

**SITUATING MORALITY: A STUDY OF ZIKPUII PA'S FICTION**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

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**DEPARTMENT OF MIZO  
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**in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the Degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy in Mizo of Mizoram University, Aizawl**



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## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled, “**Situating Morality: A Study of ZikpuiPa’s Fiction**” submitted by Mrs. Dorothy Zonunsangi has been written under my supervision.

She has fulfilled all the required norms laid down under the Ph.D. regulations of Mizoram University.

The thesis is the result of her own investigation. Neither the thesis as a whole nor any part of it was submitted to other University for any research degree.

Tanhril  
The 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2023

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## DECLARATION

MIZORAM UNIVERSITY

June, 2023

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

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

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Mizoram University

(DOROTHY ZONUNSANGI)

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**ABSTRACT**

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## SITUATING MORALITY: A STUDY OF ZIKPUII PA'S FICTION

### (Abstract)

The present thesis provides a modest investigation of 'Situating Morality: A Study of Zikpuii-Pa's Fiction'. In the realm of literature, the term 'morality' plays a significant role. Needless to say, what is considered as right or wrong has an impact on society, community, religious life, and family life. Since morality impacts everyday decisions, there is a need to inculcate morality in the present social scenario. Accordingly, this research investigates how far Zikpuii-Pa situates morality in his fiction and how significant morality is in human relationships. Subsequently, the study provides an overview of how individual morality, social morality, and religious morality influence society and the environment. For this purpose, the study has selected five fictional works by Zikpuii-Pa, *Kraws Bulah Chuan* (1986), *C.C. Coy No. 27* (1986), *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* (1989), *Silvarthangi* (1991), and *Hostel Awmtu* (1991). K.C. Lalvunga, who wrote under the pen name Zikpuii-Pa, was a multi-talented genius whose works ranged from fiction to poetry, prose to criticism. He is one of the most influential fiction writers within the domain of Mizo literature. He has been selected as 'Writer of the Century' by the Millennium Celebration Committee established by the Government of Mizoram in the year 2000. Besides, he was a posthumous recipient of the 'Academy Award' awarded by the leading literary organization, called the Mizo Academy of Letters (MAL) in the year 1995, in recognition of his invaluable contribution to Mizo literature. Significantly, morality is a central concern in Zikpuii-Pa's fictional works. Because he can see things and characters clearly and in proper perspective, his insight and honesty are essential components of his morality. His fiction depicts a comprehensive understanding of Mizo socio-religious and political life.

The thesis is therefore, divided into five chapters, in which chapter five gives the conclusion of the main thesis.

### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

The first chapter begins with the nature and meaning of morality and furnishes an account of Mizo fiction. Etymologically, the term 'morality' has been derived from the Latin word '*mos*' which means custom or habit. According to the

*Cambridge International Dictionary of English*, “Morality is a personal or social set of standards for good or bad behavior and character or the quality of being right, honest or acceptable. To moralize is to express judgement on right and wrong” (917). Meanwhile, the *New Webster’s Dictionary and Thesaurus of the English Language* defines the term morality as, “concerned with right and wrong and the distinction between them, virtuous, good” (649). Considering the above definitions, morality suggests recognizing what is deemed to be correct or not correct. The study also reveals how religion has a deep impact on morality. For instance, something considered moral in one religion may be considered immoral in another religion and vice versa. Furthermore, the morality of one family may vary from that of another. Although the study did not go into detail about the evolution and status of Mizo fiction, an attempt was made to give relevant information about Mizo fiction from its inception to the present day. Little is known about the origins of Mizo literature, yet obviously, Mizo fiction existed some time before the Mizo public became literate. Since the information was passed through oral tradition before the Mizo people were literate, numerous fascinating realities were lost along the way. With the passing of time, the miserable plight of Mizo women has been a recurring theme in early Mizo fiction. The arrival of Christianity in Mizoram resulted in a radical shift in Mizo society. As a result, the victimization of women gradually faded away. Prior to the arrival of Christianity in Mizoram, novelists generally dealt with historical elements as well as themes such as love, war, estranged relationships, and so on. On the other hand, Mizo fiction in the post-Christian era is primarily concerned with Christian themes such as love, salvation, forgiveness, reconciliation, and so on. As time passed by, Mizo writers gradually incorporated themes other than Christianity. Through an analysis of Mizo fiction, the themes applied by the writers vary depending on the historical context. Based on his research, Zoramdinthara asserts, “Development of Mizo fiction reveals that Mizo fiction writers approached morality from their own perspective” (74). This argument authenticates that morality plays a significant role in Mizo fiction. However, the study determines that what has been considered moral in Mizo society has gradually changed in response to the situations they have gone through.

Chapter I touches upon the biography of Zikpuii-Pa, focusing mainly on his literary output. Zikpuii-Pa, was born on December 27, 1929, in Venghlui, Aizawl. He was the son of the former Chief of Aizawl, Hrawva, and his spouse, Lalluii. He passed matriculation in 1948 and graduated in 1953. He married Darhmingthangi on September 5, 1948. After graduation, in 1962, he joined the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) and became the first Indian Ambassador among the Mizos to different countries. Notably, he had been associated with various organizations while he was in Aizawl (Lalthangliana90-91). He retired from the Indian Foreign Service in 1990 and passed away on October 10, 1994. Although he spent most of his life abroad, the settings of his novels were mostly located in Mizoram. Notably, Zikpuii-Pa wrote twelve fictional works. Unfortunately, the first five works were lost. Among the published fictional works, his masterpiece, *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* is a novel published in 1989. *Silvarthangi*, *Hostel Awmtu* and *Kraws Bulah Chuan* are short stories. However, *C.C. Coy No. 27* is a novella written in 1963. Remarkably, Zikpuii-Pa is well known for his contributions to essays, having written more than 70 essays on Mizo literature. His great enthusiasm, his wide and intimate insight into the Mizo culture, society, and tradition, made his creative essays of incredible worth.

Significantly, Zikpuii-Pa is also known for his contributions to Mizo poetry. His collection of poetry, entitled '*Zozam Par*' is a useful resource for learning Mizo poetry. For this reason, he holds an important place in the history of Mizo poetry and thus undoubtedly enriched Mizo poetry. Two of his 17 poems are songs, while the rest are poetry. His travelogues are not only interesting but also educational. Apart from these, Zikpuii-Pa made significant contributions to Mizo literary criticism. His criticism serves as an eye-opener for the readers regarding the culture, society, and political condition of Mizoram. Notably, the setting of Zikpuii-Pa's fiction is vast, representative, and insightful, and the characters are lively and realistic. The socio-religious culture of Mizo is brilliantly portrayed in his fiction. Therefore, in light of the above discussion, there is no doubt that Zikpuii-Pa holds a significant place in the realm of Mizo literature.

## **Chapter II: Reflection of *Rambuai* in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah***

The second chapter differs from the rest of the chapters as it is devoted to a single work of fiction, *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*. Accordingly, it offers the

summary of *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*. Furthermore, the chapter delves into the emergence and consequences of *Rambuai*<sup>1</sup>, which occurred in 1966. Since the rest of the narratives do not concern *Rambuai*, the study concentrates solely on *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*. Zikpuii-Pa has created a psychological and authentic portrait of the various shades of relationships that people encountered in a changing Mizo society, brought about by *Rambuai*. While discussing the consequences of *Rambuai*, the narrative further reflects the themes of love, family relationships, fear, violence, physical and emotional suffering, trauma, ambition, and most importantly, morality.

The term '*Rambuai*' plays a massive role in the political and literary history of Mizoram. The term '*Rambuai*' itself is a Mizo language. *Ram* denotes a country, territory, or homeland, whereas *buai* denotes trouble, tumult, or disruption. According to *The American Heritage College Dictionary*, "the term 'trouble' as "a distressing or difficult circumstance or situation" (1473). Meanwhile, Seilen Haokip remarks, "The theme *Buai*, 'troubles' in the English language, deals with a tumultuous period (1966-1986) with far-reaching ramifications, which extend beyond the political boundary of Mizoram: the Peace Accord of 1986 brought to closure the twenty-years Mizo National Front's armed movement" (212). Considering these, *Rambuai* can be defined as 'the period of disturbance', or a 'period of insurgency' within the Mizo District in early 1966, that altered the course of Mizo history and society. However, instead of using the terms, 'insurgency', 'trouble', or 'disturbance', the study, therefore, believes that '*Rambuai*' is the most appropriate term in the context of Zikpuii-Pa's fiction.

Zikpuii-Pa's last fiction, *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* (1989), exposes the horror of violence and atrocities during *Rambuai*, which started in early 1966. Remarkably, Zikpuii-Pa shows his socio-political insight in this narrative. However, the tragic love affair between the protagonist, Chhuanvawra, and his beloved sweetheart, Ngurthansangi, in the context of *Rambuai*, is the fundamental theme. The fictional village of Zopui serves as a backdrop for most of the events, and it influences and affects all the significant characters in the narrative. Since suffering is one of the central themes, Zikpuii-Pa depicts the number of innocent young ladies and married women who were sexually abused by the Indian Army during *Rambuai*.

Consequently, Captain Ranade of the Indian Army illegally forced the heroine, Ngurthansangi, into prostitution. In comparison to the pre-*Rambuai* era, Zopui village has undergone a massive transformation. To be more precise, *Rambuai* has drastically transformed Mizo morality. As a result, a Mizo maidens' self-esteem and purity can no longer be maintained, which is painful. Individuals had lost faith and confidence in one another. Subsequently, the natural beauty of Zopui fails to appeal to them. While depicting the strong determination of Mizo gentleman Chhuanvawra, this chapter further elaborates on how the individual, social, and religious morality had been affected by *Rambuai* and how they had responded to the transition.

Significantly, the *Rambuai* movement, which lasted for twenty years from 1966 to 1986, and the counter-insurgency measures implemented by the Indian government, brought untold misery and suffering for thousands of ethnic Mizo people. Chatterji therefore argues, "The Mizos were a peace-loving hill people and crimes were few but the MNF Rebellion changed the social condition. Murders became frequent and terrorizing the non-Mizos continued unabated for long" (466). This argument illustrates a peaceful Mizo society that has been transformed into a society of violence and terror as a result of *Rambuai*.

### **Chapter III: Colonial Impact in the Narratives**

The third chapter provides a theoretical framework as it deals with the meaning and nature of colonialism, along with post-colonial literary theory. Moreover, it touches upon the various themes that are associated with the colonial and postcolonial implications of Zikpuii-Pa's narratives. However, Zikpuii-Pa did not employ all the features of post-colonial theory. Moreover, this chapter provides a summary of Zikpuii-Pa's fiction, such as *Silvarthangi*, *Kraws Bulah Chuan*, *C.C. Coy No. 27*, and *Hostel Awmtu*.

The term "colonialism" has a long history and plays a prominent role in the history of the world. Needless to say, every country has been familiar with the impact of war and colonialism directly or indirectly. Both the terms 'Colonialism' and 'postcolonialism' are inter-related terms. According to *New Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus of the English Language*, "Colonial means an inhabitant of a colony, of or belonging to a colony, Colonialism means the economic, political and social policies by which colonies are governed" (193). Meanwhile, the

*Cambridge International Dictionary of English* defines, “A colonial is a person from another country who lives in a colony, especially, as part of its system of government. Colonial also refers to people who lived in a colony in the past and still have the opinions and habits of that period in their lives. Colonialism is the belief in and support for the system of one country controlling another” (259). Besides, Loomba also remarks, “Colonialism can be defined as the conquest and control of other people’s land and goods. But colonialism in this sense is not merely the expansion of various European powers into Asia, Africa or the Americas from the sixteenth century onwards; it has been a recurrent and widespread feature of human history” (8). Thus, it can be summarized that a colonial is a person who once experienced domination by a bigger country, and colonialism indicates foreign domination, which is a historical occurrence in different parts of the world. Following this, “Postcolonialism is an interdisciplinary academic field devoted to the study of European colonialism and its impact on the society, culture, history and politics of the formerly colonized regions” (*Dictionary of Literary Terms & Literary Theory* 550). Taking this into account, it is obvious that postcolonialism examines and investigates the consequences of colonialism.

Subsequently, this chapter exposes how far colonialism brought cultural domination to Mizo society through an analysis of Zikpuii-Pa’s fiction. Mizoram, then known as the Lushai Hills, was ruled by the British for about 60 years because it was a part of India. Significantly, the arrival of British colonial rule marked the commencement of a new era in Mizo history. Needless to say, the Mizos were hegemonized in almost every aspect of their lives by the western colonisers. It may not be wrong to state that although the British left Mizoram in 1947, the colonial hangover remained so strong that the Mizos elevated white men’s ideology and practices above their traditional values. Pachuau observes the British influence thus:

To the Mizos in the third quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the notorious white men-whom the Mizos called Sap, a term derived from the Hindi “Saheb” – were powerful conquerers who subdued all authorities that came their way. By the time the pioneer missionaries reached Aizawl in 1894, the whole district had been subjugated and formally annexed by the British Indian Government...In this politically unsettled period, the two notably different

white men appeared. They carried no guns and simply preached and sang about a man called Jesus in the village streets... The missionaries soon commanded the respect of the Mizos who learned to distinguish the missionaries from other white persons. To distinguish them, the Mizos called them “Mizo Sap” or “Zosap” literally “the Mizos’ white people (133-134).

It is obvious from these perceptions that the Mizos have been related to two kinds of English individuals in the nineteenth century: British colonial rulers and Christian missionaries. No doubt, both have had an impact on the Mizos in their way since their arrival. As Paul Lalremruata remarks, “The British were labelled as ‘*Sap/Mingo*’ (white race/white people) and their government or royal dynasty as ‘*Kumpinu*’ (n.Pag). This featured the high admiration of the British along with their realm. Moreover, through an analysis of plot and characters, the study validates that colonialism harmed Mizo society in terms of morality. Through his fiction, Zikpuii-Pa sharply examines the ethos of Mizo society due to the tremendous transition of colonialism in Mizoram. Since the arrival of colonial rule, the Mizos have been exposed to a new world with which they have never been comfortable. Hence, adjusting to their new world has become problematic for them. Subsequently, to imitate their rulers, there was a need to forsake several positive qualities and aspects of their culture. This led to feelings of inferiority, which had an impact on their morals.

The narrative of *Silvarthangi* depicts many features of colonial influence. For instance, the title itself, *Silvarthangi* indicates colonial influence as the Mizos were unfamiliar with such an English name. As the title signifies, *Silvarthangi* was born during the silver jubilee year of King George the Fifth of England’s coronation. Secondly, during the colonial time frame, government officials were respected and effective as portrayed by *Babu Sanglura*’s character. Thus, the affection and adoration for the white-collar job further reveal the colonial effect.

Considering the title, *Kraws Bulah Chuan* which means ‘alongside the Cross’ also designates the colonial influence. The term ‘*Kraws*’ in the title refers to the English word for ‘Cross’, which symbolizes Jesus Christ’s sufferings, which according to the Christian faith brings salvation to all human beings and the foundation of Christianity. Further, *The Bible* teaches that people who have

committed a crime will be forgiven if they sincerely apologise. The protagonist, Lalsawma, had an extramarital affair with Thanchhingi, his first love, which subsequently led to his divorce with his wife. However, as a result of the death of their beloved daughter, Lalduhkimi, both realized their sin and became united alongside the Cross. Therefore, the issue of sin and reconciliation mirrored the religious inspiration of the British Missionaries.

