your in-laws will both be happy. If you follow what your parents' desire you will always be cherished. If you marry me, your parents will disown you, you will be left with nothing..." (155). In this way he urges her to think of the future, and to prevent disputes with their parents they decided to not get married.

Rina does harbor immense love for Anita, but he simply does not see a happy future for both of them, and for that reason he claims, "I love you therefore I am letting you go" (156). Rina goes on to say, "I am an only son, I am to the only one to carry on my father's name and the weight of the family rests on my shoulders. If I marry a foreigner, it would hurt my father, and it would hurt my family and friends just the same" (156). Conveying his fear of hurting his family. If they did get married and faced hard times or sickness, Anita's parents would not reach out to her, and if her parents got sick she would not be able to reach out to them, their children would not have any grandparents to accept and love them. The opposition they are sure to face from their family would make their life miserable.

Rina understands how his family would view their union, foreseeing all the hardships that is to come their way. He tries to convince Anita by reminding her of her own experiences, "Imagine we do get married, will that not make your mother lose her mind? The time your brother got married in London they almost went as far as disowning him, but since she was able to embody the role of an Indian woman so well, a connection was finally

reformed between them and yet, there is always a rift between them ever since” (158) attempting to make Anita see the truth of how her parents would be affected by their marriage. He can clearly foresee how hurt both their parents would be, and that is a big contribution to their separation.

Rina’s following words clearly reveal the strained connection that would be created as a result of their union:

Anita, if we bravely claim that love is all we need between us and elope, I would not be able to take you home to my parents, and we would not dare go to your parents’ house either. Perhaps we definitely will be happy just the both of us, but someday we would have kids whom we would wish we could show our parents, you would miss their affection and sickness would make us yearn for them.... Now, if we live as our parents wish for us to live and each marry someone from our own tribe, we would forever have the love and support of our families, and eventually we will develop a deep love for the mother or father of our children, and that will be a much more righteous love. If we selfishly glorify our love for each other now, we will only hurt our parents.... (220)

In this way Rina expresses his practical concerns about their future and their families.

Whenever Rina’s thoughts move towards marrying Anita, his father always enters his conscience for he knows very well that his father would not agree with him. He does not condemn those who have married to a different race, “When it comes to others, if they truly love each other then let them be and let them be married, I do not blame them, it is not my place to condemn them” (163) he claims, “However, I am who I am, I am my father’s son, I simply cannot do as others do and marry a foreign woman” (163). Using the conscience of his father as a rock to stand firm on. In times when he feels the urge to elope with her, “No,

this cannot be, this foreign woman cannot become my spouse. I do not condemn those who marry outsiders as long as it is truly out of love. But, as for me, I cannot do the same, for I am my father's son" (229). Reminding himself to stay loyal to his family.

We also find out that Anita's mother is truly grateful to Rina for not marrying his daughter, "If you took her away I think I could die, I have already borne the pain of my son marrying a foreigner" (206) she says, revealing that Anita's parents would have never agreed to their marriage and would have been terribly hurt by it. It is clear to us that their parents are the main source of adversity in their union.

2.4.3. Contrasting Differences in Customs and Practices

Anita and Rina's marriage cannot come to fruition because of the vast difference in their way of life and customs. Anita is an Indian woman, with a lifestyle that is in stark contrast to the Mizo way of life, their food, clothing and language. It would be immensely difficult for two people from vast different backgrounds to come together and form a successful marriage. Perhaps, if they get married and Rina takes Anita home to Mizoram, it would be immensely difficult for Anita to adjust to a Mizo society that is so alien to her, then in the long run she would definitely feel homesick; it would not be possible for their relationship to remain harmonious for a long time. Rina is aware of all these possibility and therefore takes a step back.

"If you marry me.... You will move to my homeland, on the slopes of the hills where food will be different, you will have to attend our churches, in a room as big as your room you would have to live with my entire family, you would have to adjust to our way of life..." (155), warning her of the immense cultural and familial differences that would soon birth problems for them, because of these presumable hardship, parting ways is the best choice for them.

Rina goes on to say, "... We would soon have children, will you be able to bear other kids teasing and bullying our children. Will that be bearable for you?" (158) revealing all the pain and hardships even their children will have to inevitably face. Portraying the racism and bullying often faced by mixed race children.

The various aspects mentioned above are all proof that Anita and Rina's life together would be wrought with hardship, causing them to choose to part ways. Religion, culture, land, way of life and language all pose a threat to their happiness. The very fact that both of their parents will not accept their marriage is reason enough to not get married.

It is debatable that the hardships that bombard Anita and Rina's relationship are all made up in the mind of the author, or perhaps these hardships are based off of reality. But it is clear we can conclude that the author writes of such hardships because of his personal bias towards interracial marriage.

Laltluangliana Kiangte writes in the introduction to this story, "It is often mentioned by people that a difference in religion and a difference in cultural way of life can never really form a strong bond between people. People in interracial marriages may not reveal all their troubles, but the truth is easily revealed to the eyes of faith," (vi) thereby, declaring that interracial marriages never truly workout. Since this story is about a man whose conscience struggles with his love for Anita and his strong sense of Mizo loyalty, he claims it would be even more accurate if it was titled "*Bombay Nula nge Ram leh Hnam*" (iv).

2.5. Life and Works of C. Ṭhuamluaia

C. Ṭhuamluaia, the author of "Sialton Official" was born at Lungmam village in the year 1922, his father was Lalnghina and his grandfather was Chawngdenga (Lalthangliana, *Hnuhma* 95). C. Ṭhuamluaia completed primary school at Serkawn, did his high school in

Shillong and studied I.A in Calcutta and finished his B.A at St. Edmund's College, Shillong in the year 1950. He became the principal of Lunglei High School through the years 1950 – 1956. In the year 1957 he was chosen as the *Chhim Bial* MLA and he passed away in the year 1959 (Lalthangliana, *Mizo* 274).

C. Ṭhuamluaia married Siamliani Chhangte, on August 7 1953, the daughter of Mr. Hnuna, a famous tailor in Lunglei. Siamliani is also the sister of famous Mizo song-writer Lalzova. They were a happy couple and had four children – Zothanpuii, Zorampari (Mara name '*Rapaw*'), Zonunsangi and Zomuankimi (Lalthangliana, *Hnuhma* 99).

B. Lalthangliana writes that C. Ṭhuamluaia's writing may have been written during the years 1945 to 1959 (104). Most of his writings are known to be left undiscovered, the ones that we have today are as follows:

Essay:

1. *Zoram Nipui*
2. *Kan Nun Khuarei An Chang Tur Hi*
3. *Ṭawng Hmasawn Nan*
4. *Chawngtinleri Puan Thin Tlang*
5. *Hmanlai Mizo Hla*

Short Story:

1. *Sialton Official*
2. *Leitlang Dingdi*
3. *Pu Hanga Leilet Veng*

Novel:

1. *Eng tin Awm Ta Zel Ang Maw?*

English Writing:

1. *The Disaster*
2. *Christian Festival*
3. *The Days that Followed*

His stories and essays reveal to readers the immense skill and talent he possessed over language and many of his works can be found in the book published by B. Lalthangliana, *Kaphleia leh C. Thuamluaia Hnuhma*.

2.6. Summary of “Sialton Official”

“Sialton Official” narrates the tragic interracial love story between an unnamed Mizo man and a Khasi woman names Dorothy. Despite their deep love for each other, the great rift of ethnicity an culture between them could not be overcome and they could not get married; just as it is in the story *Anita*, it is an interracial love story between a Mizo man and an outsider, it is a riveting plot where their ethnic differences causes them to separate.

The protagonist of “Sialton Official” is an unnamed character, the officer of Sialton town and is therefore simply called ‘*Sialton Official*’. The protagonist is transferred from Sialton to a small southern town, and they leave for that town in the *Favang* season. He is withheld in Aizawl to talk to their department heads about certain work matters, while his wife Nguri and his 7 year old son and 5 year old daughter move on ahead towards the southern town. They stayed in *Hotel Odyana*, a three days’ walk from Aizawl, and the protagonist joined his family at the hotel a few days later. They are a very happy family

without any wants in the world. In the words of the protagonist, “Our family has a simple philosophy, this world is beautiful, it is a happy place and we are happy as well” (Ṭhuamluaia 200).

Since there was no bed in the hotel room to accommodate their whole family, and since the manager allowed them to make use of one more bed without having to pay for it, Ngurpuii arranged another bed for him in a separate room. Anticipating a peaceful and comfortable bed he enters the room, and he meets what would become one of his most important encounters.

At the side of the bed is a newspaper, a paper that he often read before called *Shillong Times*. He has not read that particular newspaper for a very long time, and he finds a brand new column that was added to it called the “Personal Column,” and he reads these words in that column :

“D – if you could see my heart, it is bleeding now – D” (201)

These words struck a chord in his heart, and took him back to many years back when he had said the very same words to a Khasi woman, Dorothy, whom he loved deeply at the time. “So it seems the world is yet the very same world” (201) he says, his mind taking him back to his past, the Dorothy of his past has now come back to haunt his mind in the present. His eyes immediately falls on the third page of that newspaper and on the left column at the end was written “time gone by”. These were the words written:

Dorothy and her little daughter in straightened circumstances, entered St. Mary’s Convent. It may be recalled in this connection that Dorothy married a handsome drunkard who drank himself to death two years ago. Since then her lot has been a hard one. She was originally a tea girl of M locality here. (201)

These words shook him to his core, and exclaimed the name “Dorothy”. “Dorothy, Queen of the days I loved” (201) he exclaimed as his mind went back to relive his past. There was no more space for his wife and children in his mind.

The protagonist and Dorothy met in Shillong when they were both students. For the protagonist, even just the name Dorothy was the most beautiful name, a name that still lingered in his heart. His mind took him to a time when he drank tea with Dorothy, dreaming of how Dorothy would dress up, her eyes, her hair and her smile all came back to him with such intensity; remembering Shillong city where they both went for outings came rushing back with no space for anyone else in his mind, his wife and children had no place now that Dorothy’s memories have come flooding back.

Even though he is now settled down with a good wife, and even though he is happy with his family where memories of Dorothy were suppressed deep in his mind without resurfacing, even though he had claimed “Shillong and this Khasi land is a place that I have chosen to ignore due to various silly reasons” (201). The simple mention of Dorothy and her child has him nostalgic over his long lost love.

“Even if Dorothy herself came back, it would no longer be enough to disrupt the happy family that I have built, my days with her are no longer a significant part of my memory” (208), are the strong claims that he had made, and yet, the simple mention of Dorothy in the *‘Shillong Times’* newspaper is enough to set his mind in turmoil. “... I feel like I am in my youth again, that the bruise in my heart would resurface and bleed anew” (208). He exclaims his mental turmoil and where his family now hardly have a place.

His mind is yet again filled with thoughts of Dorothy, he would not even respond to the calls of his children, and he would not even look them in the eye. The pleadings of his wife Nguri had no effect on him. His mind was back in Shillong where Dorothy lived, he

rummaged to the bottom of his trunk where he hid old photos of Dorothy, which after nine years he holds in his hands, caressing the pictures of his old love.

And so, spending his days yearning for Dorothy his loneliness becomes too heavy to bear and he gives into what Lalzova poetically named “*Di lo tleina chawltui ningzu*” (211), the sweet entrance of intoxicating nectar sold by widows. He gives himself into drinking day and night, all the while constantly taking a look at Dorothy’s picture, and he finally loses consciousness.