From the account of *Hostel Awmtu*, the study discloses that Christianity has had a significant impact on Mizo individuals as a whole. Even the most reckless wanted to attend the Church service, as evidenced by Liankhuma's friends who attended the Church. Moreover, colonial influence can be found in the title *Hostel Awmtu* itself. Prior to British frontier rule and extension, the Mizos had never heard of the term 'hostel'. After being taught by the Missionaries, the Mizos progressively gained a more extensive point of view and came into contact with outsiders. As a result, the indigenous Mizo people have become familiar with such colonial practices.

In *C.C. Coy No. 27*, several colonial and postcolonial elements can be seen. This can be perceived in the dialogue of the village Chief, Dolura, and his elders (*Upa*) that they were also deeply influenced by a European power. Given the historical context, Ralkapzauva's father feels superior and is admired by the villagers because he served in France during World War I, demonstrating the profound impact of colonial rule on Mizo society. Because the setting is in the far east of Mizoram, it can be viewed through the perspective of 'Eurocentrism', which is the notion that Europe constitutes the centre of the world. In his book '*Orientalism*', postcolonial critic, Edward Said examines how Eurocentrism has influenced the perception and construction of other cultures. In light of this, Zikpuii-Pa embodies the postcolonial attitude in Ralkapzauva's character. As a result, his attitude has been shaped by white superiority and stereotypes of Mizo people as backward and inferior. Considering the European portrayal of the eastern public known as 'Orientals', he considers his village to demonstrate ignorance and crudeness. For this reason, he used the term '*Mawl*' (ignorant, stupid) to refer to his village people several times throughout the narrative, demonstrating the influence of colonial rule in Mizoram.



Notably, Zikpuii-Pa employs one of the main concerns of the postcolonial discourse of ‘othering’ invented by Gayatri Spivak through the protagonist, Ralkapzauva in *C.C. Coy No. 27*. Ralkapzauva has been portrayed as a self-centered and egocentric young man. Considering the term, ‘othering’, he represents the ‘self’ while the rest of the characters represent ‘othering’. For this reason, he prioritises his personal career above all else. His admiration for the white people known as ‘*Sap*’ (the Mizo word for the English people) inspired him to continue his education in Shillong. Even in Shillong, the colonial influence could not keep him apart. He could not hide his appreciation and adoration for the whites. As a result, he quickly gained the favour of the white gentleman, who happened to be the Headmaster himself. Later on, the Headmaster became his mentor in his future endeavor. Although he could have been mentored by two other respectable people, Ralkapzauva’s mentor requires him to be an Englishman because there is no one else who is comparable to an Englishman for him.

Moving on to the various colonial ramifications of *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* from a postcolonial perspective. The narrative can be classified as both colonial and postcolonial fiction. However, Zikpuii-Pa did not incorporate all the key concepts of postcolonial theory into this fiction. No doubt, the setting reflects Zikpuii-Pa’s cosmopolitan outlook. Zopui village is described as a typical Mizo village that is beautiful and peaceful, economically self-sufficient and has comfortable weather. Regarding the setting of *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, Lalramnghaka argues, “The setting of the place is an ideal place like Thomas More’s ‘Utopia’. However, due to the painful effects of *Rambuai*, it became ‘Dystopia’” (150). This depicts the drastic change in Zopui village as a result of *Rambuai*. At the same time, it is evident from this argument that Zikpuii-Pa is not only the product of Mizo society but also the product of colonialism and is inspired by English literature as well.

Prominently, postcolonial theory promotes nationalism and the preservation of one’s own culture and tradition. The conversation between Chhuanvawra’s friend Rohluta and Thantluangi reveals this fact: “Mizos ought not to bow before non-Mizos, we must stand alone. Our beautiful culture should adhere everywhere. Even Chhuanvawra was expected to maintain the same even in Shillong, where people of

various nationalities dwell” (My Trans., *Nunna* 16). Considering this, it can be said that it is Zikpuii-Pa wishes to awaken the Mizo nation through his protagonist’s morality, integrity, and academic excellence. Besides, the term ‘appropriation of colonial languages’ refers to the adoption of the colonizers language, which is a key feature of postcolonial theory. Without a doubt, English is the language of former colonisers and remains an elite language. After becoming acquainted with the English language, colonized nations quickly abandoned their native tongue and adopted many English words. Consequently, English words, such as, yes, please, and so on, have been found in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*.

Significantly, the term ‘mimicry’ is another apparent social change that occurred because of the effects of colonialism in Mizoram, which can be identified in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*. Baby F claims, “Mimicry in colonial and postcolonial literature is most commonly seen when members of a colonized society imitates the language, dress, politics, or cultural attitude of their colonisers” (68). In light of this comment, the term ‘mimicry’ has been found in the narrative of *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*. No doubt, the Mizos imitated the fashion of the colonizers. Aside from that, the western way of life was imitated in terms of house designs and room materials. In ‘*The Mizo Society in Transition*’, Nag writes, “The Mizo society is now more inclined towards Western culture which finds expression in the Mizos dresses, music and dance. Men wear pants, shirts, coats, ties, etc., and have given up using their traditional garments” (163). Taking this into account, *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* highlights traditional Mizo bedding materials such as *siksil*<sup>2</sup>, *pawnpui*<sup>3</sup>, etc. have been replaced by English items such as bedsheets, mattresses, and so on. This kind of imitation is referred to as ‘mimicry’, and it is a key feature of postcolonial literary theory.

#### **Chapter IV: Character Analysis and Gender Dynamics**

Chapter four deals with a close examination of Zikpuii-Pa’s character. Characters play an essential role in works of fiction. Accordingly, Cuddon defines character as, “The person portrayed in a narrative or dramatic work. Also, a short prose sketch of a particular individual type. As a literary genre, ‘the character’ became popular early in the 17<sup>th</sup>C” (116,117). Considering this, a character denotes a literary representation with a distinct quality of its own. Through his characters,

Zikpuii-Pa has dealt with the conflict between good and evil. Notably, the female characters in his fiction are the victims of their husband's infidelity caused by lack of immorality. A few instances would make the point clear. Silvarthangi has suffered as a result of her first husband, Lalhnuna's immorality and infidelity. The same can be said for Ngurthansangi, who has suffered as a result of her husband, Captain Ranade's infidelity and inhumane actions. Hmingthansiami also suffers as a result of her husband Lalsawma's secret relationship with Thanchhingi.

Like the typical Mizo men, Zikpuii-Pa's male characters are generally arrogant and domineering in their own families. On the other hand, female characters, are portrayed as meek, docile, and devoted to their spouses and circle of family members, rather than as powerful as male characters. For instance, in terms of gender, Ngurthansangi's mother in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* appears to be modelled after the traditional Mizo spouse. Her world is, without a doubt, the domestic sphere. She is devoted to her husband, and it is assumed that her most remarkable quality is her patience. She lacked the courage to protect her beloved daughter Ngurthansangi from Captain Ranade's inhumane treatment. In a nutshell, Ngurthansangi's mother is sympathetic because she lacks her world. Subsequently, in post-colonial Mizo society, a male child has been provided with all the positive qualities such as education, achievement, and respect. To illustrate this, Zikpuii-Pa's protagonists, such as Chhuanvawra, Ralkapzauva, and Lalsawma, enjoy the benefit of being male children in the Mizo family. They are portrayed as brilliant, ambitious, and confident, which are traits that are missing in female characters. While a young man pursues higher education and is sent outside of Mizoram, female characters do not partake in such learning and scholarly pursuits. This emphasises the distinction between male and female characters in Zikpuii-Pa's fiction.

### **Conclusion:**

Based primarily on the research findings and evaluation of the previous chapters, the following research conclusions are worth mentioning:

To begin with, the research concludes that Zikpuii-Pa has situated morality in his fictional works in an appropriate manner. The select fiction such as *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, *C.C. Coy No. 27*, *Silvarthangi*, *Kraws Bulah Chuan*, and *Hostel Awmtu* are fine specimens of morality in their varied manifestations. However, the

morality depicted in one work of fiction is not the same as the morality depicted in another. Subsequently, individual behaviour, family life, work environment, social and religious values have all had an impact on morality.

Secondly, the study ascertains that the period of disturbance in Mizoram known as *Rambuai* and British colonial rule in Mizoram are definitely the two significant external forces that transformed Mizo individual, social, religious, and cultural life, influencing Mizo morality. Besides, the study unveils that excessive jealousy caused by suspicion is both painful and harmful through an analysis of *Hostel Awmtu*. When a person is consumed by excessive jealousy, he is unable to maintain his morality, resulting in tragedy. In the case of *Hostel Awmtu*, jealousy is undoubtedly the primary cause of the hostel sentinel's tragic death. Despite being a short narrative, it serves a moral purpose. Significantly, Zikpuii-Pa shows that jealousy is one of the major evils that pervades almost all human beings. If jealousy is not embedded in their lives, everyone can live a comfortable and peaceful life. Jealousy has been a major theme in the nuances of notable literature. Meanwhile, the juxtaposition of love and jealousy depicts the real factors of human life through *Hostel Awmtu*.

Moreover, the study also discloses that although Zikpuii-Pa gives moral advice to his readers, his morality is not candidly addressed in his fiction. In short, his fiction is not as didactic as *Aesop's Fables*. Notably, when it comes to Christianity, the majority of post-Christian fiction writers deliberately give moral guidance to their readers. As a result, they viewed morality solely through the lens of religion, particularly Christianity. This demonstrates the enormous influence of Christianity in Mizo society, which shows the impact of colonialism. In contrast to his contemporaries, Zikpuii-Pa did not view morality exclusively from a Christian perspective. He observed events and human instincts from a different viewpoint, which lends authenticity to his fiction. The study further observes that Zikpuii-Pa's fiction demonstrates an evil action cannot be concealed. When someone does something wrong, he is bound to feel guilty, highlighting the importance of morality in human beings.

Furthermore, the research also reveals that Zikpuii-Pa's character can be divided into two types: moral and immoral characters. Characters like Chhuanvawra,

Ralkapzauva, Bahadur, and Pastor Lianzuala represent morality, whereas characters like Captain Ranade, Lalthangpuii, Lalhnuna, and others represent immorality. In addition, the study observes that immoral people like Lalhnuna and Captain Ranade can neither be great spouses to their wives nor great fathers to their children.

Following an investigation into *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, the research authenticates that although *Rambuai* harmed Mizo morality, yet few characters have managed to their morality and humanity intact in their lives. For instance, Pastor Lianzuala serves as a dependable tower for his terrified and perplexed people during *Rambuai*. When everyone else is miserable and gloomy, he shows no indications of tension or dread, which is admirable. Taking this into account, the research concludes that he epitomizes religious morality.

Moreover, the research also determines that even religious morality is liable to change depending on the circumstances and historical context. The account of Pi Kungliani in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* exposes this reality. She is one of the rape victims in *Rambuai*. As a result, she absorbs guilty feelings, lack of confidence, humiliation, and inner turmoil. Therefore, she committed suicide out of desperation. Suicide is viewed as genuine wrongdoing in light of Christian morality. For this reason, even religious leaders were puzzled as to whether the Christian funeral should be observed or not. Despite the uncertain circumstances, Pastor Lianzuala bravely offers himself to carry out his responsibilities in such a critical situation. Rather than blaming Pi Kungliani's action, everyone understood and sympathised with her predicament. Subsequently, her funeral drew a large crowd, which is believed to be the largest crowd ever assembled at a village funeral. This demonstrates that, although her actions were against the Christian doctrine, people sympathized with the inhumanity she has encountered.

Besides, the research discloses that historical context and life circumstances can influence an individual's morality. In this regard, individual morality in pre-*Rambuai* Mizo society differs from individual morality in post-*Rambuai* Mizo society. Subsequently, the study reveals that *Rambuai* causes moral degeneration in an individual. Ngurthansangi, the heroine of *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, was portrayed as a pure and innocent maiden in the pre-*Rambuai* era. However, as a result of *Rambuai*, Captain Ranade took away her chastity and she was forced to

follow him, who later sold her to a brothel, which deeply affected her morality. When Chhuanvawra rescued her from the bonds of such an indecent occupation, she had nearly failed to remember God. When Chhuanvawra tried to seduce her before *Rambuai*, her God-fearing nature, as well as her morality, caused her to resist even her beloved sweetheart. Ironically, a gracious and pious Mizo young maiden had almost forgotten God and lost her faith. She could not keep up with her morality because of her dark involvement in her world of prostitution. There is no question that *Rambuai* brought moral disintegration.

Likewise, the study also discloses that Mizo society suffered from a lack of justice during *Rambuai*. In the eyes of the Indian army, the MNF volunteers or those individuals associated with the MNF were deemed to be morally wrong. Identity is significant in the context of *Rambuai*. It makes no difference whether an individual behaves well or not, every person was classified in light of their identity rather than their conduct during the time of *Rambuai*.

The study also discovers that the pre-*Rambuai* and pre-colonial Mizo morality, guided by communitarian Mizo culture, has been gradually changed by individualism, which prompted moral decay in Mizo society. Remarkably, the Mizos have a cooperative culture in conventional society. For this reason, everything has been done collectively. However, as a result of colonialism and *Rambuai*, everyone is concerned about their career and achievements, which have been highlighted by the protagonists of Zikpuii-Pa. For example, in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, Chhuanvawra aspires to be a decent individual and therefore went to Shillong for further studies. Similarly, in *C.C. Coy No. 27*, Ralkapzauva is determined to become a *sap*. Unlike his peers, he adopted a western style of learning. Moreover, in *Kraws Bulah Chuan*, the protagonist, Lalsawma, sought higher studies to become a medical doctor. Thus, the study observes that colonialism fosters egocentricity and individualism in Mizo society.

Furthermore, the research discloses that the majority of Mizos lacked morality toward Christian missionaries' as they regard them as superior beings or demi-divine beings. In other words, the Mizo people failed to recognize the flaws of white people because they overestimated them. In *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, the train debate between Chhuanvawra and the Major reveals the prestigious position of

the missionaries among the Mizos, who were referred to as the ‘torch-bearers of Christianity’ by the Mizos. In a train debate on issues related to *Rambuai*, the Major sneered, “Did the missionary teach you that?” Chhuanvawra confidently responds, “Of course, they have taught everything great”. This affirms that the Mizos believed the missionaries to be impeccable individuals who were omniscient and possessed only good qualities. Therefore, it is clear from Chhuanvawra’s expression that the Mizos viewed the Christian missionaries from a colonial perspective.

Remarkably, the study exposes that there are no such things as completely ‘good’ or completely ‘bad’ characters in human nature. Because no one is perfect, each of the characters bears a distinct burden and possesses moral qualities that the others lack. For instance, in *C.C. Coy No. 27*, the protagonist, Ralkapzauva, has a flaw: his excessive admiration for the English. As a result, he disregards his morals at times and attempts to abandon his educational journey. Nonetheless, he chooses to keep going. After overcoming numerous obstacles, he finally got what he wanted. Similarly, in *Kraws Bulah Chuan*, despite being the son of a religious priest, Lalsawma has a flaw in his life: his unwavering love and affection for his first love, Thanchhingi. Toward the beginning of the account, he is an instance of a morally good, God-fearing, and untainted person. However, as a result of his extra-marital affairs with Thanchhingi, a moral character, has been deemed immoral. Furthermore, in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, Chhuanvawra’s flaw is his undying love for Ngurthansangi. In the relentless pursuit of his loved one, he sometimes disregarded his morals. A close examination of Zikpuii-Pa’s character reveals his understanding of human instincts and dilemmas.

Significantly, pre-*Rambuai* Mizo morality was shaped by generosity, loving one’s neighbour, bravery, humility, honesty, compassion, equality, and so on, all of which are encapsulated in a single Mizo word known as ‘*Tlawmngaihna*’<sup>4</sup>. As a result, the majority of the characters in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* address people who are morally acceptable in pre-*Rambuai* Mizo society. However, as a result of being victimized during *Rambuai*, such morality has dwindled. Selfishness, dishonesty, rape, suicide, and other immoral behaviours were now prevalent in the public arena. As revealed by the protagonist, Chhuanvawra, a selfless Mizo

gentleman, has turned into an egocentric gentleman. Furthermore, *Rambuai* has turned a brave and confident young man into a coward and insecure young man.

The study also discloses that *Rambuai* and British colonial rule foster nepotism and discrimination within the Mizo community, which Mizo society is not accustomed to. No doubt, *Rambuai* brings favouritism to one's relatives through the character of Chhuanvawra in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, which is referred to as 'nepotism', which remains a common issue even in the post-Millennium era. It is worth noting the Mizo proverb, "Those who share will live, those who grab will die" (*Sem sem dam dam, eibil thi thi*) which served as the Mizo moral code in pre-colonial and pre-*Rambuai* Mizo society. This indicates the Mizo culture was one of sharing, and self-sacrifice to others. In *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, Chhuanvawra was arrested by the Indian army on his way to Zopui and imprisoned for three months with other Mizo young men. However, due to his father's prestigious status and his elder brother Chhuankima's prestigious designation, he was released from prison alone. The sad part was that his Mizo friends were common people who had not yet been released because they did not have any immediate relatives to help them like him. No doubt, *Rambuai* created a large disparity in Mizo society between the rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated. However, based on the aforementioned incident, it can be assumed that the Mizo culture of sharing and self-sacrifice to others has been abandoned in times of adversity. In terms of Mizo morality, Chhuanvawra should reject the proposal to release him from jail. Although he was worried about his friends in prison, he did not turn down the offer of release. Surprisingly, gone are the days when the Mizo public considered one another, which is portrayed through Chhuanvawra's character.

Following a close observation of the characters, the research concludes that Zikpuii-Pa is deeply concerned about inward goodness, and his morality is not merely determined by outward appearance. In *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, Ngurthansangi's determination to maintain her purity, and graceful heart in the face of *Rambuai* captivates readers. Although she needs to surrender her body to Captain Ranade during *Rambuai*, she remains the purest of the pure for Chhuanvawra, who recognises her true essence. In a similar vein, despite becoming a widow, Zikpuii-Pa portrays Thanchhingi as more appealing to Lalsawma than a normal maiden, as he



comprehends her predicament. These instances ascertain Zikpuii-Pa's true conception of morality.

Furthermore, the study concludes that colonialism exposes the immorality of some Mizo youth, particularly those living outside of Mizoram. Ralkapzauva, the protagonist in *C.C. Coy No. 27*, has become the victim of ragging in Earle Hostel, Shillong, which is unheard of in pre-colonial Mizo society. Evidently, after being colonised, Mizo young people became acquainted with the hostel environment, and ragging is one of the common issues in hostel life that has persisted even in the modern social scenario. As per Christian morality, it is expected that Mizo Christians are expected to be helpful, cordial, and kind toward others, especially towards their fellow Mizos. In spite of being Christians, Saichhunga, and his friends, given pre-colonial Mizo social morality, failed to uphold such morality for their juniors. On the contrary, they prefer to treat Ralkapzauva, their Mizo fellows, immorally and wickedly. This demonstrates that whether they are Christian or not, there is no such thing as a perfect society free of immorality. Every society contains both moral and immoral individuals. Subsequently, the research determines that Zikpuii-Pa's fiction demonstrates morality and integrity do not rely solely on religion, society, status and rank, but rather on the distinctive individual. To put it somewhat differently, it is unwise to judge a person based on their outward appearance and status.

The study also ascertains that Ralkapzauva represents an individual morality who demonstrates moral courage and integrity. Although he suffers greatly as a result of conflicts, he always finds a way to overcome them. On one occasion, his seniors accused him of being a burglar in the hostel. He dared to mention the instigator's name because of his moral courage. Ralkapzauva said sympathetically, "Since it was the last and most significant time in my entire life to make such a crucial decision about my destiny, whether it was positive or negative, despite being afraid of Saichhunga, I am sure it was the ideal opportunity to disclose the truth" (My Trans., *Lungrualna* 30). This narration demonstrates Zikpuii-Pa's deep concern for morality. Meanwhile, it should be noted that, because he had a cosmopolitan outlook, he did not simply manage morality from a Christian perception. The narration further validates that speaking the truth at the right time reveals a person's true nature. A moral person is willing to be punished for expressing his or her beliefs. At the same

time, a corrupt or immoral person dare not speak the truth and instead attempted to defend himself.

Besides, a close examination of Zikpuii-Pa's character may lead to the conclusion that morality is not dependent on one's financial position or social status. In this connection, the character of Bahadur, who is a *Kuli*<sup>5</sup> in *C.C. Coy No. 27* epitomizes individual morality. To some extent, his role is unique in that he is one of the few non-Mizo characters in Mizo fiction. His humility defines his personality. He is a good person who has avoided all forms of hypocrisy and deception. He always maintains selflessness, diligence, and kindness. In this competitive world, where everyone is looking for their own happiness and well-being, he never seeks such worldly pleasures as more money and fame. Despite his humble profession, he adheres to professional ethics and morality and has never engaged in unethical behaviour. He considers and respects his customers to be a demi-God. To put it another way, despite his small stature as a *Kuli*, he possesses a strong moral sense as well as the ability to be confident and patient. Throughout the narrative, the research has found that Bahadur never loses his morality under any circumstances. At the point when Ralkapzauva becomes vulnerable, he quietly helps and consoles him. For this reason, Bahadur is seen as a guide, a reliable companion, and a shield for Ralkapzauva outside Mizoram. His character thus exemplifies selflessness, which in Mizo society is synonymous with '*Tlawmngaihna*', which is as yet revered in the contemporary social situation.

Additionally, the study realizes that, due to the strong influence of colonialism, even the Church elders fail to maintain their religious morality at times. For instance, when the protagonist, Ralkapzauva, returns to his native village after joining the army in *C.C. Coy No. 27*, the villagers complimented him. In the presence of the Church elders, the chief presented Ralkapzauva with fermented liquor to express his gratitude for his accomplishment. Based on colonial Christian morality, drinking liquor is a sin and is strictly forbidden. In such a strict religious milieu, it is surprising that the Church elders neither opposed nor criticized their chief because they regarded an army officer as a superior human being, to be excluded from such moral restrictions, exposing the dominance of colonialism in Mizoram.

Significantly, although Zikpuii-Pa shares some themes with his contemporaries, his moral message to the readers comes off as unintentional as those of other renowned Mizo writers. Finally, the research concludes that every work of fiction understudy brings out how morality is contained amid complex plots, thus inspiring and encouraging the readers. He stressed the significance of morality, determination, and diligence in life by referring to his strong-willed protagonists, who struggled and faced adversity to succeed. Therefore, by looking into the possible parameters of Zikpuii-Pa's fiction concerning morality, the study concludes that Zikpuii-Pa's characters come in all shapes and sizes, yet the one thing that ties them together and unchains them independently is none other than their morality. To conclude, Zikpuii-Pa's fiction conveys the morality of the Mizo people before the colonial period till the post-*Rambuai* period. Therefore, the recurring theme in Zikpuii-Pa's fiction can be summed up as 'strong and steady wins the race', implying that a moral or good-hearted person who upholds integrity and perseverance in life is always successful, whereas immorality inevitably results in sorrow and grief.

Glossary:

1. *Rambuai*: The term “*Rambuai*” denotes the period of conflict due to the MNF uprising against the Central Government in early 1966 which changed the course of Mizo history and society.
2. *Siksil*: *Dictionary of the Lushai Language* by James Herbert Lorrain (Pu Buanga) defines the Lushai handleless umbrella.
3. *Pawnpui*: a Lushai blanket
4. *Tlawmngaihna*: Self-sacrifice, being unselfish, altruism/ a term for the Mizo code of ethics meaning selfless service for others.
5. *Kuli*: a coolie, a porter

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## CHAPTER- I

### INTRODUCTION

The term 'morality' plays an immense role within the ambit of literature, particularly, in the world of fiction. Indeed, morality is a part of everyone's life. Meanwhile, it is difficult to answer the question, "Where does morality come from?" In short, the principles that govern human conduct are defined by morality. Society will not be able to survive for long if these principles are not followed. Without a doubt, morality influences a person's daily decisions, guided by his conscience. Again, the individual must determine the origin of the conscience. More or less, the world is searching for morality. Morality can be interpreted in a variety of ways. Etymologically, the term 'morality' has been derived from the Latin word '*mos*' which means custom or habit. The *New Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus of the English Language* defines it as "concerned with right and wrong and the distinction between them, virtuous, good" (649). According to the *Cambridge International Dictionary of English*, "Morality is a personal or social set of standards for good or bad behavior and character or the quality of being right, honest or acceptable. To moralize is to express judgement on right and wrong" (917). Meanwhile, the *American Heritage College Dictionary* defines, "The term morality denotes the quality of being in accord with standards of right and good conduct, a system of ideas of right and wrong conduct, virtuous conduct, a rule or lesson in a moral conduct"(904). Since morality has been associated with ethics, it is very easy to get confused between these two terms. Subsequently, William K. Frankena describes, "Ethics is a branch of philosophy, it is a moral philosophy or philosophical thinking about morality, moral problems, and moral judgements. The terms 'moral' and 'ethical' are often used as equivalent to 'right' or 'good' and as opposed to 'immoral' and unethical" (4-5). Meanwhile, *The Oxford Reference Dictionary* defines morality as "principles concerning the difference between right and wrong or the extent to which an action is right and wrong" (546). Thus, it can be assumed that morality implies distinguishing between what is right and what is wrong. It denotes what one believes to be right and wrong.

Today the World is emerging from the age of hush. A moral revolution is sweeping the world. Majority as it seems, is the major interest in the western world. Humans, like God, have mind-power. Humans acquire knowledge which no animal brain can receive. Humans are endowed with the faculty to learn to know right from wrong. Human minds have ability to weigh facts, to judge, make decisions, and to exercise self-restraint and self-discipline. (*God speaks* 29)

This highlights the difference between human beings and other creatures, along with the significance of morality in human beings. Meanwhile, *Chambers 20<sup>th</sup> Century Dictionary* defines ‘morality’ as “the quality of being moral, that which renders an action right or wrong and the practice of moral duties apart from religion, virtue, the doctrine of actions as right or wrong” (820). The *New Encyclopaedia Britannica* defines morality as a “standard of human behaviour determined either subjectively or objectively and based on what is considered ethically right or wrong” (11).

Considering the various definitions mentioned above, it is evident that, apart from religion, human beings have been associated with morality to some extent. Thus, it can be summarised that morality helps a person differentiate between good and bad. Morality is affected by the individual, family, religion, caste, class, and culture. For instance, the morality of one religion may be considered immoral by another religion. The definition of morality may differ from society to society, person to person, country to country and so on. Likewise, the morality of one community can be considered immoral by another community. Furthermore, the morality of one family may differ from that of another. When talking about morality, it is essential to understand the historical and cultural context.

Significantly, morality seems to be the dominant preoccupation in Zikpuii-Pa’s fictional Pa’s works. Zikpuii-Pa’s intelligence and integrity are an integral part of his morality because he can see things and characters clearly and in proper perspective. Human beings, in fact, naturally acquire morality throughout their lives. It is a basic instinct for all normal humans. Without a doubt, morality is a priceless gift from God. Directly from childhood, morality prompts human existence.



Meanwhile, not all humans are alike; some are wise, broad-minded, brilliant, confident, consistent, and careful, while others are foolish, narrow-minded, illiterate, shallow, careless, cruel, and inconsistent. Regardless of family, religion, or social background, everyone has been associated with morality in their lives. As a matter of fact, a person's attitude and behaviour reveal his morality.

Meanwhile, individual morality may be altered depending on the historical context and the circumstances of one's life. For instance, the morality in pre-colonial Mizo society is not the same as the morality in post-colonial era Mizo society. Similarly, the morality of the pre-Christian era in Mizo society has been replaced by Christian morality. With regard to family, the morality of a particular family may be altered depending on their financial status. Accordingly, the purpose of this research is to investigate how far Zikpuii-Pa situates morality in his fiction and how significant morality is in human relationships. Subsequently, the study provides an overview of how individual morality, social morality, and religious morality influence society and the environment. For this purpose, the study has selected five fictional works by Zikpuii-Pa, *Kraws Bulah Chuan* (1986), *C.C. Coy No. 27* (1986), *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* (1989), *Silvarthangi* (1991), and *Hostel Awmtu* (1991).

Right now, moving on to the accounts of Mizo fiction. Since time immemorial, the Mizo people have been associated with tales and stories. Needless to say, Mizoram was a virtually unknown land to the rest of the world until the British involved other parts of North East India. The Mizo people had maintained their own culture, tradition, and morality despite living in such isolation. It is challenging to trace the origins of Mizo fiction as it might incorporate fantasy and folktales, which have anonymous authors. Obviously, in early Mizo society, such stories were passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth. Hence, the early fiction like myths and folktales were, for the most part, known as "oral narrative", and they were initially passed down from one age to another, which is, without question, a source of Mizo history.

Given the prominent role of folktales in Mizo fiction, let us briefly recount the earlier written works in Mizo literature. T.H. Lewin, known as Thangliana by the

Mizos, is credited with being the first to publish the Mizo language in print. In his book, *Progressive Colloquial Exercises in the Lushai Dialect of the Dzo or Kuki Language*, published in 1874, he recorded and included three popular Mizo folktales, *Chemtatrawta*, *Kungawrhi*, and *Lalruanga*. He was followed by J. Shakespear in 1989, who included ten Mizo folktales in his book titled, *Mizo and Non-Mizo Tales*.

Zoramdinthara argues, “Publication of Mizo folktales have (sic) been gradually increased. In 1926, Welsh Mission also collected 23 Mizo folktales and published in 1926 called ‘*Mizo Thawnthu*’ in (sic) Mizo language” (11). Following this, Nuchhungi Renthlei, P.S. Dahrawka, and C.Vanlallawma compiled a collection of Mizo folktales published prior to 2000. Consequently, Lalruanga published *Mizo Thawnthu Chhuizauna*, a collection of folktales, and a guidebook for Mizo fiction, in 2000. Moreover, C.Hermana published *Mizo Thawnthu Hlimthla (Chawngchilhi to Palova)* in 2001. Somewhat later, R.L. Thanmawia has published *Mizo Hnahthlak Thawnthu Vols 1-3*, which is regarded as a unique and systematic classification of Mizo folktales. This was followed by *Mizo Thawnthu*, a collection of Mizo folktales written by Lalrinawma. Besides, Lalmachhuana Zofa has made significant contributions to the sphere of Mizo folktales in the modern era. As such, he might be viewed as one of the most productive writers concerning Mizo folktales.