He is frantically woken up from his slumber as a fire has broken out in *Hotel Odyana*. He makes his way to escape amidst the fear and frenzy, his wife and children however could not be saved and too barely escapes death in a wounded state. He is left to mourn the loss of his family alone, walking the earth with grief. In the end he goes back to Zolawn town to become a teacher.

2.7. A Foreign Girl Dorothy and Mizo Woman Nguri from “Sialton Official”

C. Thuamluaia portrays the character of Dorothy with such finesse, endowing her with irresistible charm and beauty. Even in instances where the Mizo woman, Nguri, is endowed with respect and beauty, it still does not compare to the charm he gives to Dorothy. Let us look into detail as to why he would endow an outsider, Dorothy, with such immense enticing characteristics.

Dorothy is not a woman born of a high class family, she is as normal a woman as anyone else, however, “It is by Dorothy that Shillong is made so beautiful; it is by Dorothy that the poor workers seem to bloom; Dorothy soothes the days that are struck by loneliness. A woman satisfied with her own life, a woman worth looking up to, a woman who is always

cheerful” (203) are the words that the protagonist uses to describe her. Dorothy is portrayed as an enticing irresistible woman. He goes on to say:

You always feel a sense of calm around her, I can never get enough. She covers her head with a yellow silk scarf, from which her curly fringes peak through, on either side of her sweet face dangles two small golden earrings. On days that we gather to watch football or other social gatherings, she will come dressed up (she hardly has times to dress up as other people do), wearing her red and white shoes, one cannot take his gaze away from her, one of the wonders of the world, Dorothy (203).

Claiming that Dorothy is one of the “wonders of the world”, her charms have overtaken his mind and he rarely stops talking about her. He is overwhelmed by her charm and beauty, “what a beautiful woman, Dorothy” (206) he says. He finds deep pleasure in getting to kiss her, and when he is around her, “he forgets about all else, he does not see anyone else and he cannot think clearly of anything else”. He dearly wishes that his happiness with her would last forever.

Taking a look at Nguri’s character, she is also not one without charms and the protagonist also expresses words of praise for her. When he first started courting Nguri, he was still very heartbroken because of his breakup with Dorothy. As William Shakespeare says, “Men are April when they woo, December when they wed” and as the protagonist states, “When I first met Nguri, because of the after effects of my time with Dorothy, I was still very much in December, and if not, at least in January or February. We got married, and Ngurpuii brought out the April in me” (207), singing his praises for Nguri and the happiness she has brought him. “The only person who can make me forget about Dorothy and about my old life, if I had to write down how highly I hold her in my heart I would not be able to give words to my feelings” (207), claiming how Nguri has changed his life.

And he goes on to say, "... As long as Ngurpuii is by my side I will be able to spend the rest of my life without looking back to my past. Even if Dorothy herself came back the happiness that I have acquired with my family cannot be changed by any force, these thoughts are not even in my mind anymore" (208). However, it turns out that it is Dorothy herself who can make him go back on his words after all, as we see in *Hotel Odyana* his wife and children no longer have any hold over him as he spends his days yearning over Dorothy once again. "I cannot think of anyone else, even my wife and children no longer hold a place in my heart" (202) he says, revealing to us how clearly Dorothy's memory rings in his mind.

The result of the protagonist's yearning over Dorothy once again, has a terribly negative impact on the lives of his wife and children, and because the tragedy is a result of an accident and because the readers strongly sympathize with Dorothy and her child, we seem to not put the protagonist under too much blame. Somtei Chongthu, on the other hand, states, "This aspect reveals to us the condition of women in the past and the present of Mizo society, where stories and voices of women are silenced while we eagerly listen to the voices of men, while the actions and lives of men are closely assessed we hardly ever look at the women who suffer as a consequence of the action the men in their life take" (44), giving a stage for the silent voices of Nguri and her children to be heard. She argues that it is greatly unfair how we sympathize with a man who has fallen in love with an outsider and yet we shamelessly belittle Mizo women who are caught up in the same situation.

Vanneihluanga also shares his views on this story in *Lengzem* "Editorial", "I think we can say that *Ṭhuamluaia* brings out the hidden desire for men to cheat, or perhaps reveal to a faithful man the aspects of cheating and betrayal, embodying in the beautiful Khasi woman, all aspects of beauty and desire" (n. pag) C. *Ṭhuamluaia*, through his story, is considered to reveal the hidden mentality of men.

The reasons as to why C. Thuamluaia, in his story “Sialton Official”, would endow this Khasi woman with such immense charm and desirability is worth questioning. It is often surmised that perhaps he has faced and been through those very same things, perhaps in his college days in Shillong, he too had fallen in love with a Khasi woman? It is known that the author thoroughly enjoyed his days in Shillong and did not even think of going home, as is written by B Lalthangliana (Lalthangliana, *Hnuhma* 96).

His father had to write a letter asking him to come home, and in a reply to that letter, he is known to have written: “Will I go home without Aquilina?” (96) There is no further details as to the identity of Aquilina, but it makes me wonder that he must have been on love with a woman of another ethnicity as well.

2.8. Their Reasons for Not Getting Married

C. Laizawna’s story *Anita* and C. Thuamluaia’s story “Sialton Official” both consist of the same themes, where both the interracial lovers are unable to get married no matter how much they wish to. And the reason for this is because their partners are of different ethnicities.

The protagonist in “Sialton Official” was the first one to fall for Dorothy and made the first, putting forth his best efforts to make her like him. Dorothy on the other hand, is extremely aware of the fact that they are of different ethnicities, different cultures and different states and therefore knows that their relationship would not lead to anywhere, and thus rejected his proposals many times even though she does have feelings for him as well.

The protagonist however, is unsatisfied with just being friends with her, “When I look back at all our interactions and the times we hang out, I reckon my feelings for her are much stronger than her feelings for me” (207), “If she had loved me the right way all of this would

never have happened, not that I am rejecting my family, but I would not have had to write about this in the first place” (202), claiming that his unfortunate situation would never come to be if Dorothy had loved him too.

However, if the readers look at the story clearly, we can see that Dorothy did not necessarily have lesser feelings for him, only that she could foresee the ‘storm of hardships’ that would await their union. Even if they both agreed to marry, she assumed that the many adversities that came their way would have not allowed the marriage to happen. All the aspects that the protagonist missed out are assessed by Dorothy, the ‘stormy hardships’ ahead of them and it is for this reason that she claimed with a broken heart, “Oh! how I wish I were a Mizo woman!” (205) it is such a challenging feat for a Khasi woman to marry a Mizo man that she expresses her wish, that she were a Mizo woman.

Dorothy is a clear headed woman, one who looks ahead and analyses the things that could and would happen. The kind to look before taking a leap; to think that amongst all the Khasi men who wish to marry her, to marry a Mizo man was just not the right choice to make, and thus she laments that she was not born a Mizo woman.

We do not exactly know what their parents would think of their union, and yet, her claims, “... Whatever it is we are not the only people in this world, we both have our parents who are living who we must think of; and you must know as well what they would think of us....” (206), is a clear indication that their family would not agree. She may not say it straight, but it is clear that their family’s rejection of their union would be a cause for their separation.

The protagonist expresses their grave situation in the words, “As for me, I am trying to reach for a star without climbing, and as for her, she is looking for a ladder that does not exist.” Mafaa Hauhnar further explains this sentence:

For the protagonist, Dorothy, the Khasi woman, is a *Dingdi* flower at the edges of a hill, a flower not meant for him to pluck and own.

People of two different ethnicities, (Mizo and Khasi), from different states (Lushai hills and Khasi & Jaintia Hills), with different ways of life (patriarchal society and a matriarchal society), and from different classes in society (a student with a bright future and a daily wage worker) a contrast in every aspect of their life.

It is not the geographical distance that separated them, but in their time, there is yet a very high wall that separated ethnicities, and the law that each one must marry within one's own race is already decided beforehand. The wise Dorothy knows all of this, and painfully claims "How I wish I were a Mizo woman". (49-50)

Amidst all the hardships that is to rain upon them, the protagonist carelessly wishes to "reach for a star without climbing" while Dorothy on the other hand hoping that there must be some way to reach for that star is "looking for a ladder that does not exist" but so it seems that there is no way to find a thing that does not exist, it is only complications that surrounds them.

And finally, Dorothy is "to marry a good man of her race, everything is settled now" (Thuamluaia 207) is the news that reaches him and he claims, "Dorothy, I will go back home, but I will never forget about you. I will look onto your hills, all the way from Mizoram, the hills that you reside in and I will look onto them again and again in remembrance of you" (211) and this is how they part ways.

This sadness and nostalgia catches up to him again and again, and even after settling down with a wife and kids, yet again he is struck with the heavy thoughts of her. Succumbing to drinking, he fails to save his wife and kids in the fire that at Hotel Odyana and he loses

them as well. It would seem that it is Nguri and her children who end up facing the tragic consequences of their father's heartbreak.

B. Lalthangliana claims that, "*Sialton Official* talks about interracial love and yet does not throw it under any positive light and does not support interracial marriage in any way; and even presents it like a proverb, the words '*I am trying to reach for the star without climbing while she looks for a ladder that does not exist*'" (Lalthangliana, *Hnuhma* 108). It is really C. Ṭhuamluaia's intention to never support interracial marriage is one that requires deeper analysis. And if they two lovers were able to marry at all, would it have led to their happiness is also another aspect to ponder on.

K.C. Vannghaka also comments in his book named *Literature Zungzam*, "This story consists of the love between Mizo man and a Khasi woman, even though they love and yearn for each other, the author does in no way consider getting them both married; the fact that they are of different states and different ethnicities are always an instrument to tear them apart..." (69).

C. Laizawna's story *Anita* and C. Ṭhuamluaia's story "Sialton Official" both deal with outsiders who fell in love Mizo men but both of them were unable to get married because of their different ethnicities. Anita who is deeply in love with Rina cannot just conquer him with love, she is unable to conquer the religious, ethnic and cultural difference and they end up parting even with a broken heart. And in that same way in "Sialton Official" the protagonist and Dorothy may love each other immensely, but their difference in state and culture simply does not allow them to get married and live happily ever after.

In *Anita*, the female protagonist Anita is willing to give up everything for Rina, even giving up her virginity to him. However, Rina is able to clearly foresee the hardships that is to come their way if they get married, conflict in culture, religion and ethnicity and their

parents' disapproval, he does his best to reject and make Anita think clearly as well. With a heavy heart Anita ends up marrying a man of her own class and caste and Rina goes back home and married a Mizo woman as well.

“Sialton Official”, on the other hand, has a protagonist who wishes and does his best to marry a young Khasi girl Dorothy, he puts all matters of ethnicity aside and pursues his love. Dorothy on the other hand is able to see the “storm” that is to rain on them, and thus, is clearly aware that they cannot marry. And it is for this reason she exclaims “How I wish I were born a Mizo woman” (Ṭhuamluaia 205). When there is no other choice for her, she finally marries a man of her own tribe.

The male protagonist also marries a Mizo woman and builds a happy family with her, meanwhile Dorothy's husband passes away and he finds out that Dorothy and her daughter have moved into St. Mary's Convent because of poverty from the newspaper '*Shillong Times*'. He is taken back to his old life, because of the overwhelming memory of Dorothy, he neglects his wife and children. While he spent his days drinking a widow's brewed wine, his neglect of his wife and kids leads to their death in a fire. This shows just how much power, even just the memory of Dorothy, has on his life; their immense love of their past is still haunting them in their present life.