In the contemporary literary scenario, fiction has risen to prominence in Mizo literature. The term “fiction” has been defined by Cuddon, “A vague and general term for an imaginative work, usually in prose...Fiction is now used in general of the novel, the short story, the novella and related genres” (279) Meanwhile, *The Random House College Dictionary* defines “The class of literature comprising works of imaginative narration especially in prose form, the works of this class, as novels or short stories” (490). Besides, the *Longman Advanced American Dictionary* defines fiction as “books and stories about imaginary people and events” (530). According to *New Webster’s Dictionary and Thesaurus of the English Language*, the term, ‘fiction’ implies “Literature consisting of invented narrative, esp. the novel and short story” (348). Meanwhile, M. H. Abrams defines, “The term fiction denotes only narratives that are written in prose (the novel and the short story) and sometimes is

used simply as the synonym for novel” (116). Thus, taking into account all these definitions, one can summarise fiction as a narrative written in prose.

The first prerequisite for approaching Mizo fiction is to be familiar with Mizo folktales, with which it is closely associated. Similarly, a Mizo folktale assumes a significant role in the rise and development of Mizo fiction. Although fiction is the youngest literary genre in Mizo literature, it has become the most widely read and studied genre in Mizo literature today.

### 1.1 The Evolution of Mizo Fiction

Like Indian English fiction, Mizo fiction has a proper place in Mizo literature because of its unique conditions and the Mizo ethos of characters set in varying socio-economic scenarios. As a creative process, fiction chronicles the artistic progression of society itself. Zoramdinthara classifies Mizo fiction into three periods, such as Pre-Independence Mizo Fiction, Post-Independence Mizo Fiction, and Modern Mizo Fiction (20). Besides, F. Lalfakawmi divides Mizo fiction into subgenres, such as Indigenous Fiction, Transitional Christian Fiction, and Nationalistic Fiction (40).

For a helpful investigation of the fictional works of Zikpuii-Pa, foundational information on the historical backdrop of Mizo writing is fundamental. Little is known about the origins of Mizo literature, but it is clear that Mizo fiction existed long before the Mizo people became educated. It was assumed that the Mizos began to literate themselves around the end of the nineteenth century A.D. As previously stated, knowledge was passed down through oral tradition before the Mizo people became literate, many interesting facts were lost along the way. In light of his research, Renthlei writes, “Forty second year after the introduction of Mizo Alphabet, in 1936, Mizo fiction appeared as a literary form of the novel. The first to appear was *Hawilopari*, and the writer was an 18 years old young man called L. Biakliana. L. Biakliana wrote 2 fictional works, one a novel and the other a short story. Three other fiction writers, Kaphleia, Lalzuithanga, and C.Thuamluaia followed the footsteps of L. Biakliana” (3). To authenticate this view, Thanmawia

remarks, “The year 1936 may be regarded as a landmark in the literacy (sic) history of Mizo as in the year L. Biakliana wrote the first Mizo novel, *Hawilopari* (113).

Regarding the accounts of *Hawilopari*, Lallungmuana remarks, “*Hawilopari*’ written in 1936 appears to be the first Mizo novel...this first work in Mizo fiction ‘*Hawilopari*’ is a kind of love story with the historical background of Pre-Christianity in Mizoram”(19). Lalthangliana held a similar view. He stated that the first Mizo novel was *Hawilopari*, which was written by Biakliana, son of Liangkhaia, and was completed in 1936 (188). Consequently, pre-Independence Mizo fiction, which spans the years 1936 to 1946, plays an important role in Mizo literary history as it marks the beginning of Mizo fiction and contains several important works.

As the pioneer Mizo fiction writer, it is necessary to introduce L. Biakliana. He is the son of Liangkhaia and Ngurchhuani and was born on August 26, 1918, at Mission Veng, Aizawl. Thus, he passed matriculation in the year 1936 (*Biakliana* 13). While studying and preparing for God’s service, he contracted tuberculosis, the most dreadful and contagious disease of the time (TB). As a result, he died on October 19, 1941, at the age of 23, in Shillong.

L. Biakliana wrote and completed his first fictional story –‘*Hawilopari*’. Mr.Khuangruma,<sup>1</sup> a close companion of L. Biakliana, claimed that they had read the manuscript copy of ‘*Hawilopari*’ written by L. Biakliana in the month (sic) of November 1936 just before their marriage (*Themes* 18). Because of this, it is considered that ‘*Hawilopari*’ is the first Mizo novel and the history of the Mizo novel started from the year 1936. The same novelist Biakliana wrote another short story called ‘*Lali*’, the second Mizo novel in the year 1937 (*Influence* 22).

Let us take a look at some pioneering Mizo fiction. As denoted earlier, *Hawilopari* is the primary Mizo fiction written in an original structure in 1936. It is a love story set against the historical backdrop of pre-Christianity. It depicts the love affairs of three pairs of lovers, Hminga and Hawilopari, Liana and Mawii, and Chhana and Ngaihi, along with their devoted leader, Zema. *Hawilopari* is a tragic-comedy. The novelist, L. Biakliana has skillfully intertwined the subplot and the main plot in *Hawilopari*.

Surprisingly, L.Biakliana's second fictional work, *Lali*, also stood as the second Mizo fictional work. Notably, *Lali* was the first Mizo short story written in 1937, and it took place between 1920 and 1940. The narrative of *Lali* highlights how Christianity has uplifted the pathetic status of women in the traditional Mizo family and early Mizo society. Furthermore, it ingeniously differentiates between the moral and the immoral. The focal subjects are the low status of women in Mizo society, the terrible impacts of alcohol, the conjugal framework, and the impacts of Christianity in Mizo society, etc. Renthlei comments, "The first two Mizo fictional works belonged to one author, named L. Biakliana. They were written in 1936 and 1937, having had a title of maidens (sic) names. It was notable that 23 years old Biakliana could write two important fictional works during his short lifetime (7). In light of the above discussions, it is obvious that L. Biakliana's contribution to Mizo literature is tremendous and indelible. Since there was no other novel in written form at the time he wrote *Hawilopari*, his foresight, deep concern for the welfare of Mizo society, and tireless efforts enabled him to complete the first- Mizo novel.

Kaphleia, like L.Biakliana, is a pioneer among fiction writers. The author, Kaphleia, son of Chhingvunga and Chuailovi, was born on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1910 in Thiakvillage. He was a bright student and completed his matriculation from Govt. High School, Shillong, in 1935...Unfortunately, he suffered from tuberculosis, which was an infectious and incurable disease at the time, and died on November 13, 1940, at the age of 30 (*Kaphleia Hnuhma* vii). As a well-educated gentleman, he had a positive outlook on life. Even after he became bedridden, Kaphleia continued to observe society through a nationalist viewpoint. He is the author of the third fiction and the second short story in Mizo entitled *Chhingpuii*. Since the story depends on the personality of the wonderful maiden, Chhingpuii, in Mizo history, it can be viewed as the primary historical fiction in Mizo.

In terms of theme, *Chhingpuii* is both a secular historical novel and a romantic tragedy. Although it was written in 1963, considering the different episodes that occurred in the story, perhaps it was composed sometime around 1938-1939 in the pre-colonial time frame. While depicting the significant event in Mizo history known as the war between the East and the West (*Chhak leh Thlang Indo*), the

narrative focuses on the tragic love affair between Kaptluanga and Chhingpuii. It also emphasised various practices in Mizo society, such as inter-village war, the Mizo courting system, the prestigious status of *Pasaltha* (hunter warrior), superstition, taboos, and so on. Because the hero, Kaptluanga's life is similar to Kaphleia, it may be considered an autobiographical story as well. Simultaneously, it might fall into the class of morality fiction as it depicts genuine and reliable love that suffers from time and testing, which is the primary topic of the narrative. Therefore, a survey of the beginnings of Mizo fiction reveals that the writers primarily wrote historical or sociological novels.

Lalzuithanga, the author of popular novels such as *Aukhawk Lasi*, *Thlahrang*, and *Phira leh Ngurthanpari*, is located next to Kaphleia. Lalzuithanga began his literary career as a novelist. He wrote nine poems, thirteen short stories, and one play called *Black Corner of Aijal* in 1999. Besides, he wrote two novels such as *Thlahrang* and *Phira leh Ngurthanpari* (*Mizo Lit* 287). Lalzuithanga was the eldest son of Chawngbuaia of Kulikawn in 1916. He was only 33 years old when he died on September 28, 1950. He wrote 16 stories to his credit (*Zotui* 246). Notably, Lalzuithanga ranks very high among early Mizo fiction writers because he was the one who introduced a new type of fiction known as *Utopian Fiction* to Mizo literature. Utopian fiction supplements and enriches Mizo fiction in this way. The story of *Thlahrang* depicts unusual incidents in early Mizo society, such as kidnapping, murder, suicide, and so on. As a result, Lalzuithanga is considered a pioneer in detective Mizo fiction because he paved the way for detective fiction in Mizo. On the other hand, *Thlahrang* interestingly depicted Mizos altruism, bravery, and patriotism in Mizo society. A reading of this fiction provides an insight into Lalzuithanga's nationalism and patriotism. Furthermore, Lalzuithanga's art of characterization is praiseworthy. The next fiction, *Aukhawk Lasi* <sup>2</sup> is basically a supernatural story that mainly deals with the affairs of *Lasi* lady named Rautinchhingi and Thuama. As the name suggests, it portrays the strange force of *Lasi*.

*Eng Dan Nge* fundamentally mirrors the hopeless state of women in Mizo society. Given the various issues that women face, it is clear that the narrative was created from a feminist perspective. *Min Hriatreng Nan* by Lalzuithanga is a complicated love-story between Hmingi and Sanga. In English literature, Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, Lawrence Sterne, and Tobias G. Smollet were regarded as ‘*Four Wheels of the Novel*’. Similarly, Lalthangliana refers to L.Biakliana, Kaphleia, and Lalzuithanga as the “Three Wheels of Mizo Fiction” because of their invaluable contributions to Mizo fiction (207).

C. Thuamluaia is one of the three main runners in Mizo fiction. To affirm this, Zoramdinthara remarks, “C.Thuamluaia was the first Mizo fiction writer of the pre-Independence Mizo fiction period” (77). For this reason, there is no doubt that he holds a unique position in the history and development of Mizo fiction. His complete fictional work is *Engtin Awm Ta Zel Ang Maw*, written in 1945 and published in 1990. He published two short stories, *Sialton Official* and *Leitlang Dingdi*. He had thus completed three fictional works in total. For this reason, Renthlei labelled him the “Father of Utopian Literature in Mizo”.

C.Thuamluaia’s first novel, *Engtin Awm Ta Zel Ang Maw*, is a fantasy novel. He composed this novel while he was in Calcutta. In contrast to the typical novel, the author names his characters with non-Mizo names such as Allana, Januari, Nina, and Koke. Furthermore, unlike other Mizo regional novels, the author introduced several unfamiliar locations, giving the story a distinct one. This story is endowed with a wealth of originality and resourcefulness. Like his previous novels, it also exposes a rare type of affair between a Mizo gentleman known as Sialton Official and a beautiful Khasi maiden named Dorothy, as in his previous novels.

Prior to C. Thuamluaia, so-called inter-racial love was not common in Mizo fiction. Above and beyond that, this particular work of fiction reveals Thuamluaia’s wit and rhetoric. No doubt, reading *Sialton Official* is like travelling to one’s favourite place because it paints a vivid description of the beautiful Shillong and its appealing ambiance. Without a doubt, his witty expressions and creativity capture the attention of readers, including literary geniuses like Zikpuii-Pa. Thuamluaia’s fiction

enriches Mizo fiction. His works are a continuation of the social novels of his predecessors.

C. Thuamluaia's contemporary is Zikpuii-Pa, whose real name is K.C. Lalvunga. It is considered that by the end of 1950, Zikpuii-Pa started his literary career by writing his first fiction, entitled *Silvarthangi*, in the year 1958. He has three novels, such as *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, *Kraws Bulah Chuan* and *C.C. Coy No. 27*, and three short stories, such as *Silvarthangi*, *Hostel Awmtu* and *Lalramliana*. Among his works, *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* is the masterpiece of Zikpuii-Pa. As a whole, his fiction is worth reading and studying.

C. Khuma was another legendary figure in Mizo literature. Born in 1914, C. Khuma, the son of Zawngkawma and Rochhungi, was the first Captain among the Burmese Mizo. He died on September 27, 1990, at the age of 76, after succumbing to cancer. C. Khuma began his literary career in 1944 and has published six books: *Hmangaih Thiamna*, *Maymyo Sanapui*, *In in chu ka In a ni*, *Chhingkhual Lungdi*, *Fahrah Nun*, and *Phuloh Zunleng (Mizo Lit 290)*. Despite its small size, *In in chu ka In a ni* reveals C. Khuma's creativity and innovation. Unlike the typical Mizo love story, it deals with the love affairs of a divorced man and a young lady. The third novel, *Fahrah Nun*, focuses on the plight of the poor and sympathetic orphans in Mizo society. *Phuloh Zunleng* is a love story about the King's daughter and the son of an ordinary young man. It depicts the parents' wrong decision regarding a life partner, which destroys the family as a whole. The story has a didactic purpose in that it encourages people to avoid the path to hell and instead take the path to heaven. C. Khuma's first fiction, *Maymyo Sanapui* was written in 1946. As the title suggests, the setting of the story is Maymyo itself, which should be the hometown of numerous Mizos during those days. Notably, *Maymyo Sanapui* depicts the complicated circumstances of the two lovers, Liana, and a Burmese lady, named Ma Hla Kyi, during World War II. While portraying the tolerance and diligence of the Mizo honourable man amid an emergency, he further emphasised the Mizo young fellows who filled in as comfort and solace for their sweethearts. A reading of this fiction helps us understand C. Khuma's ethical quality. He did not advocate inter-racial



marriage, he was rather against it. In the account, the incident where some military personnel did not get a warm welcome is quite surprising and astounding in early Mizo society.

It is worth noting that the Mizo youth independence movement emerged gradually around the 1960s. Meanwhile, fictional works by RL Rina, such as *Lungtiawii leh Parchuailova* and *Lungngaihna Virthli*, have been published in Burma. Later, in 1964, Vanlalropuia's *Chawngpui A ti vawl vawl thin* and L. Zokhuma's *Harlene Irene and James Mellory* were published. Sapthankhuma also wrote *Senhripari* in 1971. This epoch is appropriately referred to as "The Dark Age of Mizo Literature" (*History* 223). During the dark ages, the spirit of national identity was the primary motivation for writers.

Prior to 1970, Mizo fiction primarily depicted Mizo culture and society. Without a doubt, Mizo morality such as honesty, diligence, and reverence for the elderly remained ingrained in Mizo society even after Christianity was introduced to Mizoram. At the same time, colonialism alters the Mizo value system and aspirations, which are reflected in post-colonial fiction. During this decade, 1970-1980, many cyclostyle translation works were produced, particularly cowboy stories. As far as Mizo fiction was concerned, the post-1970's witnessed the re-appearance of the Mizo fiction genre and fresh fiction writers. A new type of fiction known as *Rambuai* Fiction has come out. In this context, "we witnessed the first example of *Rambuai* fiction in 1975 in Vanlalngena's works, *Ka Di Ve Kha (After 34)*.