C. Laizawna and C. Ṭhuamluaia understand the love that is possible between the beautiful non-Mizo women and Mizo men, they still hold their opinions that to go as far as marrying outside of one's tribe is not something possible or acceptable. Therefore, they do not make any attempts to portray interracial love stories in a positive light.

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Chapter – 3

Interracial Relationships in H. Lallungmuana *Ram leh I Tan Chauh* and Khawlkungi

Duhtak Sangpuii

3.1. Life and Works of H. Lallungmuana

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Chapter – 3

Interracial Relationships in H. Lallungmuana *Ram leh I Tan Chauh* and Khawlkungi

Duhtak Sangpuii

In the preceding chapter, we have looked at the concept of interracial relationship between Mizo men and women outside the Mizo community. The relationships failed to evolve into marriage because of the differences in culture, language, religion, customs and lifestyle. The present chapter will look at the romantic relationships of Mizo women with men from outside the Mizo community as portrayed in H. Lallungmuana's story titled *Ram leh I Tan Chauh* and Khawlkungi's story *Duhtak Sangpuii*. These two stories highlight how romantic relationships developed between Mizo women and non-Mizo men, how they forced themselves into marriage pacts against the will of their parents and how this resulted into unpleasant consequences, particularly for the Mizo female characters.

3.1. Life and Works of H. Lallungmuana

H. Lallungmuana, the author of *Ram leh I Tan Chauh*, was born on 9 January 1944 in the village of Biate. His father, Lalkhawsiamama met an early death and Lallungmuana and his siblings were raised by his mother.

On account of the poor family condition, he struggled his way through schools and college with meagre financial assistance. He entered primary education at Biate village and there in 1964, he completed his class ten. Then he joined Shillong College for Pre-University and in 1965 he passed Pre-University examination, and he graduated in 1968 from St. Anthony's College (Zoramdinthara 206). He completed his M.A in 1972 from Gauhati University and earned his Ph.D in 1989 with a doctoral thesis titled 'Themes and Techniques of Mizo Fiction' from the Khasi Department in North Eastern Hill University (NEHU).

In 1973, H. Lallungmuana held the post of Headmaster in Lengpui High School and worked as a Lecturer at Pachhunga College in the following year. In 1998, he was elected as the Member of Parliament (Lok Shaba), a post which he retained till April 1999. After this, he returned to Pachhunga College to continue this work as Lecturer (Lalthangliana 467). From 2004, he was the Principal of Pachhunga University College till his retirement in 2008.

He married K. Lalramthangi in 1973, October 18 with whom he had three sons and two daughters. He is currently residing in Salem Veng, Aizawl with his family.

H. Lallungmuana is a master storyteller and his book written in 1995, *Ram leh I Tan Chauh* was selected as 'Book of the Year' in 1995 by the Mizo Academy of Letters (MAL). The inscription on the award reads as follows:

This book provides valuable instructions in choosing life partners, the value of friendship, the dangers of obsession with material wealth and the suffering of the poor in the face of social injustice. It also portrays the reward of perseverance and hard work to achieve success on both the individual and cultural level.

The author pen down his imagination in a true love story and structured narrative and the language of the text is also of high literary value. Hence, the Mizo Academy of Letters has selected this book as Book of the Year 1995. (*Thu leh Hla* 16-17)

H. Lallungmuana also wrote two other fictional works titled *Hmangaih Zoramthangi* (1996) and *Hara Kima* (2007) which are much celebrated and highly regarded texts within Mizo literature. H. Lallungmuana is not only fiction writer but also an essayist. He wrote fifty essays and sixty articles which often appeared in various newspapers, souvenirs, and journals (Zoramdinthara 207). His essay titled "Lung In Malsawmna Thuruk" has also been included in the Class XII syllabus. With the publication of his drama *Sual Man Chu Thihna* (1978), Muana is also known as a dramatist (207).

3.2. Summary of *Ram leh I Tan Chauh*

Ram leh I Tan Chauh is a story that tells the story of a Mizo woman named Julie Lalhruaitluangi who is married to an Arab man named H. H Alnafasi and how she, later, faced the tragic consequences of her marriage. The protagonist, Julie Lalhruaitluangi, is the identical twin sister of Jennie Vanlalhruaii, and their similarities in terms of looks and appearances even fooled the Mizo male protagonist, Lalramchhuana.

Julie started her early school years in Shillong where she stayed in a Roman Catholic convent. She spends the majority of her years in Shillong as a result of which she feels distanced and unfamiliar with Mizoram and Mizo society. Her mental attitude and perspective also differs from the common Mizo mentality to a certain. While pursuing her Ph.D degree in Bangalore, she falls in love with her fellow researcher, H. H. Alnafasi whom she later married without taking the consent of her parents.

H.H. Alnafasi's father is Ghazif Alnafasi and the family migrated from Kuwait to Saudi Arabia while Alnafasi was a young boy and they settled down in Ibu Khaldoon Street in Damman (Lallungmuana 107). Alnafasi tells Julie that their family acquires large amount of wealth from the oil business that his father owned. Shortly after their marriage, Alnafasi takes home Julie to Saudi Arabia.

The married couple are happy and enjoyed each other's company during the initial stage of their marriage. However, after a year, Alnafasi takes in a beautiful Saudi Arabian girl, the daughter of a wealthy Arab man, as his second wife. From then on, Julie continually suffers domestic abuse in the hands of her husband. He forces her to return to India but is stopped by his parents because Julie is already pregnant with Alnafasi's child (114). On hearing his wife's pregnancy, Alnafasi is furious on hearing the news about his wife's pregnancy and he goes away on a trip with his second wife.

Julie is heartbroken and she contemplates about going back to her family in India but is afraid to do so because she feels that she has betrayed them. 'Loneliness and hopelessness slowly erased meaning from her life, and this led her to suicidal thoughts' (115). She is rescued by her father-in-law when she tried to commit suicide by drowning herself in the swimming pool. Her father-in-law tries to make arrangements for her to return to India but Julie refuses to go. Out of pity for his daughter-in-law's tragic condition, Alnafasi's father sends a letter to Julie's parents:

Dear Julie's parents,

As you know, my son married your daughter Julie, sometime last year. Your daughter is very dear to my family, she makes a good wife. But my son got married with another girl of this country, since then he has been changed completely. He becomes cruel to Julie, and life is for her unbearable because of her husband. Her husband has gone away taking his new wife without informing me or Julie where would go. Till now, nothing is known about them. Despair, Julie tried to commit suicide, but thank God. I did save her. I think, I have to send her back to you for her happiness, within this month. Please accept her and show your love to her as I do here.

Your sincerely

Ghazif Alnafasi (116).

After sending the letter to Julie's parents to take her back and welcome her, Julie's father-in-law escorted her till India. Before leaving, he gives two heavy suitcases to Julie to hand it over to her parents as gifts along with large amount of cash.

With her heart full of regret and shame, Julie returned to Mizoram where she begged her parents to forgive. She exclaims, "I used to claim myself as a Mizo woman, but I became

an Arab wife for a year. It is going to be painful and difficult to try to be a Mizo woman again while carrying an Arab child inside me” (120).

In this manner, this story showcase an unfulfilled married life between a Mizo woman and a man from a non-Mizo community. The author clearly highlights the wrong choices that Julie made through the course of her relationship with a man from outside her community. Even after her return to Mizoram, she hides herself within the four walls of her father’s house, away from the eyes of Mizo society.

3.3. The Reason Behind Julie’s Father’s Disapproval of Interracial Relationship

Julie Lalhruaitluangi’s parents are shocked and deeply saddened by the news of their daughter’s marriage to an Arab man. While the mother is able to gradually understand her daughter’s marriage, Julie’s father finds it difficult to accept the marriage and is filled with fury and anger. After reading the letter stating his daughter’s marriage to Alnafasi, Julie’s father says to his wife, “You have lost your daughter” (106). This statement shows that Julie’s father considers her daughter as dead once she marries a non-Mizo man. He exclaims his disappointment saying, “Death is not the only way of losing our children. I consider this as more haunting and dreadful than death itself” (107).

Julie’s father’s main concern, apart from his daughter’s husband being a non-Mizo, is the fact that he is a Muslim and not a Christian. He may come to a certain understand had Alnafasi be a Christian; but the fact that he is a Muslim motivates his disapproval of the marriage. He cries out, “It would have been easier to deal with if she had died as a Christian. Even if she was to give birth to a child, I’d be having an Arab grandson and nothing would embarass me more!” (108).

Julie's mother, on the other hand, tries her best to support her daughter. She tries to calm her husband by saying that there are other people who are married to non-Mizo men. She says,

There are other Mizo girls who are married to men outside the Mizo community. We shouldn't be consumed by sadness and anger just because it is happening to our daughter. Can we just accept that she has found the man she loves? We should not disapprove of him just because he is not a Mizo. In fact, he is from a wealthy family who can give our daughter whatever she wants, I don't mind the fact that she is looking for material comfort. (109)

However, Julie's father seems to have different opinion than his wife, he says, "You are right. There are other Mizo girls who marry non-Mizo men but atleast they are married to Christians with whom they can built a decent Christian family. Our daughter is married to an Arab man, a Muslim! I cannot accept this" (109). Therefore, her father's main problem with her marriage to Anafasi is that his daughter is married to a man of another religion.

This throws light on the fact that Christianity occupies a central position in Mizo society and is considered to be one of the defining factors in the case of marriage. The idea of interracial marriage can also be given a chance if the non-Mizo member is a Christian, someone with whom one would be able to built a decent respectable Christian family. The attitude of Julie's father in the story shows the important position and deep impact of Christianity on Mizo society and how this is reflected in literature.

The author's core concern about interracial relationship seems to be determined by religion and one can assume that the author shows leniency towards couples who share the same faith. He says in an interview, "Even if they are from outside the Mizo community, it is somehow acceptable if he/she is a Christian. The Bible also talks about how God is against

not merely interracial relationship but a relationship with non-believers.” Religion, and not ethnicity, is used as the yardstick and this reflects the importance given to Christianity by the Mizo community and the deep impact of religion on the people.

3.4. Problems Faced by Julie on Account of Interracial Marriage

In this section, the different hardships and difficulties faced by Julie because of her marriage to an Arab man and how, through the story, the author attempts to highlight the dangers of interracial marriage.

Firstly, Mizo community is a close-knit community where everyone knows each other. This plays an important role in the dynamics of the reputation of an individual, be it bad or good. Hence, from this perspective, the severity of Julie’s condition can be understood. When his father first heard about her marriage to an Arab man, he says, “After a short while, everyone will know that our daughter is married to someone outside our community. It will be published in newspapers. We wouldn’t be able to hide it” (108). In this manner, Mizo men and women who involved themselves in interracial marriage are bound to face the ridicule and resentment of their fellow. They appear on newspapers and media, gossips and small talks as a result of which the issue becomes not just an individual problem but a problem faced by the entire family.

Hence, the story clearly reflects the author’s views and attitude towards interracial marriage which is evident from his portrayal of the many negative impacts of such marriage through the tragic plight of the protagonist and her family.

Secondly, as aforementioned, one of the major problem is Julie’s conversion from Christianity to Islam. Mizoram is a Christian state where the majority of the people follow Christianity. Hence, the principles and doctrines of Christianity are deeply embedded in the cultural practices, value system and in the everyday lives of the Mizo community. This leaves

little or no room for other religion within the society. Any person who holds a religion other than Christianity is easily marked and looked upon as an outsider. Therefore, Julie's conversion to Islam is unacceptable in the eyes of Mizo society where Christianity is accepted as the only true religion.

Thirdly, Julie's happiness did not last long because of her marriage to a non-Mizo man without her parents' consent. Her husband took in another wife, and he treats Julie as a slave. She suffers torture and abuse in the hands of her husband. Julie becomes depressed and hopeless. She continues to develop suicidal tendencies and even tried to kill herself by drinking poison and tried to drown herself in the family swimming pool.

All these physical and psychological pain experienced by Julie reflect the author's disagreement with the idea of interracial marriage. The author is determined to bring to the readers the tragic plight of Mizo women who marry men outside the Mizo community.

Fourthly, Julie is left without a choice when her father-in-law, out of sympathy and compassion, pressures her to go home to her parents in Mizoram. She is also pregnant with Alnafasi's child which only worsens her situation. The narrator says, "Now she has returned from a marriage where was nothing but an unwanted wife, only to be ridiculed by her people for betraying her land and her people, carrying the child of a man who do not love her. She comes home to nothing but loneliness and despair" (117). In this manner, the author describes Julie's tragic state of existence as someone who has nowhere to turn to. This clearly shows how the story reflects the horrific consequences of interracial marriage for Mizo women.

Fifthly, Julie converts back to Christianity when she returns to Mizoram. She is filled with remorse and guilt. Her father forgives her and is allowed to stay in her father's house. However, she is afraid to leave the four walls of their house because of her pregnancy and also because she is aware of the fact that she would not be welcomed within the church and

social circles. This throws light on the fact that Mizo women who involve themselves in interracial marriage are inevitably doomed with alienation and estrangement even after they returned to Mizo society with a feeling of repentance.

Lastly, in this story *Ram leh I Tan Chauh*, Julie's sister Jennie Vanlalhrui is married to a Mizo man named Lalramchhuana. Initially, the mother did not approve the relationship between Jennie and Lalramchhuana because Lalramchhuana was a mere graduate without a government job who rears pigs for a living. Even Julie expresses her disappointment with her sister's choice, she makes a derogatory comment saying, "I would rather die without a husband than marry someone like him who simply leads a farm life with a B.A degree" (94).

However, in the long run, the one who made the right choice in marriage is Jennie and not Julie. Lalramchhuana, the man Jennie's mother and daughter mockingly called "a farmer with B.A degree" proves himself to be a reliable and responsible husband with far-sighted visions for the family. When Julie returned to Mizoram after her failed marriage, she is afraid to meet the eyes of her sister and her husband, whom she had once treated with mockery and contempt.

This throws light on the fact that the women who choose men outside the community for their riches and wealth always end up with guilt and remorse for the choices they make. Moreover, the author of this story puts forth the moral lesson that it is always a better choice to choose someone from one's own community even though they may not be rich and wealthy like the non-Mizo men.

3.5. Reasons Why Mizo Women Enter into Interracial Relationships

The general consensus is that it is easier for Mizo women to engage themselves in interracial relationships than Mizo men. In an article titled "Hnam Dang Pasa Neih"

(*Vanglaini* 17th May, 2019), Lal Hmangaiha writes, "... It seems that Mizo women, in particular, finds it easier to marry someone from outside the Mizo community than the men do" (6). Chuauṭhuama also highlights similar view in his article titled "Hnam Humhalh" (*Vanglaini* 14th September, 2019) where he writes, "Unlike the men, there are Mizo women who do not mind marrying someone from a non-Mizo community" (8). He observes that though most of the men in Mizo society do not wish to enter into interracial marriage, there are a number of Mizo women who do not mind the idea of an interracial marriage.

Why do Mizo women involve themselves in interracial relationships? Why do they choose men from outside the Mizo community when there are many Mizo bachelors? There can be many reasons behind the choices that they make. There are women who desperately fall in love with these men and for some women, convenience in location and settlement play crucial role in their choice. However, there are some women who deliberately choose to go for non-Mizo men instead of Mizo men and this is evident in this story (*Ram leh I Tan Chauh*) and this seems to be the answer put forward by the author in looking for reasons as to why Mizo women choose men outside the Mizo community.

Firstly, it can be said that Mizo men too play an important role in the choices that women make regarding men. In this story, Julie's sister Jennie remarks, "... Mizo men fail to take proper care of the women, you can't control them, you catcall them on the streets, you disgrace them in the eyes of non-Mizo men. You let them run business outside the state, many men treat women as the bread-earner, you depend on women for a living..." (Lallungmuana 84). Hence, it can be seen that the attitude and mentality of Mizo men towards the women play is one of the many reasons why Mizo women tend to choose men outside the Mizo community. The ill-treatment, the catcalls and the dependency on women put Mizo men in a bad light and this makes it easier for Mizo women to choose non-Mizo

men whom they consider to be more reliable and dependable than men from their own community.

It is important that Mizo men rethink their attitude and mentality towards their own women and how they treat them individually and how they approach them within the public space as well.

Secondly, Lalramchhuana's remark reflects that Mizo men lack a strong feeling of patriotism when it comes to relationship, he says, "Mizo men do not have a high sense of patriotism in regards to romantic relationship and marriage" (84). This statement reflects the absence of attention and awareness among Mizo men about the importance of the women's role in cultural progress and in preserving cultural values and integrity. Lalramchhuana says:

A few years ago, a Mizo woman married a *Vai* in Nowgong village. The Mizo men took this matter very seriously and paid her a visit while the husband was away. They asked her why she chose to marry outside the Mizo community and she replied, "All those days when I was a single unmarried woman, all I got from Mizo men was street catcallings and they never took me seriously, let alone an honest proposal for a relationship. But this non-Mizo man is the only man who told me that he loves me. So, why wouldn't I marry the man who loves me?" Her visitors were left tongue-tied. (84)

This incident narrated by Lalramchhuana shows the failure of Mizo men in their treatment of the women. In such conditions, it is only natural for Mizo women to marry someone who treats them in the right way, irrespective of their culture, language or religion.

Thirdly, many Mizo women, like other women, yearn for wealth, material comfort and luxurious life which, unfortunately, cannot be afforded by the majority of Mizo men. Hence, they often turn to men outside the Mizo community since they consider these men to

be more eligible in terms of material wealth. When Julie's parents heard the news of their daughter's marriage to a rich Arab man, the father was filled with anger, while the mother says, "If he is someone who can provide her with anything she wants, then our daughter knows what is good for her" (109). This shows that women long for a luxurious comfortable life and their choice in life partners is also greatly determined by this desire.

Julie's mother says "He might be more useful than Jennie's husband who is merely a useless graduate living in a remote far-flung village" (109). The mother's perspective on her two son-in-laws reflect the materialistic mentality of many Mizo others who are on the lookout for rich and wealthy in-laws who can provide material wealth and comfort for the family. They are willing to give their daughters to such men, be it from the Mizo community or outside the community, in exchange for financial gain and material comfort.

Fourthly, it can be assumed that there are Mizo girls who consider farm life and labour work as unworthy professions for men even if they happen to be responsible and reliable individuals. Hence, such men would often be overlooked as potential husbands. This is a common perspective particularly for Mizo women residing in big cities in mainland India who are exposed and tempted to the wealthy life and comfort of luxury that rich men from mainland India could offer. As a result, it becomes easier for them to choose wealthy men who even if they do not belong to the same ethnic community instead of choosing Mizo men.

Julie Lalhruaitluangi gives a derogatory comment about her sister Jennie Vanlalhruaii's boyfriend Lalramchhuana, saying, "I would rather spend my entire life without a marriage than marrying a low life farmer with a B.A degree" (94). This comment by Julie reflects the mindset of many Mizo women whose choice of a husband is determined by wealth and the prospects of material comfort. Such men are given priorities by Mizo women in their search for life partners even if they do not belong to the Mizo community. Wealth

becomes the yardstick with which they measure the eligibility of men, pushing aside the idea of a similar cultural identity, religion and language.

3.6. Life and Works of Khawlkungi

Khawlkungi, the author of *Duhtak Sangpuii*, was born on 1927, September 14 in Mission Vengthlang, Aizawl. She is the daughter of H. Chhuma. She did not have proper schooling and education. She served in the Women Auxiliary Corp during the Second World War. In 1944, she was only 17 years old when she worked as an Air Force Clerk till 1947. Upon her return to Mizoram in 1959, she worked in the PWD Department till her retirement in 1991.

In 1960 January 23, Khawlkungi married Bualkhuma with whom she had two sons and two daughters (Khangte 14). She died on 26 March, 2015.

Khawlkungi was the first women fiction writers among the Mizo (Zoramdinthara 138). She made immense contribution to Mizo literature. Apart from novels and short stories, she has a number of significant works in play-writing and in the field of translation. These are some of her popular works:

Drama:

1. *Pangpar Bawm* (1972)
2. *Rammawi Kalkawng* (1978)
3. *Zawlpala Thlan Tlangah* (1981)
4. *Monu Sual* (1982)
5. *Krismas Thilpek* (1996) etc.

Fiction:

1. *Sangi Rinawmna* (1978)
2. *A Tlai Lutuk Ta* (1979)
3. *Pasal Duhthlan* (1982)
4. *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang* (1983)
5. *Duhtak Sangpuii* (1998) etc.

Translation:

1. *The Daughter of the Condemned*
2. *The Prince and the Pauper*
3. *Secret Power*
4. *D.L. Moody*
5. *The Sins of Herod*, etc.

Khawlkungi was awarded the Padma Shri in 1987 for her contribution to literature and in 1998 she was awarded the Mizo Academy Award (Lalthangliana 464).

3.7. Summary of *Duhtak Sangpuii*

The novel *Duhtak Sangpuii* tells the tale of a Mizo woman Hmingi and a Muslim man named Hussain who is a Mathematics teacher. Before they get married, Hmingi is pregnant with Hussain's child but Hussain's parents have already chosen a wife for him from their Muslim community. Hussain left Hmingi to marry the Muslim woman and Hmingi is left alone in a tragic state to survive on her own with the baby.

Hmingi is the neighbour of the female protagonist Sangpuii's uncle. She studies in Delhi where she is joined by Sangpuii. However, their friendship takes a different turn when Sangpuii starts a romantic relationship with Rotluanga, a man whom Hmingi has secretly admired for a long time. Out of spite and jealousy, Hmingi tries to sabotage Sangpuii and Rotluanga's relationship.

As the story progresses, Hmingi plans an evil plot to harm Sangpuii's reputation by telling Rotluanga that Sangpuii has an affair with a non-Mizo man. She weaves in their Jordanian Mathematics teacher, Mr. Hussain into her plot and tries to convince Rotluanga that Sangpuii and Hussain are in a clandestine relationship. Meanwhile, she also tries to plant doubt and uncertainty in Sangpuii's mind about Rotluanga, she says, "Men are so untrustworthy, especially the likes of Rotluanga who are eligible bachelors, charming and attractive. You can never trust guys like him in a place like Delhi where he is popular among the ladies" (Khawlkungi 48). In this manner, Hmingi cleverly tries to sabotage the trust between Sangpuii and Rotluanga.