During the *Rambuai* (Dark Age) of Mizo literature, James Dokhuma, like other Mizo novelists, was inspired by the *Rambuai* experience. He shared the sense of wound, trauma, physical and mental agony caused by *Rambuai* with other novelists. Many of his fictional works are *Rambuai*-related fiction. Remarkably, Dokhuma was the first Mizo to receive the Padma Shri Award in literature in 1985. As a result, his name is indelible in Mizo literary history, particularly in the realm of fiction. He wrote 460 articles and numerous essays, beginning in 1973, and he published 42 books (*Mizo Lit* 393). Dokhuma's *Khawhar In* mainly deals with the complicated love-triangle of the main characters. It also portrayed male hegemony

over their female partners and an unhealthy mentality. The account also provides a vivid description of the social milieu of Mizoram's rural and urban life from the 1940s to the 1950s. Since the novel is considered the outcome of Dokhuma's lonely life in jail, it contains some autobiographical elements.

*Thla Hleinga Zan* (1969) is Dokhuma's next significant work of fiction. It is essentially a parallel love story and is considered one of the most intriguing pieces of Mizo fiction to this day. *Rinawmin* is the title of the next story. The novel, set in the Mizoram conflict, depicts the love affairs of one MNF volunteer and his sweetheart, Ramhluni. *Tumpang Chal nge Saithangpuii* (1981) is Dokhuma's fifth novel. It tells the story of the protagonist, Fehtea, who is a typical brave warrior, and a great hunter in Mizo society. *Hmangaihna Thuchah* was written in 1982 and has a worldwide setting. *Irrawady Luikamah* was published in 1982 as part of a "War Fiction Novel". The love story *Good Bye Lushai Brigade*, published in 1983, is about Capt. Mark Martin and his sweetheart, Lallawmi. *Kimoto Synora*, a work of war fiction, was also published in 1984. Unlike the previous novel, it tells the romantic tale between a Mizo guy named Lalthawma and a Japanese girl named Kimoto Matshuda.

The following novel, *Silaimu Ngaihawm*, is about the touching and thought-provoking love story between the protagonist, Lt. Sanglura, and his faithful sweetheart, Lalramliani. The novel mirrors the physical and mental misery of the Mizo individuals during *Rambuai* in Mizoram. *Kham Kar Senhri*, the last novel by Dokhuma, is a profoundly moving romantic tale wherein the author portrays the significant contributions made by Mizo women during the Mizoram Conflict. Apart from these, Dokhuma also wrote *Ni leh Thla Kara Leng* and *Gabbatha*. Capt. L.Z. Sailo sits next to James Dokhuma. He was a skilled Mizo musician, a fiction writer, and an enthusiastic campaigner for the reunification of the Mizos. He wrote fiction like *Rose Par Vul Ve Ta Lo Chu*, *Runlum Nuthai* and so forth. His interesting fiction named *Runlum Nuthai*, was awarded "Book of the Year 2002" by the Mizo Academy of Letters.

The year not long before Indian Independence, 1946, saw the presence of another face in Mizo writing, in particular, the woman writer, Khawlkungi. The

appearance of women, added a new dimension to Mizo fiction. Khawlkungi began her literary career in 1946, when she was only 19 years old, with the novel *Khawthlang Thli leh Khawchhak Thli* (West Wind and East Wind). She has published 24 fiction, 42 cyclostyles, 32 plays, 3 poetry, and 10 biographies to her credit (*Tlang* 134). It is worth noting that her close relationship with Pi Zaii (Welsh Missionary Kattie Hughes), as well as her vast experience in various fields, served as inspiration for her intriguing fictional works. *Sangi Rinawmna*, *Pasal Duh Thlan*, *Lal Fapa leh Kutdawh*, and *Kraws Thih Niare* among her most notable works. In acknowledgement of her commitment to Mizo writing, she was awarded the Padma Shri Award in Literature and Education in 1987, and the Mizo Academy Award in 1995-1998 by the Mizo Academy of Letters.

*Zawlpala Thlan Tlangah* (1977) is the first novel by Khawlkungi, and is considered her masterpiece. Set in the post-Second World War period, the story is primarily a Christian romantic tale. It narrates the sympathetic life of the heroine, Vanlalremi, along with a moving love-story. Like the greater part of Mizo fiction, this story portrayed morality through the major characters in it. Furthermore, self-sufficiency and nature play a prominent role in most of her novels, reflecting the spirit of the post-Christianity era. Her second novel is titled *Sangi Rinawmna* (1978), and her third novel, *A Tlai Lutuk Ta*, was published in 1979. *Pasal Duhthlan* (1982), is one more fascinating piece of fiction by Khawlkungi. In this account, Khawlkungi emphasised the importance of morality when selecting a life partner. Khawlkungi's novel, *Duhtak Sangpuii*, (1998) is another great work of fiction.

Additionally, Khawlkungi was renowned for her extraordinary commitment to children's fiction in *Hmanlai Mi Thianghlim Chanchin*, *Kan Chhehvel Hnamte Thawnthu*, *Thawnthu Za te*, *Naupang Thawnthu Pasarih te*, *Lal Fapa leh Kutdawh*, etc. Since women were generally considered secondary beings in early Mizo society, Khawlkungi's choice to write fiction was challenging during those days. Her bravery and deep attachment to Mizo literature, however, made her one of the most illustrious Mizo novelists. Her fiction enriches Mizo literature, and her works are a continuation of the morality fiction of her predecessors.

Lalsiama is another minor fiction writer who wrote *Tlanthangi leh Lianhnuna* and *Lalruati leh Tlanzara* (*Mizo Fiction* 161). *Tlanthangi leh Lianhnuna* represents how diligence and determination lead to prosperity. He taught readers that honesty brings happiness while delineating post-Second World War Mizo society and mentality. R.L. Rina also contributed two works of fiction to Mizo literature, such as *Lungtiawii leh Parchuailova* and *Lungngaihna Virthli*. Zokima also contributed fiction like *Inneih Hunah Le*, *Pathian Samsuih*, and *Hmangaihna Lamluang*.

In Mizo fiction, the decade from 1970 to 1980 has some significance. In this regard, Ch. Zama and Vanchiau comment:

The year 1977 for the first time introduced what we may categorise as ‘Pulp Fiction’ to the Mizo reading public from Joe Ngurdawla in works like ‘*Dirty Broadway*’, ‘*High Time in Paris*’, ‘*Home in Texas*’ and ‘*Meet Me in Texas Moonlight*’. The titles themselves are a strong pointer of the changing times as the growing influence of western popular culture, and so occupies a significance (sic) place in the evolution and growth of Mizo fiction under different trends and influences (34).

The Dark Age in Mizoram had gradually faded over the decade, from 1970 to 1980. As a result, Mizoram was granted Union Territory status. Many fictional works were created in this context as a result of the Social Education Wing of the Education Department’s inspiration for social reforms. Books relating to the same include: *Khawkil Bung Huai* by Darhlira, *Khawfing Chahlai* by R.Zuala, *Khuarei Ram Zopuite* by Selletthanga, *Khawnglung Run* by R.Lalrawna, and *Fahrah Nun* by Khawlkungi. Aside from these, short stories like *Pathian Samsuih* by VZK (Zokima), *Zu Um A Keh Ta* by K.Saibela, and *Mathani Te Unau* by R.Lalchungnunga have been published.

The following decade spans the years from 1980 to 1990. The increasing attention given to fiction is one notable event of the decade. Significant writers of the decade are James Dokhuma, Khawlkungi, C. Laizawna, Lalengmawia Ralte, etc. Lalengmawia Ralte was a well-known Mizo novelist during the post-insurgency period. He started his literary career in 1969 and has published 25 books so far.

Among his works, only one of his books is a drama, and the rest are interesting fiction (*Mizo Lit* 428). His first novel, *I Tan a Tawk* was published in 1989 and received positive reviews from the Mizo people, prompting it to be reprinted in 1986. *Tu Fa Nge*, *A Sawt Tawh Lo*, and *Eng Vang Nge* are among his major fictional works. Hailed from a committed Christian family, the majority of Lalengmawia's fiction manages to incorporate Christianity alongside its principles. Significantly, he skillfully situated morality in his fictional works. Understanding the mindset of the youth, he created English titles such as *Honeymoon*, *Eternal Bliss*, and so on.

C. Laizawna is another well-known name in Mizo literature, particularly among writers who worked in the 1980s and 1990s. He has been related to writing since around 1982. His noted novels include *Hmangaihzuali*, *Anita*, *Ziziphus*, *Ka Phal Lo*, *K.S. Min Ti Maw*, and *Ka Thlang Zawk*. His two novels, *Hmangaihzuali* (1990) and *Anita* (1998), were awarded "Book of the Year" by the Mizo Academy of Letters in 1990 and 1998, respectively. Remarkably, C. Laizawna is one of the very few outstanding novelists among the Mizos to have received such an honour twice. As a result, it may not be wrong to state that he has contributed significantly to the development and enrichment of Mizo literature in general and Mizo fiction in particular.

VL Zaikima is a one of a kind in the realm of Mizo fiction. So far, he has 11 books published, including *Lalpa Kohhran Thar*, *Sakhaw Hrang Hrang Thlirna*, and *Vanawia leh a Pawlte* (*Mizo Literature* 408). Although he wrote only one piece of fiction, *Bombay Fantasy*, his name is indelible in Mizo fiction. V.L. Zaikima's *Bombay Fantasy* is a sociological novel written in the form of a diary. As Zoramdinthara asserts, "It is the first Mizo fiction dealing with the problem of human trafficking" (178). As the title suggests, the novel is set in Bombay, one of India's largest metropolitan cities. Because the author was once a student of social work at Bombay University (now Mumbai), his description of Bombay and its ambiance is authentic. For this reason, reading *Bombay Fantasy* is like taking a trip to Bombay in the 1980s.

Since Mizo fiction flourished during this time, it is estimated that more than 60 novels were published during this time. Some of them include– *Zanlai Thlifim* by S.R.Thangvela, *Hringnun Vol.I* by P.C.Lalbiakthanga, *Bung Khaw Run Thu Vol.I* by K.Chawngthuama, *Rinawmna Rah* by Vanlalchhuanga, *Mangtha Ka Ti Phal Lo Che* by K.Laldawngliani, *Ka Thi Pek Che Kha* by R.L.Thanmawia, *Tluangtei Te Pafa* and *Pastor Nupui* by H.Kaphlira, *I Nu Thu Min Hrilh Kha* by Rev. S. R.Lalkailuaia and so on.

From 1991 to 2000, veteran novelist James Dokhuma produced two memorable fictions, *Rinawmin* (1970) and *Silaimu Ngaihawm* (2000). In 1992, C. Laizawna also wrote short stories such as *K.S Min Ti Maw? Ka Phal lo*, *Kan Tiam Tawh Si*, and others. Notably, the decade produced unfamiliar faces in Mizo fiction, such as Lalzuia Colney, C. Remtluanga, Lalhmingliana Saiawi, Lalhriata, H.Lallungmuana, H.P.Lalremtluanga, B.Pawlthanga (Zothansangi Pa), and R.Rozika. C. Remtluanga wrote 6 novelettes: *Fate Nu Atan*, *Chhawrthla Eng Hnuaiiah*, *Van a Duai Chuang*, etc. Meanwhile, Lalruali, a poet and novelist, contributed two (2) fictions to Mizo literature, *Ka Hmangaih Tlat Che* and *Nula Vanduai Sumchani*. This decade is also notable for the selection of three novels as “Book of the Year” by the Mizo Academy of Letters, including *Ram leh I Tan Chauh* (1995) by H.Lallungmuana, *Anita* (1998) by C.Laizawna, and *Chawngmawii leh Hrangchhuana* (2000) by R. Rozika.

One of the prominent writers during this time is Lalhmingliana Saiawi, who began his literary career around 1958. His well-known fictions are *Lungrang Hmangaihna*, *Lungrang Laiawrha*, *Keimah Unionliana*, *Nukawki*, *Nukawki Fanu*, *A Na Lua*, and so on (*Mizo Literature* 426). He wrote 18 books - 9 non-fiction and 9 fiction works. What is remarkable is the consistency of the theme of family ties and rootedness found in his writings (*After* 35).

Certainly, Saiawia is a one-of-a-kind in the domain of Mizo fiction because he utilized a novel theme that the Mizos are unfamiliar with. Unlike the other Mizo novelists, Saiawi did not have any restraint in making references to sex, because he felt that sex is a natural human instinct. Furthermore, he rarely used sweet and

decorative language, preferring to use frank and candid language, which is also uncommon in Mizo fiction. Certainly, his prolific output of novels commands constant public attention. Considering his commitments, he surely marks one-step forward in the development of Mizo fiction.

H. Lallungmuana, one of the most memorable Mizo fiction writers, has also achieved great success in Mizo fiction. He is notable for being the first person to receive a Doctorate Degree in Mizo fiction, with his thesis titled '*Themes and Techniques of Mizo Fiction.*' Although Lallungmuana is not as a prolific writer as Emily Bronte in English literature, his fiction is worth reading and worth studying. He has three novels to his credit so far, such as *Ram leh I Tan Chauh*, *Hmangaih Zoramthangi*, and *Harakima*. Lallungmuana, like Charles Dickens of the Victorian period in English literature, was familiar with the social problems and issues of his time as a result of his active participation in the Church, as well as his involvement in politics and social activities. Morality plays an important role in all of his fictional works.

H. Lalngurliani stands next to H. Lallungmuana. Some of her fictional works include: *Mangtha Mai Aw Mama I & II*, *Mary Lanzes*, *Thian Rinawm*, *Lungawina Kim*, *Zirtirtu Tha*, *Rinawmna Rah*, *Inneihna Thilpek*, *Thisen Thutiam Ziak*. Remarkably, the settings of her novels are so diverse, that they reveal her breadth of experience. For instance, the setting of the place in *Mary Lanzes* is Tibet. Her best-known novel, *Zorinpari*, was selected as '*Book of the Year*' by the Mizo Academy of Letters in 2004. Indeed, she is one of the most promising fiction writers of the post-millennium, as well as a shining novelist among Mizo women.

C. Remtluanga is another Mizo fiction writer worth focusing on. His works incorporate *Min Ngaidam Rawh*, *Van a Duai Chuang*, *Fate Nu Atan*, *Chhawrthla Eng Hnuaiyah*, *Hlimna Kawl Eng*, *Buaina Kara Hmangaihna*, *A Pawi Zo Ta*, *Ka Thlang Sual Nge*, *Mitin Tan Dan Hriatna*, and others. No doubt, Remtluanga is a shining fiction writer, who brought legal awareness to the Mizo people. Observing the problems faced by his fellow Mizo people inspired him to write law-related fiction, which is, certainly, a new kind of fiction in Mizo literature.