Hmingi is determined to make Sangpuii fall for their teacher, Hussain. She tells her, "He is such a handsome man. You should respond to his advances in the best possible way" (67). She also constantly invites Hussain for a visit to the house that she and Sangpuii have rented. Her plan is to make Sangpuii get involved in an interracial relationship with Hussain so as to ruin her reputation. She tries her best to bring Sangpuii and Hussain together so that she herself can get Rotluanga. Hussain, who is already in love with Sangpuii, tries his best to make use of the opportunities that Hmingi has given him. He bought Sangpuii an expensive gold bangle and showered her with gifts and presents. However, Sangpuii refuses to give into his approach in spite of his desperate efforts. The situation worsens when Rotluanga sees Sangpuii and Hussain in her house which continues to create a crack in their relationship.

Hussain is determined to marry Sangpuii. He tells her, "I know I am not a Mizo but you are the only girl I love and if you feel the same way for me, I promise you that I will never make you unhappy. I will never say anything against your religion. We will live wherever you want, and I don't mind not going back to my home country" (91). He even tells her that he is willing to follow her back to Mizoram if she wishes him to. However, his willingness to sacrifice his comfort and the many gifts could not change Sangpuii's heart. She returns all the gifts that Hussain has given her.

Hmingi continues to plot her evil plan to sabotage Sangpuii and Rotluanga's relationship. She makes a suspicious remark to Rotluanga's friend Rina and tells him that Sangpuii and Hussain are not far from getting married (93). This further widens the gap between Sangpuii and Rotluanga. After she tries to explain herself to Rotluanga, Sangpuii loses all hope and goes home to Mizoram.

Hmingi stays back in Delhi after their exam because she wanted to attend a course on Shorthand. She is deeply hurt and troubled her failure to bring Sangpuii and Hussain together, and most of all because she begins to realize the strong bond between Rotluanga and Sangpuii. After failing to win Rotluanga's heart, she turns her attention to Hussain to win his affection. Though she is initially disturbed a bit by the fact that he is a non-Mizo, she frequently invites him to her place out of loneliness and need.

Hussain's visit to Hmingi's house becomes a regular nightly visit and after a short while, the friendship develops into a sexual affair. At first, Hussain pretends to take her seriously and even buys her a golden necklace. He tells her that he would marry her right after she finishes her exam. However, after the examination, Hmingi realized that she is pregnant with Hussain's child which convinces her that Hussain will have no choice but to marry her. She tells him about the pregnancy excitedly and Hussain convincingly promises to

marry her. But Hussain continuously makes excuses about setting the specific date for the wedding while Hmingi constantly pressurizes him to make a decision.

Then, Hussain tells her that he has to go back to his home country, Jordan, on an emergency because his father's business was falling apart because of the crisis in the Middle East. He tells her that he has taken a one month and that he would marry her right away upon his return to Delhi (105). Hussain then leaves her with large amount of money to pay for her rent and other necessities. What Hmingi does not know is that Hussain has gone back to Jordan to marry the daughter of a rich businessman, an arrangement made by his father. He quits his job before his departure to Jordan and has no intention of coming back to India.

Hmingi, then, begins to realize that Hussain has completely fooled her. Burdened with the fear that her fellow Mizo might find out about her pregnancy, she hides in her house with fear. After a month, she goes to her college to inquire about Hussain and finds out that he has already quit his job and even appointed another teacher in his place.

Hmingi returns to Mizoram with a heavy burden. She is determined to hide the fact that the father of her child is a Muslim man. To add to their tragedy, she finds out that her parents have been divorced and comes home to an empty house. She decides to stay with her mother in Jeribum as she feels that it would be safer for her and the child since there are fewer Mizo people in the area. Unfortunately, her mother dies a few days later after she gives birth to her son.

Hmingi raises her son alone with much difficulty and hardship in the house of her elder brother, Vana. She is further cut off from her brother's home after he married a Hmar lady named Zaii. Hmingi, then, puts her son in Kalimpong Home and goes to Shillong in search of jobs. She stays with her brother Liana who is married to a Khasi woman. However,

Hmingi's hope is eventually crushed again after her brother dies shortly after her stay with them. She also hears the news of her father's death in Mizoram.

Hmingi's journey after Hussain left her, it is continuously marked by one tragedy after the other. She faces adversities in different forms everywhere she goes. She faces the final rejection from a Mizo man she secretly hopes to marry after he found out that she has a son. Hmingi's tragic plight is endless through the course of the story.

3.8. Hmingi's Tragic Plight on Account of Her Relationship with Hussain

As aforementioned, Hmingi has to go through heartache, rejection, death and countless difficulties on account of her relationship with a man outside the Mizo community and because of her pregnancy with his child.

Firstly, it is safe to say that Mizo men are quick to feel a sense of jealousy when it comes to a Mizo woman having an affair with non-Mizo men. When they hear of such news, they are quickly agitated and easily resent such women. In this story, Rina says, "I am afraid that a day might come when we can no longer protect our own Mizo women. It might be better if Mizo girls stop coming to mainland India for their studies" (93). Rina's comment on Mizo women studying outside Mizoram reflects the general viewpoint of many Mizo men regarding Mizo women who leaves their home state for further studies.

Such is the attitude of Mizo men towards Mizo women who involve themselves in interracial relationship, especially with men who are not from the Christian faith. Hmingi is aware of this and of the fact that Mizo women who marry outside the Mizo community have little or no place within Mizo society. She is fully aware of the difficulties that she would have to face, she tells Hussain, "How will I survive without you? If I go home to Mizoram, my own people will look at me with disdain, please do not leave me" (105), and she begs him

to stay with her. It can be said that her fate is already sealed once she became pregnant with the child of a Muslim man, which cannot be accepted by the Mizo community.

Secondly, the tragic predicament of Hmingi's relationship continues to haunt her even after her return to Mizoram. She comes home to find her parents divorced. She joins her mother in Jeribum where they live with her elder brother, Vana, only to mourn her mother's death after a few weeks and lives with her son in poverty. Her situation worsened when her sister-in-law starts to randomly pick a fight with her. She moves to Shillong in search of a job. She stays with her brother Liana who passed away a few days after Hmingi's arrival. While in Shillong, she also hears the news of her father's death in Mizoram. Hmingi continuously mourns the death of her family members, one after the other. This creates a deep sense of loneliness and alienation in her.

Her son, too, has his own share of personal suffering. He is afraid to say his father's name, least they find out that he is the son of a non-Mizo man. He does not feel safe in places where there are too many Mizo people and spends his life hiding from others. This only further increased Hmingi's sense of guilt and regret for her sexual involvement with a non-Mizo man. Burdened by the fear that people would find out the true identity of her son, she puts him in Kalimpong Home to protect him from Mizo society.

Thirdly, Hmingi does not disclose her son's identity even after she puts him in the Home. She supports him from a distance without telling anyone and sends him everything that he needs, but she never pays him a visit. However, she has no choice but to meet her son in person when he fell sick. She is afraid to let anyone know about her visit and about her son. All these secrecy indicates how trapped her life is and the lack of freedom and liberty she has with her life.

When she finally sees her son at the Home, she finds out that her son has forgotten that he has a mother and has been spending his days longing to have one. She is filled with regret when she realizes that she has been absent from her son's life for a long time so as to hide the fact that she has a child with a non-Mizo man.

Her son says to her, "Are you really my mother? You're the one who sends me money and you do look like the photo I have of my mother. But if you are my real mother, how come you never visit me even during school holidays? My friends are always picked up and taken home by their mothers on school holidays. I am always alone in the hostel during the holidays" (170). Hence, Thanzama had to go through difficult hardships and suffered the consequences of her mother's desperate attempts to hide the truth about her marriage and her husband. He is denied a mother's love and has to go through many days alone in the hostel. Because of Hmingi's careless acts during her days in Delhi, an innocent child has to go through painful hardships and Hmingi is filled with regret and guilt when she realizes this.

Fourthly, Hmingi spends her life as a normal unmarried woman without a child after she puts her son in the Home. After she finally begins to work a normal job, she is approached by several suitors, and she also takes a liking to Lianphunga, one of her suitors. She is determined to marry him as a way to fix her previous mistake of marrying a non-Mizo man. She says to herself that she would not be betrayed by a man from her own community (161). However, Lianphunga leaves her when he finds out that she has a child with a non-Mizo man and that she keeps her son in the shelter of the Home.

In this manner, Hmingi falls into the trap of a non-Mizo man and even carries his child as a result of which she continues to face many adversities. Her choice in men defined her future as a tragic and hopeless one and she continues to encounter different difficulties and hardships even after the relationship ended.

3.9. Comparison Between Sangpuii and Hmingi

Sangpuii and Hmingi lives together in Delhi as students and they do everything together. Sangpuii is superior in terms of physical beauty and is more popular among men. This incites a felling of jealousy in Hmingi which further led to a crack in their friendship. The Muslim man Hussain is rejected by Sangpuii and upon this rejection, he turns to Hmingi as a second choice. Unlike Sangpuii, Hmingi easily opens up to Hussain which led to her being pregnant with his child. Hmingi realized that Hussain do not love her after he left her to marry another girl in his home country. She is, then, left on her own to raise a child.

Hmingi's tragic plight reflects the author's attitude towards interracial marriage. It is evident that the author does not support the idea of marrying someone from outside the Mizo community and strongly presents the many ill-consequences of such marriage through the character of Hmingi.

Sangpuii is a decent Christian girl who is well-disciplined and has a clear conscience. Though Hussain woos her with all his wealth and riches, and she refuses to give in and is able to maintain her honour and integrity. Even though she is often doubted by Rotluanga, the truth about her well-disciplined character defeats all the negative assumptions that they had about her.

Hmingi, on the other hand, do not mind having a casual relationship with non-Mizo men even though she initially did not like the idea. She is constantly irritated by the protectiveness of Mizo men. After she realizes that she cannot have Rotluanga, she focuses her attention on Hussain as a means to cure her loneliness. Hussain provides her with financial assistance and he fools Hmingi into believing that he will marry her. But after he realizes that Hmingi is pregnant with his child, Hussain shows his true colour and goes back to his home country.

Hmingi spends her life burdened with guilt and regret as she continuously faced different hardships – her parents' divorce, her mother's death, her elder brother's death which was followed by her father's death. She is afraid to be seen in Mizo society and spends her life in hiding. She goes to Shillong to live with her brother, Vana where she has to put up with her brother's wife who cannot tolerate her.

The character of Hmingi serves as the instrument through which the author of the story, Khawlkungi, voices her concern about interracial marriage. She uses Hmingi's character to portray the tragic plight of women who blindly falls into the trap of non-Mizo men. The character of Sangpuii, on the other hand, showcases the advantages and merits of women who are faithful to their cultural identity. Even though Sangpuii has her own share of difficulties through the course of the story, she meets a happy ending when she is finally united with her true love, Rotluanga in the end.

Julie Lalhrulaitluangi from H. Lallungmuana's story *Ram leh I Tan Chauh* and Hmingi from Khawlkungi's *Duhtak Sangpuii* share many similarities. They are both married to Arab Muslim men and are both pregnant with their child. Julie and Hmingi are also betrayed by both their husbands. From the two stories, these women continue to face many hardships and difficulties not only in their individual life but also in Mizo society. They have to hide their pregnancy from the Mizo community. Hmingi has to cut off communication with her son for many years to hide the fact that the father of her child is a non-Mizo man. Julie, too, has to hide from social and community life in order to hide her pregnancy and to save herself from further shame and humiliation.

Julie's situation is slightly more preferable than that of Hmingi. Her husband, Alnafasi takes her home to his country and they lived a happy married life for about a month.

However, her husband disowns her after he takes in an Arab girl as his second wife. Julie is fortunate to earn the sympathy of her father-in-law who helps her to return home to Mizoram.

Hmingi, on the other hand, is not even married to Hussain though they shared a live-in relationship and even gets pregnant. He leaves her on her own with a child to raise and disappeared without a trace. Though Hmingi and Julie are betrayed, they both receive huge amount of financial assistance from their husbands. Julie's father-in-law gives her three lakhs fifty thousand in cash and bought her many gifts before she returned to Mizoram. Hmingi is also left with a large amount of money by Hussain before he left Delhi which she later used to look after herself.

Julie and Hmingi may share similar forms of betrayal but they also have their own set of problems which are unique to them individually. Julie is brave enough to inform her parents about her marriage to an Arab man and about her conversion to Islam. Hmingi, on the other hand, is desperate to keep her marriage a secret and even hides the identity of her son in order to protect her honour and integrity.

In the two stories, *Ram leh I Tan Chauh* and *Duhtak Sangpuii*, there are another two female characters who are both married to Mizo men. In *Ram leh I Tan Chauh*, Jennie Vanlalhruii marries a Mizo man of her choice Lalramchhuana and in *Duhtak Sangpuii*, Sangpuii marries the love of her life, Rotluanga. These two female characters are happier and are in far better conditions than their female counterparts in the stories, Hmingi and Julie. This stark contrast in the situations of female characters who marry Mizo men and those who marry men from outside the Mizo community reflects the opinion and viewpoint of the two authors, H. Lallungmuana and Khawlkungi, regarding interracial marriage. It can be rightly said that the two authors are not in support of interracial marriage which is evident from the manner in which their stories strongly bring out the tragic plight of Julie and Hmingi.

H. Lallungmuana, the author of *Ram leh I Tan Chauh*, highlights the many drawbacks and difficulties of marrying someone outside the community and highlights this in the endless tragedies that Julie continues to face through the course of the narrative. Julie's marriage to a non-Mizo man with a different religion has many tragic consequences and this is the moral lesson that the author attempts to bring across. According to K.C. Vannghaka, "H. Lallungmuana's story artistically portrays that nothing good can come out of a marriage to a man outside the Mizo community, who has a different religious background and only leads to humiliation and hopelessness" (262).

Similarly, Khawlkungi, the author of *Duhtak Sangpuii*, shares the same perspective and viewpoint in regard to interracial relationships. She artistically highlights the tragic predicament of women who marry men outside the Mizo community through the character of Hmingi. In the Foreword to her short story titled *Chantawka Khawrel*, she writes, "... Make sure that you fall in love only with someone from your own community, a true Mizo with whom you share the same language, culture and religion. God has specifically planned different lands and homes for every culture, so be careful not to cross that border that he has already lined. In this manner, we can avoid many hardships" (Khawlkungi, *Chantawka* v). Khawlkungi expresses her wish that every Mizo marry his/her fellow Mizo and she uses her fictional narratives and characters like Hmingi to put forward her message.

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Chapter – 4

Conclusion

Chapter – 4

Conclusion

This chapter attempts to conclude the findings from the study and analysis of the four selected Mizo stories – C. Laizawna's *Anita*, C. Ṭhuamluaia's "Sialton Official", H. Lallungmuana's *Ram leh I Tan Chauh* and *Duhtak Sangpuii* by Khawlkungi.

The concept of interracial relationship is present not only in Mizo fictional writings but in Mizo folk narratives and Mizo history. As aforementioned in Chapter 1, The British officer who came to Mizoram, Thangliana (T.H Lewin) and the British missionary Zosaphara (Edwin Rowlands) both engaged themselves in a romantic relationship with Mizo women and married them. However, both the two men subsequently faced several problems from their English friends and colleagues. Hence, it can be concluded that it is not only the Mizo community who are not in support of interracial relationship but other Western communities as well.

As reflected in the different Mizo fictional writings highlighted in Chapter 1, interracial relationship in Mizo fiction can be categorized into three groups. Firstly, there are relationships which failed to develop into marriage on account of differences in community, religion, culture and lifestyle. Secondly, there are those characters who forced their way into marriage inspite of all the hardships that they had gone through, with the knowledge that there would be more difficulties in the future. In the third category, there are characters who faced difficulties not because they involved themselves in interracial relationship but because they belong to a family of interracial marriage. However, there are also few fictional works where interracial relationships developing into successful marriages without much difficulties or hardships.

Among the Mizo writers, the ones dealing with the concept of interracial relationship tend to portray the negative outcomes of such relationship at large, and this clearly shows their views and attitudes towards the concept. They often avoid the idea of a successful marriage between two characters belonging to different ethnic communities though they may indulge themselves in romantic affairs. The differences in language, religion and cultural practices tend to create several conflicts in marriage and severe enmity between two families. Therefore, it can reveal that Mizo writers do not favour the idea of interracial marriage and construct their narratives to throw light on the ill-effects of such relationships. Furthermore, since the marriage can have unpleasant impacts on the lives of the children. These Mizo writers strongly viewed interracial marriage as a step towards cultural assimilation and a betrayal of one's faith, hence, the concept of interracial marriage is never portrayed in a positive light by the Mizo writers.

From the four selected texts that deal with interracial relationship, it can conclude that there is a possibility of a romantic relationship between a Mizo and someone from a non-Mizo community, but the idea of a successful married life is close to impossible.

In C. Laizawna's story titled *Anita* and C. Ṭhualuaia's "Sialton Official", there are two non-Mizo female characters, Anita and Dorothy, who are beautiful and attractive in terms of physical aspect. Even though their respective Mizo partners wanted to marry them, their differences in cultural identity barred them from marriage. Dorothy says, "Oh! How I wish to be a Mizo woman!" (Ṭhualuaia 205) Anita, too, expresses her devotion to the Mizo man she is involved with, "Your people will be my people, your religion will be my religion, I will follow you wherever you go" (Laizawna 157). But, they can not marry because of their difference barred them.

In the story of *Anita*, Rina could not go through with the marriage because Anita belonged to a different community with different religion, culture and practices. He is aware of the hardships and difficulties they would have to face in the future. The male protagonist in “Sialton Official” is initially determined to marry Dorothy but the relationship could not come to fruition because of the same reason as Rina and Anita. The authors of these two stories, C. Laizawna and C. Ṭhuamluaia, throw light on the fact that even though the non-Mizo female protagonists may be beautiful and attractive in terms of their physical attributes, they cannot be accepted as the model wives and hence, chose to end their stories with heartbreak and separation.

In the third chapter, looked into two stories – *Ram leh I Tan Chauh* by H. Lallungmuana and *Duhtak Sangpuui* by Khawlkungi – where the authors deal with romantic relationships between Mizo women and non-Mizo men. In these two stories, the relationship further resulted into marriage. Julie Lalhrwaitluangi, the Mizo female protagonist in *Ram leh I Tan Chauh*, is married to an Arab man named H.H Alnafasi and Hmingi, in *Duhtak Sangpuui*, lives with a Jordanian man named Hussain in a setting similar to a married couple.

The interracial marriages that highlight in these two stories have unpleasant consequences for the Mizo women characters. The non-Mizo husbands of the two female protagonists refused to commit themselves to the marriage and divorced their Mizo wives in order to marry their kind. The two Mizo women from these stories were left with tears and heartache and they had to look after their children on their own with much difficulty.

What is evident from these two stories is that women who carry the child of non-Mizo men are not welcomed within Mizo society; they are seen as outcast in the community and are treated with hostility and resentment. Hence, Julie Lalhrwaitluangi and Hmingi had to

hide themselves from members of Mizo society when they returned to Mizoram. This clearly shows the attitude of the general Mizo population towards interracial marriage.

Mizo women who married men from outside the Mizo community are bound to face with adversities and furthermore, their children too suffer the consequences of their marriage to non-Mizo men. Hence, this research finds out that Mizo writers who deal with the theme of interracial relationship do not favour the idea of a relationship outside one's own community and do not wish to portray it in a good light. Though there are instances where the plot of the story involves a relationship which resulted into marriage, the couples had to go through extreme difficulties and hardships.

Of the four selected stories for the purpose of the study, two stories deal with Mizo men in romantic relationships with non-Mizo women while the other two stories deal with Mizo women in a romantic relationship with men outside the Mizo community. With regard to the idea of Mizo men in a relationship with non-Mizo women, apart from the fact that they cannot marry them, there is not much opposition or hostility from the Mizo community. Furthermore, it is important to note that the authors often describe the characters of their non-Mizo female characters as more beautiful and attractive than Mizo women. However, a contrasting scenario is played out for the Mizo women involved in interracial relationships.

The two Mizo women in the selected stories are faced with more difficulties than the Mizo men who had an affair with women outside their community. These two women are seen as outcasts by their fellow Mizo people right from the onset of their relationship, and even after they ended their relationship with the non-Mizo men, they are forced to hide from the judging eyes of Mizo society. Hmingi, the female protagonist in *Duhtak Sangpuii*, had to keep her pregnancy a secret and in the end, she had to flee from Mizoram and settle down outside the state.

Hence, this research revealed that the experience of interracial relationship is different for Mizo men and Mizo women. Society, too, seems to judge men and women differently in cases of interracial relationship. It can be said that the Mizo community in general is more sensitive when it comes to Mizo women in an affair with men outside the community as compared to Mizo men in interracial relationship. According to Lalrammuana Sailo, “Mizo women do not have the same freedom and flexibility as the men do in cases of sexual affairs and interracial relationship. They are not allowed to behave like the men. They are easily condemned and judged while the Mizo men have a certain amount of freedom in having romantic relationships outside the community” (40).

In the four selected texts, the male Mizo characters seem to involve themselves in romantic relationships with women from non-Mizo community mainly for their physical beauty. These women are described as more beautiful and more eligible than Mizo women. In *Anita*, Rina remarks that Anita is more beautiful than his Mizo girlfriend and that no Mizo girl can be compared to her in terms of physical beauty. Similarly, in “Sialton Official”, even though the male protagonist adores his Mizo wife Nguri, the story shows that the non-Mizo girl Dorothy has more impact on him than his Mizo wife. Even after his marriage to Nguri, he is often disturbed by thoughts about Dorothy and this eventually resulted in the death of his wife and children.

Christianity occupies a central position in Mizo society and is considered to be one of the defining factors in the case of marriage. The idea of interracial marriage can also be given a chance if the non-Mizo member is a Christian, someone with whom one would be able to build a decent respectable Christian family. The attitude of Julie’s father in *Ram leh I Tan Chauh* shows the important position and deep impact of Christianity on Mizo society and how this is reflected in literature. H. Lallungmuana says in an interview, “Even if they are from outside the Mizo community, it is somehow acceptable if he/she is a Christian. The

Bible also talks about how God is against not merely interracial relationship but a relationship with non-believers.” Rina, the protagonist in *Anita* also says that, “Even though Anita somehow agrees to marry me, I will not comply... I am a Mizo, and will be so forever, I am a Christian and I will not let go of my faith” (Laizawna 100), claiming that he is a “Mizo” and a “Christian” and thus will not marry anyone who worships another God. So, Christianity is the important reasons why the characters in the selected fictions could not married.

In stories such as *Ram leh I Tan Chauh* and *Duhtak Sangpuii*, the two Mizo female characters engage themselves in interracial relationship not because of physical attraction but solely for the purpose of the material wealth and luxury that the men could offer.