Hermana is one of the more prolific Mizo writers of his generation. He has finished 19 books up to this point. His popular works are *Mizo Thawnthu Hlimthla*, *Mingo leh Mizote*, *Zoram Politics Thli Tleh Dan* Vol. I and Vol. II, etc. Thankima is also a well-known fiction writer, with works such as *Lainattu Hmelma*, *Teirawlai*, *Nun Ninawm*, *Tawn Loh Zuapa*, *Damlaite Nunkhua*, *Shillong Hotel*, *Hlimna Thian*, and others (*Mizo Lit* 397, 431).

From 2001 to 2010, it was assumed that around 90 fictional works had been published. C.Lalnunchanga wrote fiction like *Ruamrai Thuruk*, *Ka Mi Huaisen leh Pasalthate*, *Pasalthate Ni Hnuhnung*, and so on. Lalrammawia Ngente produced fiction like *Damlai Thlan Thim*, *Hmangaihna Par*, *Thlaler Pangpar*, *Rintei Zunleng*, and so on (Mizoram Images). Similarly, Samson Thanruma also wrote *A Rei Ta Hle Mai*, *Sulhnu Hliam*, *Beiseina Mittui*, and 2 other short stories. Besides, it is interesting to note that during this decade, i.e., 2001- 2010, seven fictions were selected for the “Book of the Year” organised by the Mizo Academy of Letters.

Besides, the era witnessed a new kind of fiction known as ‘Stream of Consciousness Novel’ popularised by James Joyce, reflecting the past events of the main character and interfering in their lives. Lalhriata’s *Chun Chawiloh* is a prime example in this regard. From the early 2000s, particularly the 2010s, women novelists have received far more critical and popular acclaim than at any other time in Mizo fiction history. Lalhriata is a major fiction writer of the contemporary era. In 1996, he published his first novel, *Khualzin Nula*. *Hmangaihna Zungzam*, his second novel, was published in 1999 and is a love story about the pitiful heroine, Lalhmingdangi, and Captain Thuamluaia Hauhna. His well-known fiction, *Chun Chawiloh* has been selected as ‘Book of the Year 2008’. It deals with real life. Hence, it is a morality novel in which the novelist employs a philosophy of life as it indicates the importance of good manners and integrity. Romawia’s name is notable in Mizo fiction as his sole novel, *Thangthar Taitesena* (1992), received ‘Book of the Year’ Award. As Zoramdinthara describes, “the title of the novel is extracted from the name of one of the most well-known Mizo hero Taitesena (1880-1902). In this novel, Romawia creates a (sic) modern Taitesena who inherited the good characters and unselfish act of Taitesena. Therefore, this novel *Thangthar Taitesena* is a



reminiscent to the departed Mizo hero Taitesena” (238). Lalzuia Colney’s sole work of fiction, *Lal Hlau Lo Thi* (1993), is a historical novel set in Mizoram between 1910 and 1950. B. Thangdailova is also known for his novels, *Ka Rul Seng Lo* and *Riakmaw*.

Apparently, fiction emerged later in the history of world literature than other literary genres. In the history of English literature, the novel was popularised by England, France, and Italy. It is widely assumed that the scope of the novel has expanded to include every subject under the sun. As a result, the subject matter of fiction is so vast because it deals with human nature in general. In the context of Mizoram, fiction addresses all of the political and social issues that have arisen throughout the history of Mizo society. Since writing is a reflection of society, the majority of contemporary Mizo fiction writers, for the most part, portray the degeneration of Mizo society. Accordingly, the primary focus of the writers is to address the different shades of malice that influence Mizo society these days, along with social reformation.

Fiction is, without a doubt, an important historical document. For instance, Lalhriata’s *Khualzin Nula* recounts the inauguration of the Union Territory of Mizoram by the Indian Prime Minister in 1972, which is a significant historical event in Mizoram. Similarly, *Mittui Kara Hmangaihna* by Zothansangi Pa (B.Pawlthanga) begins with Mizoram’s political unrest, which is also a significant event in Mizo society. Fictions of the contemporary period are described by the variety and intricacy of their topics. Similarly, the style and articulation of Mizo fiction have gone through an extraordinary change. The predicaments of the modern era are far more diverse than those of the past. Notably, they have been written on virtually every possible theme and subject that appeals to modern readers.

Among the contemporary writers, Lalrammawia Ngente assumes a conspicuous part in Mizo fiction. His assortment of 14 stories in a single book named, *Hringnun Hlimthla* was published in the year 2002. His first fictional work, *Damlai Thlan Thim* was published in 2003, which significantly urged him to seek out innovative compositions. Among his most well-known works are *Hringnun*

*Hlimthla2* (a sequel to the first short story book), *Hmangaihna Par*, *Thlaler Pangpar*, *Dan Rual Loh Hmangaihna*, *Rintei Zunleng*, *Tuktin Par*, *Keimah Mizo*, and others. So far, he has written 24 books. Notably, his fifth novel, *Rintei Zunleng* has been chosen as ‘Book of the Year 2009’ by the Mizo Academy of Letters. Ngente’s masterpiece *Rintei Zunleng* addresses social and spiritual crises. It is worth noting that the majority of his novels explore the power of sex. On the other hand, he never forgets the nobility of faithfulness, the value of self-esteem, and moral dignity. In his fiction, *Thlaler Pangpar*, he outlines the virtue of faithfulness over unfaithfulness. To put it another way, the young lovers' premarital sex trauma is prominently featured. Besides, Ngente wrote a psychological novel named, *Dan Rual Loh Hmangaihna*. It tells the story of a broken family caused by sexual desire, alcohol, and greed (Lalrammawia Ngente). Thus, it can be said that morality plays a dominant role in Ngente’s fiction.

Rozamliani is a minor novelist who has written three novels: *Lawm A Kim Lo*, *Tuarna Phenah*, and *A Mak a Na*. The following significant author in the contemporary period is C. Lalnunchanga, prominently known as Taitea. Due to his extensive knowledge of Mizo history and other cultures, he ranks very high among modern novelists. Significantly, his two books, *Pasalthate Ni Hnuhnung* (2006), and *Kawlkil Piah Lamtluang* (2015), were awarded Book of the Year by the Mizo Academy of Letters in the years 2006 and 2015, respectively. His books that have been published are as follows: *Partei*, *Hmangaihna leh Huatna*, *Ka Mi Huaisen leh Ka Pasaltha*, *Pasalthate Ni Hnuhnung*, *Ruam Rai Thuruk*, *Lunglenna Thawveng*, *Zoram Mi Hrangte an Vanglai*, *Kawlkil Piah Lamtluang*, etc. Remarkably, Taitea’s well known fictions portrayed the different daring heroes in Mizo society, which reveals his incredible reverence for boldness and valiant champions. His protagonists, to be sure, represent the archetypal Mizo gentleman who is selfless, reliable, confident, strong, and dynamic.

Close to Taitea, Romuanpuii Zadeng is an esteemed name in Mizo fiction, and one of a handful of exceptional female fiction authors in the contemporary time frame. So far, she has published seven novels. Her fictional works include *Puk Dangdai*, *Parfung Chawi*, *Tainam Fa*, *Hmangaihtu leh Hmangaih*, *Tawksir*, *Sihlipui*,

and *Inleh. Puk Dangdai* primarily concerned with the complicated lives of prostitutes. Her next fiction, *Parfung Chawi* portrays the significance of being dependable in human instinct. *Tainam Fa* is located next to *Parfung Chawi*. *Tainam Fa* depicts the pitiful situation of children from broken families. On the other hand, it was ironic that, rather than praying for their children, some children prayed for their parents, illustrating the deterioration of the family in Mizo society. The following fiction, *Hmangaihtu leh Hmangaih*, narrates the sad plight of step-children in the Mizo family (Romuanpuii Zadeng). Furthermore, Zadeng also deals with patriotism in this fiction. *Tawksir* predominantly manages national integration and nationalism. The novel *Sihlipui* was awarded “Book of the Year 2012” by the Mizo Academy of Letters. In this fiction, Romuanpuii emphasized the significance of nationalism, honesty, and bravery. Her vivid description of human trafficking is both informative and relevant, as it is still prevalent throughout India. *Inleh* is the last fictional work by Romuanpuii. Importantly, her novels reveal her deep preoccupation with the love of God. Her fictional works, like those of Lalrammawia Ngente, are fine examples of morality fiction.

The modern era of the Mizo fiction is witnessing the emergence of new trends and innovations by contemporary writers. An increasing interest in short stories is one of the post-upcoming millennium trends. Ch. Zama and Vanchiau remarks, “Mafaa Hauhnar’s collection ‘*Vaihna Vartian*’ (2010) and several other mixed collections of short stories, essays, and poems enlisted here already foretell the thrust of future works of the new generation writers” (*After* 35).

Among the myriad themes explored in modern fiction, social awareness and reformation play a vital role. In addition, historical elements and war themes are prevalent in early Mizo fiction. The well-known fictional works of the post-Millennium era are - *Nang leh Kei* by Zara, *Kum Leng* by Vanhmunmawia Hnamte, *Priya leh Kei* by Samson Thanruma, *Nun Khawhar Hnemtu* by CVL Fakmawia, *I Tan Ka Ti* by C.Lalrochhara, *Ramada 19* by Zirsangkima, *Rap* by Laltleipuia Hmar, *Pindan Khawhar* by T.S.Khupchong, *Kan Thirsakawr* by R.Lalzarmawia, *Lungpher Pasaltha Thangchhunga* by Zamvela Ralte, *Dumde Meichher* by Lalnunpuia Renthlei, *Falung* by Lalengzauva, *Vantirkoh Mittui* by Lalsangzuala and so on.

*Taunu Zawलाई* is the magnum opus of Lalpekkima, one of the noted contemporary fiction writers. Supernatural themes like necromancy and reincarnation are suitably portrayed. Since these subjects are not common in Mizo fiction, they appeal to modern readers. In terms of plot and themes, the story is reminiscent of Christopher Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*. Next, Florence L.R. Ralte is, without question, one of the most sparkling female authors of the contemporary era. A teacher by profession, Florence has 3 novels to her credit: *Chenghnemi* (2015), *Theipui Hnuaiiah* (2017), and *Susani* (2018). Her novel, '*Chenghnemi*' was shortlisted for the top three positions in the Mizo Academy of Letters' 'Book of the Year 2015'. *Chenghnemi* is both a love story and a detective novel. Additionally, the account gives striking data about the different cultural heritages, as well as the authentic realities of Mizoram. *Theipui Hnuaiiah* is a Bible-based Christian romantic tale. A reading of this novel gives insight into Florence's comprehensive knowledge of *The Bible* and along with her creativity.

When one thoroughly examines the history of Mizo fiction, it is true that the three pioneer novelists, L.Biakliana, Kaphleia, and Lalzuithanga, have some significance in their own way. For instance, L.Biakliana's first fictional work, *Hawilopari*, pioneered the historical novel. Since *Lali* manages Christianity alongside the liberation of women, there is no question that L. Biakliana presented sociological fiction as well as a Christian romantic tale in Mizo writings. Consequently, Kaphleia also introduced "Secular Literature" in *Chhingpuii* and Lalzuithanga also introduced "Detective Story" as well as "Patriotic Fiction" through *Thlahrang*. As time goes on, it is worth noting that the miserable plight of Mizo women has been a recurring theme in early Mizo fiction. Be that as it may, the appearance of Christianity in Mizoram brought a radical change in Mizo society. As a result, the victimization of women gradually ceased to exist. Subsequently, women's progress and upliftment were generally depicted in post-Christian fiction. To validate this, women were appointed as Sunday school teachers, as portrayed in *Lali*.

A thematic approach to the pre-Christian Mizo fiction uncovers the value of unselfishness, the good status of a hunter and a brave warrior, the impact of inter-village war, the worth of a genuine companion, parental love, profound love, etc.

*Hawilopari*, *Chhingpuii*, *Phira leh Ngurthanpari*, and *Tumpangchal Nge Saithangpuii* are fine specimens in this regard. On the other hand, post-Christianity Mizo fiction depicted various ill-practices in early Mizo society, such as inter-village wars, raids, slavery, head-hunting, and so on, which no longer existed. Apparently, the thematic approach of fiction writers appears to have been influenced by Christianity.

Needless to say, the main occupation of Mizo in the past was cultivation, which has now been supplemented by white-collar jobs, business, industry, and other professions. For instance, in Zikpuii-Pa's *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, the protagonist Chhuanvawra was selected for the Indian Police Service. Moreover, C. Laizawna's *Hmangaihzuai*, portrays an officer in an administration office. Notably, unlike in pre-Christianity Mizo fiction, Mizo ladies can marry whomever they want. Christianity has no doubt uplifted Mizo society in general and women in particular. As Vannghaka points out in his thesis entitled, '*Influence of Christianity in Mizo Fiction*', "Many indigenous practices have been replaced" (209). He further argues that the limited choice of themes in Mizo fiction are still confined it (sic) to Christian ethos. The one common feature that the characters share is that Christianity is an end, having a moral and social purpose of being a tool for instruction and a depiction of Christian identity (217). In view of Vannghaka's argument, it is clear that many indigenous practices of early Mizo have been replaced by Christianity. Subsequently, the thematic approach of the pre-Christian Mizo ethos has been replaced by the Christian ethos.

Lallungmuana also discovered that the theme of parental love could be found only in few Mizo novels in early society. Perhaps this is because of the fact that children were not given due importance in Mizo society prior to II World War (53). He further arranges major topics in Mizo fiction under the following heads, conjugal love, parental love, brotherly love, patriotic love, money, and suffering. This featured the different subjects in Mizo fiction. It is noteworthy that among the eminent authors, James Dokhuma and some other writers employ various styles and subjects in their works. For instance, while *Thla Hleinga Zan* is a historical novel, *Khawhar In* by the same author is a kind of autobiography.

Prior investigation exposed that Christianity enormously impacted the social, and cultural life of the Mizos. In a more dynamic sense, it changes Mizo society overall. Since writing is the disclosure of society, Mizo fiction writers vividly depict contemporary social life, the beautiful and the ugly, the pleasant and the unpleasant. Honestly, Mizo fiction is a blend of politics, Christianity, culture, and social reforms. Contemporary fiction writers made a concerted effort to bring about social reform, in which they criticised the various social evils of the present era. As a result, contemporary fiction addresses common social ills such as drug and alcohol abuse, sexual abuse, domestic violence, self-indulgence, and so on. They are a reflection of Mizo society in the millennium and post-millennium eras. As such, they mirror the social, economic, political, and religious life of the Mizo. The fictions of C.Laizawna, Lalrammawia Ngente, Romuanpuii Zadeng, H.Lallungmuana, C.Lalnunchanga, Lalhriata, Samson Thanruma, Lalpekkima, and others are the best examples of modern fiction in terms of themes and plot construction.