From the female protagonists like Julie Lalhruiatluangi and Hmingi in *Ram leh I Tan Chauh* and *Duhtak Sangpuii*, it is evident that Mizo girls residing in mainland India are prone to indulge themselves in interracial relationship. In his newspaper article in *Vanglaini* (14 September, 2019), Chuauṭhuama comments, “I am one of the witnesses who have seen and deal with how Mizo girls living outside the state tend to involve themselves in interracial relationships. During our college days as theological students, there were many cases where we had to resolve issues regarding Mizo girls who had relationships with non-Mizo men” (8). In the two stories of Julie and Hmingi, the authors throw light on the different struggles that the female characters had to go through as a result of their involvement in a relationship with non-Mizo men.

From the selected stories, this research finds that emotional bonds of love and affection between two different ethnic communities can happen, though it seldom resolves into successful marriage. As reflected in the different Mizo fictional narratives, interracial relationships often lead to hardships, struggles and even unpleasant enmity between different families. Therefore, it can be concluded that it is the intent of the authors of the selected

stories to portray that the demerits of interracial relationships outweigh the merits and that the general consensus among Mizo authors, as reflected in their works, is that interracial relationship should be avoided in order to build a successful marriage life.

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2.	Ziakfung Zalen (<i>Mizothu leh hla thlirna</i>)	Literary Criticism	Mizoram Publication Board	2019	978-81-94045557

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**A STUDY OF INTERRACIAL RELATIONSHIPS IN SELECTED
MIZO FICTION**

(ABSTRACT)

A DISSERTATION

**SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT
OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN MIZO**

BY

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**A STUDY OF INTERRACIAL RELATIONSHIPS IN SELECTED
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A Study of Interracial Relationships in Selected Mizo Fiction

This dissertation examines the treatment of interracial relationship and marriage between Mizo characters and non-Mizo characters in selected Mizo fiction. The texts in focus are C. Laizawna's *Anita*, C. Ṭhuamluaia's short story "Sialton Official", H. Lallungmuana's story *Ram leh I Tan Chauh* and *Duhtak Sangpuii* by Khawlkungi. From these selected texts, the concept of interracial relationship and marriage in Mizo fiction are examined with in depth analysis.

Interracial relationship, in the simplest term, refers to any kind of relationship built between two different races or ethnic groups. This includes any form of relationship from short-term courtship and open informal relationship to long term relationships such as marriage.

The Oxford Dictionary defines 'interracial' as 'existing between or involving different races' (474). According to Cambridge International Dictionary of English, 'interracial' is "involving different human races" (745). On a similar note, Random House Unabridged Dictionary defines 'interracial' as 'involving, or for members of different races' (998).

In light of the above definitions, interracial relationship points to a relationship built between different races, and when this relationship develops into marriage, it becomes an interracial marriage. Interracial marriage is defined by Richard C. Henriksen and Richard E. Watts in "Interracial Marriage" as, "Interracial marriage is the term used to describe marriages that take place between people who are from different racial or ethnic groups. Intercultural marriages are defined as marriages between people who come from two different cultural backgrounds" (n. pag.).

The dissertation is divided into the following four chapters:

Chapter 1 : Introduction

This is the introductory chapter which provides a detailed definition and nature of the concept of interracial relationship. The treatment of interracial relationship in various Mizo folk narratives and historical accounts is also discussed in detail. The different narratives in Mizo fiction which deal with the concept of interracial relationship and marriage are also briefly highlighted in this chapter.

The concept of interracial marriage can be seen in Mizo folk narratives. In the popular story of “Mauruangi”, the girl Mauruangi is wedded to a certain non-Mizo Chief known as ‘*Vai lal*’. *Vai* is a common term used to describe mainland Indians or foreigners. Even though the story does not provide further information regarding the detailed identity of the Chief, the word ‘*Vai*’ indicates that he belongs to another race. According to the story, the servants of the Chief went in search of a wife for their master and eventually met Mauruangi. The servants said to her, “Our master is a powerful chief and we have travelled in search of the perfect wife for him. We will be pleased to have you as our queen, wouldn’t you like to be the wife of our master? You will have the luxury to eat and drink whatever you want, do whatever you please and you will never have to work again” (Lalthangliana 427). Mauruangi accepted their offer and married the Chief.

Listeners of the popular tale never blamed or condemned Mauruangi for her decision to be married to the *Vai* Chief because she was constantly tortured by her step-mother in the house. On the contrary, there is a sense of relief as her marriage provided her the much needed escape from the domestic abuse that she faced under her step-mother. Mauruangi’s involvement in an interracial marriage was never judged or condemned by the society.

In Mizo history, T. H. Lewin and Edwin Rowlands were two Westerners who married Mizo women and they both faced harsh objection from their respective communities. Edwin Rowlands was expelled from Mizoram by the Welsh Mission Board because of his relationship with Thangkungi. This signifies that the British were against the idea of any form of intimacy and close domestic relationship with the people of Mizoram. The display of love and affection beyond the Christian principles was unacceptable and regarded as a form of cultural degradation. Similarly, T.H. Lewin was immediately sent home to England because of his good relationship with Mizo people. According to L. Keivom, “If we trace back Mizo history, they [Lewin and Rowlands] were the only ones who genuinely loved and cared for the Mizo people, so much so that they were willing to marry a Mizo woman, and it may have been the case that any English man who was involved in such acts of intimacy was consequently disdained by his fellow English men” (141).

Dari and Thangkungi were the first known Mizo women to enter into an interracial marriage and they both faced adversities and difficulties on account of their marriage. It is evident that they were scorned by the society and disdained by the Mizo community.

In Mizo stories which involve the theme of interracial relationship, there are many characters whose relationship failed to develop into a successful marriage and the often reasons vary. On the other hand, there are stories where the characters end up in a happy marriage while some faced separation even after marriage.

Mizo narratives about interracial love consists of characters that face varying levels of acceptance and adversity. While some characters face a lot hardships, few characters on the other hand are accepted by their families, where their interracial marriage ends up serving them a great deal of luck and blessings.

Mizo fictions reveal to the reasons why many interracial relationships fall apart before marriage, most of them being – difference in race, religion and difference in communities and way of life. These aspects pose a big threat to their relationships and often tear them apart; while a few characters struggle to get married and then break up anyway, there are also a few characters who live happily ever after.

Interracial relationships in Mizo fictions are all burdened with trials and tribulations as a result of their unaccepted union, and these fictions can be classified into three categories according to their adversities.

Firstly, relationships with people from a different community, race, religion and culture often cannot bridge their inherent differences and they fail to get married no matter how they wish to. For example – C. Laizawna's *Anita*, C.Vanlalmalsawma's *Doma*, James Dokhuma's *Goodbye Lushai Brigade* etc. are stories that deal with tragic relationships. The adversity they face is often from society and their parents who cannot accept their union.

Secondly, some interracial couples who strive through their adversity and get married despite many oppositions. These couples are bombarded with hardships from time of their courtship but they strive through together and get married in the end. For example. H. Lallungmuana's story *Ram leh I Tan Chauh*, *Anpai Lanu* by H.K.R Lalbiakliana and Lalhmingliana Saiawi's *A Na Lua* consist of such narratives.

Thirdly, some characters faced many adversities as a result of their interracial heritage; they often struggle when it comes to finding a spouse within the Mizo community. Khawlkungi's story *Chantawka Khawrel* narrates the story of Zikpuii, a Mizo young woman who had never questioned her racial identity, but one day finds out that she has a *Vai* or mainland Indian father, as a result of this revelation she faces various adversities when it comes to her finding a spouse and getting married. Lalthantluanga Chawngthu's story

Thlahpawlh Nih Zet Chu narrates a story where the protagonist Dintluanga, who has always lived in Mizoram and has a very Mizo mindset, and yet, as a result of his father hailing from Bihar, is unable to marry his Mizo girlfriend.

In this chapter, the attitude of Mizo writers towards interracial relationship and the reasons that prompted this attitude are also thoroughly discussed. Moreover, the difference in status of Mizo men and women in relation to interracial marriage is also explored.

Chapter 2 : Interracial Relationships in C. Laizawna *Anita* and C. Ṭhuamluaia “Sialton Official”

In this chapter, the concept of interracial relationship in C. Laizawna’s novel *Anita* and C. Ṭhuamluaia’s short story “Sialton Official” is studied and analyzed. The biography of the authors and their different works are also highlighted.

In these two narratives, the Mizo male characters are engaged in an affair with women from outside the Mizo community. The relationships failed because of the many differences in language, practices, beliefs and traditions. The different factors that hamper the relationships, the comparison between Mizo and non-Mizo women and the subsequent effect of interracial relationships in the lives of the characters are analyzed and examined in this chapter.

In *Anita*, the female protagonist Anita is willing to give up everything for Rina, even giving up her virginity to him. However, Rina is able to clearly foresee the hardships that is to come their way if they get married, conflict in culture, religion and ethnicity and their parents’ disapproval he does his best to reject and make Anita think clearly as well. With a heavy heart Anita ends up marrying a man of her own class and caste, after Rina goes back home and married a Mizo woman as well.

The various aspects like differences in religion, culture, land, way of life and language are all proof that Anita and Rina's life together would be wrought with hardship, causing them to choose to part ways. The very fact that both of their parents will not accept their marriage is reason enough to not get married.

Laltluangliana Kiangte writes in the introduction to this story, "It is often mentioned by people that a difference in religion and a difference in cultural way of life can never really form a strong bond between people. People in interracial marriages may not reveal all their troubles, but the truth is easily revealed to the eyes of faith," (vi) thereby, declaring that interracial marriages never truly workout. Since this story is about a man whose conscience struggles with his love for Anita and his strong sense of Mizo loyalty, he claims it would be even more accurate if it was titled "*Bombay Nula nge Ram leh Hnam*" (iv).

"Sialton Official", on the other hand, has a protagonist who wishes and does his best to marry a young Khasi girl Dorothy, he puts all matters of ethnicity aside and pursues his love. Dorothy on the other hand is able to see the "storm" that is to rain on them, and thus, is clearly aware that they cannot marry. They are different ethnic (Mizo and Khasi), from different states (Lushai hills and Khasi & Jaintia Hills), with different ways of life (patriarchal society and a matriarchal society), and from different class in society (a student with a bright future and a daily wage worker) a contrast in every aspect of their life. And it is for this reason Dorothy exclaims "How I wish I were born a Mizo woman" (Thuamluaia 205). The protagonist expresses their grave situation in the words, "As for me, I am trying to reach for a star without climbing, and as for her, she is looking for a ladder that does not exist" (207).

When there is no other choice for Dorothy, she finally marries a man of her own tribe. The 'nameless' protagonist also marries a Mizo woman and builds a happy family with her,

meanwhile Dorothy's husband passes away and he finds out that Dorothy and her daughter have moved into St. Mary's Convent because of poverty from the newspaper '*Shillong Times*'. He is taken back to his old life, because of the overwhelming memory of Dorothy, he neglects his wife and children. While he spent his days drinking a widow's brewed wine, his neglect of his wife and kids leads to their death in a fire. This shows just how much power, even just the memory of Dorothy, has on his life; their immense love of their past is still haunting them in their present life.

C. Laizawna and C. Thuamluaia understand the love that is possible between the beautiful non-Mizo women and Mizo men, they still hold their opinions that to go as far as marrying outside of one's tribe is not something possible or acceptable. Therefore, they do not make any attempts to portray interracial love stories in a positive light.

Chapter 3 : Interracial Relationships in H. Lallungmuana *Ram leh I Tan Chauh* and Khawlkungi *Duhtak Sangpuii*

The treatment of interracial relationships in H. Lallungmuana's story *Ram leh I Tan Chauh* and Khawlkungi's story *Duhtak Sangpuii* is examined in this chapter. The relationship between a Mizo girl and a young man from non-Mizo community who continued to force their relationship against the wishes of their parents and the subsequent hardships and difficulties that befell them are highlighted in this chapter.

In *Ram leh I Tan Chauh* one of the female protagonists, Julie Lalhruaitluangi, married a non-Mizo man Alnafasi without the consent of her parents. Julie's parents could not accept her husband because he belonged to the Muslim community, and after the marriage failed, Julie continued to face many difficulties. The chapter examines the different hardships faced by the protagonist because of her marriage to a non-Mizo man and the reason why she married him.

Khawlkungi's story *Duhtak Sangpuii* tells the tale of a Mizo girl Hmingi and her relationship with a non-Mizo man, Hussain. The two lived together as a married couple which resulted in Hmingi's pregnancy. However, Hussain refused to marry her and Hmingi continued to face many hardships after their separation. The present chapter focuses on how Hmingi struggled through the many difficulties, the scorn and ridicule faced by Mizo women who married non-Mizo men and how their children continue to suffer discrimination in Mizo society. The stance of the selected Mizo writers regarding interracial marriage and their opinions are also explored in this chapter.

Julie Lalhruaitluangi from H. Lallungmuana's story *Ram leh I Tan Chauh* and Hmingi from Khawlkungi's *Duhtak Sangpuii* share many similarities. They are both married to Arab Muslim men and are both pregnant with their child. Julie and Hmingi are also betrayed by both their husbands. From the two stories, we see that these women continue to face many hardships and difficulties not only in their individual life but also in Mizo society. They have to hide their pregnancy from the Mizo community. Hmingi has to cut off communication with her son for many years to hide the fact that the father of her child is a non-Mizo man. Julie, too, has to hide from social and community life in order to hide her pregnancy and to save herself from further shame and humiliation.

In the two stories, *Ram leh I Tan Chauh* and *Duhtak Sangpuii*, there are another two female characters who are both married to Mizo men. In *Ram leh I Tan Chauh*, Jennie Vanlalhruii marries a Mizo man of her choice Lalramchhuana and in *Duhtak Sangpuii*, Sangpuii marries the love of her life, Rotluanga. These two female characters are happier and are in far better conditions than their female counterparts in the stories, Hmingi and Julie. This stark contrast in the situations of female characters who marry Mizo men and those who marry men from outside the Mizo community reflects the opinion and viewpoint of the two authors, H. Lallungmuana and Khawlkungi, regarding interracial marriage. It can be rightly

said that the two authors are not in support of interracial marriage which is evident from the manner in which their stories strongly bring out the tragic plight of Julie and Hmingi.

H. Lallungmuana, the author of *Ram leh I Tan Chauh*, highlights the many drawbacks and difficulties of marrying someone outside the community and we see this in the endless tragedies that Julie continues to face through the course of the narrative. Julie's marriage to a non-Mizo man with a different religion has many tragic consequences and this is the moral lesson that the author attempts to bring across. According to K.C. Vannghaka, "H. Lallungmuana's story artistically portrays that nothing good can come out of a marriage to a man outside the Mizo community, who has a different religious background and only leads to humiliation and hopelessness" (262).

Similarly, Khawlkungi, the author of *Duhtak Sangpuii*, shares the same perspective and viewpoint in regard to interracial relationships. She artistically highlights the tragic predicament of women who marry men outside the Mizo community through the character of Hmingi. In the Foreword to her short story titled *Chantawka Khawrel*, she writes,

... Make sure that you fall in love only with someone from your own community, a true Mizo with whom you share the same language, culture and religion. God has specifically planned different lands and homes for every culture, so be careful not to cross that border that he has already lined. In this manner, we can avoid many hardships.
(Khawlkungi, *Chantawka v*)

Khawlkungi expresses her wish that every Mizo marry his/her fellow Mizo and she uses her fictional narratives and characters like Hmingi to put forward her message.

Chapter 4 : Conclusion

The analysis and findings of the dissertation are concluded in this chapter. The significant points discussed in the different chapters are brought together in a concise conclusion.

The concept of interracial relationship is present not only in Mizo fictional writings but in Mizo folk narratives and Mizo history. The British officer who came to Mizoram, Thangliana (T.H Lewin) and the British missionary Zosaphara (Edwin Rowlands) both engaged themselves in a romantic relationship with Mizo women and married them. However, we see that both the two men subsequently faced several problems from their English friends and colleagues. Hence, it can be concluded that it is not only the Mizo community who are not in support of interracial relationship but other Western communities as well.

As reflected in the different Mizo fictional writings highlighted in Chapter 1, interracial relationship in Mizo fictions can be categorized into three groups. Firstly, we have relationships which failed to develop into marriage on account of differences in community, religion, culture and lifestyle. Secondly, there are those characters who forced their way into marriage inspite of all the hardships that they had gone through, with the knowledge that there would be more difficulties in the future. In the third category, there are characters who faced difficulties not because they involved themselves in interracial relationship but because they belong to a family of interracial marriage. However, there are also few fictional works where we see interracial relationships developing into successful marriages without much difficulties or hardships.

Among the Mizo writers, the ones dealing with the concept of interracial relationship tend to portray the negative outcomes of such relationship at large, and this clearly shows

their views and attitudes towards the concept. They often avoid the idea of a successful marriage between two characters belonging to different ethnic communities though they may indulge themselves in romantic affairs. The differences in language, religion and cultural practices tend to create several conflicts in marriage and severe enmity between two families. Therefore, it can be concluded that Mizo writers do not favour the idea of interracial marriage and construct their narratives to throw light on the ill-effects of such relationships. Furthermore, since the marriage can have unpleasant impacts on the lives of the children. These Mizo writers strongly viewed interracial marriage as a step towards cultural assimilation and a betrayal of one's faith, hence, the concept of interracial marriage is never portrayed in a positive light by the Mizo writers.

From the four selected texts that deal with interracial relationship, there is a possibility of a romantic relationship between a Mizo and someone from a non-Mizo community, but the idea of a successful married life is close to impossible.

In C. Laizawna's story titled *Anita* and C. Ṭhuamluaia's "Sialton Official", there are two non-Mizo female characters, Anita and Dorothy, who are beautiful and attractive in terms of physical aspect. Even though their respective Mizo partners wanted to marry them, their differences in cultural identity barred them from marriage. Dorothy says, "Oh! How I wish to be a Mizo woman!" (Ṭhuamluaia 205) Anita, too, expresses her devotion to the Mizo man she is involved with, "Your people will be my people, your religion will be my religion, I will follow you wherever you go" (Laizawna 157). But, they could not marry because of their difference barred them.

In the story of *Anita*, Rina could not go through with the marriage because Anita belonged to a different community with different religion, culture and practices. He is aware of the hardships and difficulties they would have to face in the future. The male protagonist

in “Sialton Official” is initially determined to marry Dorothy but the relationship could not come to fruition because of the same reason as Rina and Anita. The authors of these two stories, C. Laizawna and C. Ṭhuamluaia, throw light on the fact that even though the non-Mizo female protagonists may be beautiful and attractive in terms of their physical attributes, they cannot be accepted as the model wives and hence, chose to end their stories with heartbreak and separation.

The interracial marriages that portray in *Ram leh I Tan Chauh* by H. Lallungmuana and *Duhtak Sangpuii* by Khawlkungi have unpleasant consequences for the Mizo women characters Julie and Hmingi. The non-Mizo husbands of the two female protagonists refused to commite themselves to the marriage and divorced their Mizo wives in order to marry their kind. The two Mizo women from these stories were left with tears and heartache and they had to look after their children on their own with much difficulty.

What is evident from these two stories is that women who carry the child of non-Mizo men are not welcomed within Mizo society; they are seen as outcast in the community and are treated with hostility and resentment. Hence, Julie Lalhruitluangi and Hmingi had to hide themselves from members of Mizo society when they returned to Mizoram. This clearly shows the attitude of the general Mizo population towards interracial marriage.

Mizo women who married men from outside the Mizo community are bound to face with adversities and furthermore, their children too suffer the consequences of their marriage to non-Mizo men. Hence, it can be concluded that Mizo writers who deal with the theme of interracial relationship do not favour the idea of a relationship outside one’s own community and do not wish to portray it in a good light. Though there are instances where the plot of the story involves a relationship which resulted into marriage, the couples had to go through extreme difficulties and hardships.

Of the four selected fictions for the purpose of the study, two stories deal with Mizo men in romantic relationships with non-Mizo women while the other two stories deal with Mizo women in a romantic relationship with men outside the Mizo community. With regard to the idea of Mizo men in a relationship with non-Mizo women, a part from the fact that they cannot marry them, we see that there is not much opposition or hostility from the Mizo community. Furthermore, it is important to note that the authors often describe the characters of their non-Mizo female characters as more beautiful and attractive than Mizo women. However, a contrasting scenario is played out for the Mizo women involved in interracial relationships. The two Mizo women in the selected stories are faced with more difficulties than the Mizo men who had an affair with women outside their community. These two women are seen as outcasts by their fellow Mizo people right from the onset of their relationship, and even after they ended their relationship with the non-Mizo men, they are forced to hide from the judging eyes of Mizo society. Hmingi, the female protagonist in *Duhtak Sangpuii*, had to keep her pregnancy a secret and in the end, she had to flee from Mizoram and settle down outside the state.

Hence, this research finds that the experience of interracial relationship is different for Mizo men and Mizo women. Society, too, seems to judge men and women differently in cases of interracial relationship. It can be said that the Mizo community in general is more sensitive when it comes to Mizo women in an affair with men outside the community as compared to Mizo men in interracial relationship.

Christianity occupies a central position in Mizo society and is considered to be one of the defining factors in the case of marriage. The idea of interracial marriage can also be given a chance if the non-Mizo member is a Christian, someone with whom one would be able to build a decent respectable Christian family. The attitude of Julie's father in *Ram leh I Tan Chauh* shows the important position and deep impact of Christianity on Mizo society and

how this is reflected in literature. H. Lallungmuana says in an interview, “Even if they are from outside the Mizo community, it is somehow acceptable if he/she is a Christian. The Bible also talks about how God is against not merely interracial relationship but a relationship with non-believers.” Rina, the protagonist in *Anita* also says that, “Even though Anita somehow agrees to marry me, I will not comply... I am a Mizo, and will be so forever, I am a Christian and I will not let go of my faith” (Laizawna 100), claiming that he is a “Mizo” and a “Christian” and thus will not marry anyone who worships another God. So, Christianity is the important reasons why the characters in the selected fictions could not marry.

From the selected stories, this research reveals that emotional bonds of love and affection between two different ethnic communities can happen, though it seldom resolves into successful marriage. As reflected in the different Mizo fictional narratives, interracial relationships often lead to hardships, struggles and even unpleasant enmity between different families. Therefore, it can be concluded that it is the intent of the authors of the selected stories to portray that the demerits of interracial relationships outweigh the merits and that the general consensus among Mizo authors, as reflected in their works, is that interracial relationship should be avoided in order to build a successful marriage life.

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