As love is the dominating topic in literature, it is also a significant subject in Mizo fiction. However, depending on the author's style, the theme of love may vary. Notably, inter-racial love plays an important role in Mizo fiction. In such a manner, Lalrammuana Sailo categorizes fiction about inter-racial affairs and marriage into three types, in his book titled, *Mizo Thu leh Hla Zirchianna*, Volume-I. *Anita*, *Sialton Official*, *Doral Kara Hmangaihna*, *Sisil Hipson leh Kei*, *Irrawady Luikamah*, and *Kimoto Syonora* provide the reader with an intimate insight into the protagonist's affairs with non-Mizo ladies, but they have no intention of marrying them. Surprisingly, while Mizo young men are hesitant to marry non-Mizo women, non-Mizo women and their families do not clash with such relationships. Second, there are a few fictions, such as *Farewell Lushai Brigade*, *Hmangaihna Lamtluang* etc. that manage a relationship between a Mizo young lady and an English gentleman. The third category is distinct from the previous ones. In this category, some Mizo women marry non-Mizo young men by chance, and they usually lead lives of depression and sadness. *Ram leh I Tan Chauh* by H.Lallungmuana falls into this group (33). Moreover, Fakawmi named inter-racial fiction "Awze Fiction" whose characters are

non-Mizos and the story is laid somewhere outside Mizoram. *Pastor Nupui*, *Israel Tlangval* Simon Azaria, *Honey Moon*, *Ka Thi Pek Che Kha* fall under this group (41).

*Zorinpari* (Book of the Year 2004) also tells the love affair between a Mizo maiden and a Meitei young man, along with their elopement. Similarly, F. Lalthankima's *Runmawi Siali* depicts Zorami and Inzaborough's intriguing love-affairs. Furthermore, C.Hermana's *Vangkhwawmawii* I to III describes three gentlemen of a different race who were infatuated by the heroine Vangkhwawmawii's attractive appearance. Certainly, literature, as a whole, evolves and changes from generation to generation. As a result, even fiction and its varying alterations can be observed from age to age. Since the commencement of Mizo fiction in 1936, Mizo fiction has prospered from a multi-dimensional point of view, particularly in topics and methods. Experimentation with themes and techniques has also broadened the scope of Mizo fiction. Obviously, contemporary fiction is more reasonable, which might be viewed as a boon to Mizo literature. Regardless of how unpopular they may be, it is undeniable that each fiction writer enriched Mizo fiction in their own unique way. They definitely mark one step forward each in the advancement of Mizo fiction. Similarly, their authentic portrayal of contemporary social life, with all of its benefits and drawbacks, mirrored the ethical quality of contemporary fiction writers. Although the majority of the characters and episodes might have been invented, they were portrayals of Mizo society at different ages.

Irrespective of their writing style, it is clear that most fiction writers intend to teach moral lessons to their readers. Besides, reading Mizo fiction provides an intimate insight into Mizo society in the past. This incorporates men's hegemony along with the low status of women, the style of courting, our value system, the gap between rich and poor, and so on. A significant point to remember is that social reformation is a recurring theme in contemporary fiction. Without a doubt, no writer can live in seclusion. He is certainly a product of his age and his current circumstances. As a result, in recent years, a few writers of Mizo fiction have begun composing metropolitan fiction, investigating the in-depth authenticity that reproduces the existences of socialites living in Aizawl, the capital city of Mizoram. They mainly deal with a society that somehow combines both western and oriental

culture. For this reason, dating and surfing are no longer considered sins in major cities because they are vital parts of the lives of social networking netizens. Popular culture, as well as pub culture, is spreading in the streets, allowing young people unrestricted freedom. As seen so far, there is no doubt that Mizo fiction is increasing. When one examines Mizo fiction thoroughly, he may assume that advancement of Mizo fiction reveals that fiction writers moved toward ethical quality according to their own viewpoint. For this reason, there is no doubt that morality plays a significant role in Mizo fiction. However, the study determines that what has been considered moral in Mizo society has gradually changed in response to the situations they have gone through.

Meanwhile, creative writers must take a more deliberate approach to raise the standards of Mizo fiction. It should be noted that fiction writers, irrespective of age, always express their dominant egos. Simultaneously, one thing that should be a source of concern on matter of the shortcomings of Mizo fiction is the consideration given to social media, particularly after the millennium. Since the majority of today's generation is actively involved in social media, there is a lack of interest in reading fiction in the modern era that needs to be transformed.

#### 1:2 An Overview of Zikpuii-Pa's Biography and His Literary Works:

K.C. Lalvunga, who wrote under the pen name Zikpuii-Pa, was a multi-talented genius whose works ranged from fiction to poetry, prose to criticism. As an author, he was a novelist-an essayist, a critic, and a poet par excellence. Moreover, he was a fine musician, a good sportsman, and a good singer too. However, he would be best recognised as a novelist. For his rich collection of works and the substantial role he played in Mizo literature, he was honoured with an important accolade called '*Writer of the Century*' by the Millenium Celebration Committee established by the Government of Mizoram in the year 2000. Apart from this, he was a posthumous recipient of the '*Academy Award*' awarded by the leading literary organisation called the Mizo Academy of Letters (MAL) in the year 1995 in recognition of his invaluable contribution to Mizo literature. Remarkably, he was the first person to receive the Academy Award posthumously. Among his works, five (5) novels have been published in book form. His invaluable works reveal his wit and keen insight



into various things such as love, humanity, nature, culture, religion, etc. By and large, his contributions to the development of Mizo literature are monumental.

K.C. Lalvunga, more popularly known as Zikpuii-Pa, was born on December 27, 1929, in Venghlui, Aizawl. He was the son of the former Chief of Aizawl, Hrawva, and his spouse, Lalluii. He passed matriculation in 1948 and graduated in 1953. He married Darhmingthangi on September 5<sup>th</sup>, 1948. In 1962, he joined the Indian Foreign Service (IFS), and as such, he was the first Indian Ambassador among the Mizos to different countries. It is to be noted that he had been associated with various organizations while he was in Aizawl. Accordingly, he was the ex-editor of *Zoram Thupuan* during 1954-1956, Sub-Inspector of Schools 1955-56, Headmaster of Saitual High School 1959 -62, former President of MZP during 1954-55, and so on (*Ziakmite* 90-91). During his tenure as an ambassador, he was posted to different countries like Spain, Chile, Australia, Kathmandu, Venezuela, Colombia, Oman, Jamaica, and North Korea. He retired from the Indian Foreign Service in 1990 and passed away on October 10, 1994.

It is worth noting that, despite being the son of the Aizawl Chief, Zikpuii-Pa was never arrogant or insulting to others. He ably kept up with his status as Mizo chieftain among non-Mizos, which is also one of his distinguishing features. Besides, Zikpuii-Pa was well-versed in Spanish and Hawaiian guitar. He had also been associated with sports like poll vault and boxing (*Mi* 50). Based on Zikpuii-Pa's character mentioned above, it can be said that he is a man of versatile genius. Subsequently, he has proven to be a blessing to his fellow Mizo people due to his wit, wholeheartedness, and understanding of Mizo mentality.

#### 1:2:1 His Fictional Works:

Significantly, Zikpuii-Pa assayed different genres of literature. His literary works are voluminous and their variety is amazing. But he would be best remembered as a great novelist. Right now, coming to his fictional works, Zikpuii-Pa has been endowed with a special talent and rare quality for writing fiction. In this regard, he wrote twelve fictional works such as *Lalringa leh Thangzuali Hmangaihna Vanduai*, *Champhai Kawng Khualzin*, 'A Thurochhiah Chu Zawm Tlak

*A Ni, Mumangah Talin Aw, Lalremmawia, Curzon Road Hostel A-38, Lalramliana, Silvarthangi, Hostel Awmtu, C.C. Coy No 27, Kraws Bulah Chuan and Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah.* It is indeed, sad that the first five works were lost before publication. As Zikpuii-Pa stated that *David Copperfield* by Charles Dickens in English literature was his great inspiration to write prose. Among the published fictional works, his masterpiece, *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* is a novel published in 1989. *Silvarthangi, Hostel Awmtu* and *Kraws Bulah Chuan* are short stories. However, *C.C. Coy No. 27* is a novella written in 1963. Turning our attention to the accounts of Zikpuii-Pa's fictional works.

*Silvarthangi*, Zikpuii-Pa's first fictional work, was written around 1958 and published in 1999. The account depicts the milieu of rural life in Mizo society alongside the poignant story of the protagonist, *Silvarthangi*. A reading of *Silvarthangi* raises awareness of the plight and deplorable status of orphans in early Mizo society. Zikpuii-Pa, like Thomas Hardy in English literature, paints a picture of women's oppression and degradation in *Silvarthangi*.

"Zikpuii Pa wrote his second novel, '*Kraws Bulah Chuan*' in 1959 at *Saitual*" (*Mizo Fiction* 104). As stated by Zikpuii-Pa, in his book titled, *Lungrualna Tlang*, he was inspired by Lord Tennyson's poem '*We Kiss Again in Tears.*' The plot revolves around Lalsawma, the protagonist, who falls in love with a beautiful lady named Thanchhingi. Finally, as the title implies, resolution and pardon take place between the two people nearby to the Cross. The next fiction, *Hostel Awmtu* is about the ghost of a hosteller who was murdered by an unfamiliar person. Through this account, Zikpuii-Pa juxtaposed the themes of love and jealousy as realities of human existence.

*C.C. Coy No. 27* is another captivating fiction by Zikpuii-Pa. The fictional centre of attention is on Ralkapzauva, who was sent to Shillong for higher studies, and his deep connection with an old Gurkhali porter (Coolie) named Bahadur. The narrative demonstrated Zikpuii-Pa's morality and humanity. In terms of theme, readers may recognise it echoes Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*.

*Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, published in 1989, is the last novel by Zikpuii-Pa. Considering the style and technique employed in this novel, it is regarded as the masterpiece of Zikpuii-Pa. Set in the Mizoram trouble, *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*

offers a thorough image of the social and political existence of Mizoram during the time of an uprising, prominently known as *Rambuai*. The narrative has primarily focused on the tragic love story of Chhuanvawra and Ngurthansangi.

#### 1:2:2 His Creative Essays and Articles:

As previously indicated, apart from being a novelist, Zikpuii-Pa is also well acclaimed for his contribution to the essay. He had been dynamic as a writer during the prime of his life. There is no doubt that he ranks very high among Mizo essayists. His well-known essays include: '*A Ruh No No Chhuakah*', '*Tun Kum Za Chhunga Mizo Fate*', '*Zofaten Kawng Kan Bo Ve*', '*Tlawmngaihna*', '*Sipai*', '*Ka Tiang Kha*', '*Thil Nawi Kan Hmaihthelh*', '*Tunlai Zonun Siamtu*', '*Venghlui Kan Vanglai*', '*Thanpuii Pa- Min Ngaidam Rawh*' and so on. His first essay is '*Thal Favang*', written in 1950 when he was in Shillong, and his last essay is '*Pastor Liangkhaia - Thu leh Hlaa Mi Ropui*'.

Coming to his creative essays, as the title signifies, *Thal Favang* is a vivid depiction of the wonderful season of the so-called *Thal Favang*. *Thal Favang* is the harvest season in Mizoram that occurs between summer and winter. It is, indeed, the most pleasant season for the Mizo people. This essay discloses interesting details about Zikpuii-Pa's intimate relationship with nature. Since the autumn season is associated with leisure in Mizo society, everyone looks forward to it as it is that time of the year when they can relax and entertain their friends and siblings.

Zikpuii-Pa portrayed that *Thal Favang* is a season of joy and happiness because everyone enjoys freedom during this time. He beautifully narrates that autumn is not only a beautiful season for humans, but it is also a wonderful season for other creatures. Since nature displays itself in full bloom during autumn, even the birds and insects congregate. In this essay, Zikpuii-Pa addressed different types of people, including students, soldiers, farmers, and business people, to witness such a beautiful and charming season. He emphasised the importance of autumn to everyone by stating that autumn always brings blessings. Consequently, he begs his fellow humans to set aside their responsibilities to enjoy the splendour of autumn. He further summons them to observe the outcome of their toil and labour. Most likely,

youngsters do not perceive the value of the fall season. For this reason, mature individuals should observe and recognize their maker for giving them such a wonderful season. Undeniably, this essay demonstrates Zikpuii-Pa's deep understanding of Mizo mentality.

Another notable essay by Zikpuii-Pa is *Sipai*, which refers to a soldier. In this essay, Zikpuii-Pa emphasised the value of soldiers in every nation. No doubt, Zikpuii-Pa's comprehensive and wide-ranging knowledge of world history is astounding in this essay. He pointed out the world's most famous personalities who came in touch with the soldier. He went on to say that there could be a variety of reasons for joining the army, such as money, occupation, fame, nationalism, family incongruity, and so on. Whatever their motivation for becoming a soldier, they deserve admiration and respect. Taking this into account, he likewise referenced that from the Israelites to Hitler in world history, the status of a soldier was considered the best job ever because it required one's own life. Specifically, Zikpuii-Pa esteemed the soldiers because of their daring vow: "If necessity arises, I will even shoot my beloved parents". How dare they say such a thing? Indeed, there is a magnificent combination between a soldier, pain and demise. Remarkably, the term, "discipline" has always been the driving force behind every soldier. For this reason, Zikpuii-Pa addressed discipline like a human being and put it:

"Oh Thee, discipline, how lovely you are!

Of all worldly intelligence, magnificence, and sovereignty,

Dwell in it because of you" (My Trans.; *Zikpuii* 319).

In this essay, Zikpuii-Pa compared the people of Calcutta to those of Brussels (Belgium). He stated that the people of Calcutta (presently Kolkata) failed to recognise the value of soldiers because they lived in a peaceful environment. On the other hand, the people of Brussels recognized and appreciated the soldiers because they had suffered greatly as a result of the war. Since there is no one else who can help them out of their predicament, the soldier serves both as a comforter and rescuer. Innocent children lost their parents, and even parents lost their beloved

children due to war. Besides, one of the negative consequences of war is starvation. In such a dangerous and unsettling environment, the soldier acts as an emancipator.

Besides, Zikpuii-Pa mentioned various touching and interesting historical events from around the world, such as the 'Crimean War' between England and Spain, as well as the soldiers' victory. He went on to say that a soldier is always loyal and ready to die for their beloved country at any time. Finally, he stressed his admiration for soldiers for their discipline and dedication to duty. That is why, as long as they wear the uniform of a soldier, whether they were *Tomy* or *Sepoy*, he respected them all. Soldiers are widely recognised for their commitment, patriotism, loyalty, and discipline. Undeniably, it is the best way to serve one's own country. At the same time, being a soldier is not easy as the task is constantly hazardous and demanding. They are asked to do things that other people are not asked to do.

'*Zofaten Kawng Kan Bo Ve*' is another interesting essay by Zikpuii-Pa. In this essay, he highlights that Mizo individuals were known for being fearless, diligent, faithful, and selfless before the Second World War. Meanwhile, such great characteristics have been steadily disappearing and conquered by different evils. As a result, Zikpuii-Pa compared the Mizo people to a criminal tribe during the British period. In a nutshell, this essay reveals the deterioration of the laudable qualities of Mizo society. If this is the case, who is to be faulted? Certain individuals might blame the present generation and the youngsters. But Zikpuii-Pa did not simply blame them because they were not the primary cause of the degeneration of society. As highlighted by the British historian, Arnold Toynbee, 39 of the world's great civilizations have vanished. Among these, the majority of them were destroyed by moral corruption (ibid 471). In light of this, he suggests that the Mizos need to reflect on their forefathers' policies and administration. He further emphasized that the greatest political strategy of our forefathers was to protect the village community from enemies. Although there was no standing army at the time, due to their good cooperation, they lived a comfortable life. Apart from peace and security, economic independence may be vital to their existence. They had to be economically independent through hard work because they did not have any support. As a result,

most of their ancestors were diligent and patient enough. In this context, the term “Mizo” has been associated with the so called, *tlawmngaihna*, an unwritten moral code, valued by the Mizos that indicates patience, diligence, and selflessness. Furthermore, Zikpuii-Pa stressed the different changes that have been made in Mizo society because of imperialism. Consequently, he stated that three important aspects of survival in early Mizo society were to protect the village community from enemies, be economically independent, and maintain integrity and unity among the villagers. There is no doubt that this creative essay resembles an overview of early Mizo society.

After his study of the degeneration of Mizo society, Zikpuii-Pa proposed some significant focus points to restore Mizo society’s pleasant existence of the past. The first point is good administration, followed by an abundance of food. As a nationalist, Zikpuii-Pa did not allow the Mizos to be inferior to the non-Mizos. In the past, they would say things like, “Mizo brains cannot achieve ICS, Mizos are not eligible to pass B.E,” and so on in the past. But, as an aspirant and ambitious gentleman, he never accepted such sarcastic remarks and decided to refute them. While mentioning the importance of family and school, he also contended that since Mizos are a close-knit society, their community life is more significant than that of other communities. In addition, Zikpuii-Pa emphasised the importance of having a good leader. Not only in Mizo society but even the powerful countries in the world have made mistakes in search of their leader. Referring to Moses in the *Old Testament of the Bible*, whom he regarded as a great leader for all time. Moses is a great leader who faithfully guided the Israelites through difficult times. As a man of integrity, he is willing to forfeit his life for the sake of his fellow Israelites. In this way, Zikpuii-Pa observed parallels between Moses and Jesus Christ, who prayed and appealed for sinners. This essay was written in Muscat in 1981. Finally, Zikpuii-Pa urged the Mizo people to seek God’s forgiveness for their past wrongdoings, to begin loving one another, and to stop cheating themselves. Certainly, this essay provides insightful information about Zikpuii-Pa’s curiosity, his extensive knowledge of Mizo history, and his deep concern for the advancement of Mizo society, as well as his intellectual capacity. Apart from these, Zikpuii-Pa wrote travelogues, such as *Luba*

*Luipui Fawn Vel Mah Se, Madrid Zin Thu, and Venezuela Zin Kawng*. His creativity is evident in all of his work. They certainly enhanced Mizo literature.

Another interesting essay worth mentioning by Zikpuii-Pa is '*Venghlui Kan Vanglai*'. It is basically an autobiographical piece. It exposes Zikpuii-Pa's childhood experiences and lingering memories in his locality, named *Venghlui*. It was written in 1975, when he got back from abroad. The lovely portrayal of his childhood experience is interesting. He reviewed and portrayed his old companions, his neighbours, and his family members who had bearings to his childhood and his youth. Since life was so simple back then, greed and selfishness had no place in their lives. This essay reveals Zikpuii-Pa's wit and sense of humour. It provides information about his positive outlook and his intriguing realities. They reveal his insight into the Mizo history, culture, and society, which is commendable. His essays, like those of J.B. Priestley, are notable for their broad humanity, narrative and humour power, nationalism as well as of patriotism, and so on.

#### 1:2:3 His Poetical Works:

It is further noteworthy that Zikpuii-Pa is also well acclaimed for his contribution to Mizo poetry. Accordingly, he composed 17 poems, of which '*Zozam Par*', '*Hruaitu Vanapa Kan Ngai*', '*Lalhmingliana Father Mihuai*', '*Tawnloh Chhimtlang Saw*', '*Ka Senlai Nite Zawng Kha*' '*Sikni Eng*', '*Lungrukah Min Vei Ve La*', '*Kapu Hualrothanga*', '*Shillong Thal Favang Kut*' were famous. Among his seventeen poems, two of them are songs, and the rest are poetry.

#### The Book of *Zozam Par*:

The book entitled, *Zozam Par* is essentially a collection of seventeen poems by Zikpuii-Pa. The importance of family in his life is an important aspect of his poetry. In *Zozam Par*, he highlighted various poetical terms such as lyrics, odes, elegies, sonnets, ballads, personification, hyperbole, epigrams, alliteration, and so on, with appropriate examples from both English poetry and his own poetry. Taking these into account, one cannot deny that Zikpuii-Pa was well-versed in poetic techniques as well. Aside from his creativity and inspiration, his poetical abilities

demonstrate his versatility. Some of his compositions, such as *Sikni Eng*, *Hruaitu Vanapa Kan Ngai*, *Lungrukah Min Vei Ve La*, and others, became immortal in Mizo poetry.

Zikpuii-Pa composed '*Tawnloh Chhimtlang Saw*' using the style of his beloved father Hrawva, who was also a well-known poet. It was written in October 1949, while he was in the Earle Hostel in Shillong (*Zozam* 58). This poetry mainly illustrates a sense of nostalgia about the southern part of Mizoram, which is, in fact, the birthplace and hometown of the poet's father. No doubt, Zikpuii-Pa was deeply moved by his father's tragic childhood experience. At the same time, he recognised the importance of parents in the lives of their children. Parents are, indeed, very precious to their own children, regardless of how poor they are. The following poem is titled '*Sakhmel Hmuh loh Hrai Hlimthla.*' This poem was composed after his wife sent him a photograph of their firstborn child. It is universally accepted that every child is precious to their parents. Similarly, Zikpuii-Pa realised his parents' unconditional love after he got married. It makes no difference to parents whether their children are beautiful or ugly, healthy or unhealthy. Generally, young people are unaware of how much their parents adore them. However, once they become parents themselves, they recognize the value of parental love. Normal parents, on the other hand, obviously have a feeling of satisfaction when they see their beloved children, which is matchless by other worldly things. This poetry reflects human nature and has significance too. The image of his firstborn child, Zikpuii, inspired him to create his '*Nom de Plume,*' Zikpuii-Pa. Since then, he has been called "Zikpuii-Pa".

Another popular poem by Zikpuii-Pa is '*Hruaitu Vanapa Kan Ngai.*' Zikpuii-Pa thought that when philosophical and economic conditions are positive, morality tends to decline. He noted that in the 18th century, social life in England had deteriorated and stagnated. As a result, to revitalize the degenerated social life, William Wordsworth approached the famous Puritan poet John Milton. Similarly, Zikpuii-Pa invited *Vanapa*, who represents chivalry and humility in early society, to restore the deserted Mizo culture. Furthermore, he used symbols in this poem, such as '*Lersia do darin khum, Liando inhnawl maw,*' and so on. While *Lersia* represents



the well-to-do, *Liando* represents the poor in Mizo society. Besides, Zikpuii-Pa had a sentimental attachment to the Mizo forefathers. Understanding and appreciating the better side of their lives, Zikpuii-Pa stated:

“Dove like a good-natured *Vanapa*,

Sharp devices of uprightness, bearing benevolent assistance to other people,

To rejuvenate the deteriorated *Zoram*,

Do penetrate again with your meek and self-sacrifice manner” (My Trans.; *Mi* 54).

Based on the above quotation, Zikpuii-Pa lamented the deterioration of Mizo society in which selfishness, enviousness, and pride had overcome selflessness, humility, and respect for the elderly. Consequently, Zikpuii-Pa wished to have an ideal leader like *Vanapa* to awaken the Mizo youth.

‘*Zozam Par*’ is another lovely composition by Zikpuii-Pa. It is an ode. In Mizoram, *Zozam Par* is a lovely flower. In this poem, Zikpuii-Pa used metaphors to compare *Zozam Par* to a human being. Like *Zozam Par*, a human being in his youth had all the blessings he could wish for. At the point when he was strong and dynamic, life was an everlasting spring as *Zozam Par*. Furthermore, just as *Zozam Par* blossoms into their final form, humans do the same as they grow in life. However, the blooming period of *Zozam Par* fades quickly, and the same is true for humans. Their primes did not last long. Only good deeds will remain forever. That is the reason Zikpuii-Pa advised his fellows to be cautious in their lives and maintain morality.

The next poem, ‘*Zalen Hun Hmangtute*’ reveals Zikpuii-Pa’s appreciation and admiration of Mizo culture and tradition. According to him, his paternal uncle, Makthanga, was both a mentor and an inspiration to him. Remarkably, although his uncle became the Chief of Aizawl, he continued to practice the traditional Mizo cultures, such as community feasts, mass fishing, and so on. As a result, all these practices became habitual for Zikpuii-Pa. A reading of this poetry helps the reader

appreciate the wonderful culture of the Mizos. A reading of this poem provides the reader to appreciate the Mizos wonderful culture.

‘*Lungrukah Min Vei Ve La*’ composed by Zikpuii-Pa is a famous love song, particularly among the youngsters in Mizoram. Like his contemporaries and friends, Zikpuii-Pa had a passion for love songs, even when he was only fifteen years old. He revealed that he had collected, written, and memorized nearly one hundred love songs, emphasising the importance of love in human nature. In this poem, he begged his beloved sweetheart not to marry someone else, so that he would be remembered in the future. Despite the passage of time, he will never forget the happy moments he shared with her. Remarkably, Zikpuii-Pa did not use similes as regularly as Mizo poets Zirsangzela Hnamte and P.S. Chawngthu. His similes are rarely used by other Mizo poets, which demonstrates his unique quality (*Zozam* 139). Given this, Zikpuii-Pa undoubtedly enriched Mizo poetry as well. In light of the above discussion, although Zikpuii-Pa’s fame is based on fiction, he has been proven to be a famous poet, which deserves to be acknowledged. His poetic ability surpasses many Mizo poets in terms of technique and originality. As a poet, he is an optimist.

Like the renowned Mizo poet, Rokunga, Zikpuii-Pa is a poet who perceives the value of nature in human existence. Nature was one of his favourite subjects. ‘*Sikni Eng*’ is one of the immortal songs in Mizo literature. The poem describes the lovely sunshine that can be found in Mizoram during the winter season. Since it addresses and praises the beauty of *Sikni Eng*, it is reminiscent of Keats’s ‘*Ode to Autumn*’ in English literature. Because of the appeal of *Sikni Eng*, Zikpuii-Pa felt that even Jesus Christ wished to be born during that very season. Evidently, he was really impressed by the beautiful ambiance of Shillong and had a yearning to escape from the harsh realities of life. For this reason, one cannot deny the fact that ‘*Sikni Eng*’ is an excellent example of escapism in Zikpuii-Pa’s poetry. Consequently, Sailo rightly puts it: ‘*Sikni Eng*’ is not insignificant in comparison to the English famous poem, ‘*Ode to a Nightingale*’, composed by John Keats” (qtd in *Thu leh Hla* 1994, 7<sup>th</sup> Dec, p.7). This quotation demonstrates Zikpuii-Pa’s creativity and rhetoric. In other words, ‘*Sikni Eng*’ is a fine illustration of a Mizo nature poem. Zikpuii-Pa himself expressed:

“Every beautiful flower blooms because of you” (My Trans.; *Zozam* 115).

This quotation validates Zikpuii-Pa’s deep appreciation of nature. To corroborate this, Thanmawia argues, “Zikpuii-Pa may be viewed as a nature worshipper like William Wordsworth in this particular stanza” (188).

1:2:4 His Critical Essays:

Regarding his critical works, Zikpuii-Pa’s critical essays reveal that he is a critic of great insight. As a critic, he observed the pros and cons of Mizo society. Despite his long absences from Mizoram, it is clear from his critical writings that he was profoundly engaged with each part of Mizo life and culture. His works address topics and issues that reflect the religious, economic, political, and social conditions of Mizoram. No doubt, each of his works depicted a specific aspect of Mizo society. The following are his remarkable critical essays:

*‘Pu Rokunga Thlirna’*, *‘Zosaphara Hla’*, *‘Ka Lungkham Bu Thlirna’*, *‘Lehkhabu Ramtiam Bu Thlirna’*, *‘Lushai Literature’*, *‘Kan Mizia leh Insawiselna’*, *‘Mizo Rilrua Hla Hnathawh Dan’*, *‘Bible, Literature Hmanrawpui’*. His collection of critical essays was published posthumously in the book entitled *Zikpuii Pa Hnuhma* in 2000 and *Zozam Par* published in 1993. Let us touch upon his critical essays.

*‘Pu Rokunga Thlirna’* is a tribute to Rokunga, who was awarded “Poet of the Century” by the Millennium Celebration Committee, Mizoram in 2000. It was written while Rokunga was still alive in 1960. In this critical essay, Zikpuii-Pa expressed his high admiration for Rokunga in terms of spontaneity and originality. Furthermore, he cherished Rokunga’s true Christmas spirit, which is, after all, the greatest occasion for Christians all over the world. Without a doubt, Rokunga deserves such admiration and appreciation because he composed numerous memorable Christmas songs for Mizos. As Lalzuithanga argues, “This is one of the first and finest critical observations of Rokunga and his works from the biological and romantic approach of criticism” (43). Considering this argument, Zikpuii-Pa’s observation of Rokunga, along with his poetry, is significant in Mizo literary criticism. Based on this critical essay, Zikpuii-Pa was deeply moved by Rokunga’s poems. As stated by Zikpuii-Pa, Rokunga regards the term “Mizo” as designating truth, courage, honesty, and

altruism. Consequently, he regards every Mizo bachelor as *Vanapa*, the Mizo legendary hero, who represents philanthropy and selflessness. Similarly, he considers every Mizo maiden as *Chhingpuii*, a lady of exceptional beauty in Mizo history. All of these compliments ascertain Rokunga's true spirit of nationalism, as well as Zikpuii-Pa's reasoning power. Considering his enormous contributions to Mizo literature, Zikpuii-Pa ranked Rokunga alongside William Shakespeare, the greatest English dramatist (*Zikpuii-Pa*159). Obviously, as an educated man, his criticism is not bias and destructive. Therefore, Zikpuii-Pa's perception of Rokunga is authentic and valuable. This critical essay further shows Zikpuii-Pa's broadmindedness and sense of morality.

'*Lushai Literature*' is the primary commitment of Zikpuii-Pa to Mizo Literary Criticism. At the same time, it is one of the first historical approaches to Mizo literary criticism in Mizo literature. For this reason, it has some significance in Mizo literature as well. It is essentially a concise investigation of Mizo verse prior to the colonial time frame in Mizoram. In this critical essay, Zikpuii-Pa invited readers to remember the first known Mizo poet, Pi Hmuaki, not for her style of composition, but for being the pioneer poet in Mizo literary history during the pre-colonial period. In addition, Zikpuii-Pa likewise deals with well-known Mizo poets like Saikuti, Vankhama, etc. He went on to say that as there were no hard and fast rules for writing poetry in the early period, systematic poetry was rare. In any case, the early Mizo poetical compositions are significant to the evolution and development of Mizo poetry. On the other hand, although the Mizo forefathers formed poetry easily, their innovative ideas and spontaneity are laudable.

The following critical essay, '*Bible Literature Hmanrawpui*,' was written in 1991. Certainly, each religious principle has its own central books that have always had a significant impact on their respective disciples. The Hindus, for example, place a high value on '*The Vedas and Unpanishads*.' Similarly, '*Quran*', the sacred book of Islam, is viewed as the expression of God that was revealed to Muhammad. As such, it impacts its disciples as well. Similarly, '*The Guru Granth Sahib*' is the sacred text of the Sikh people. So is '*The Holy Bible*', which is considered a divine inspiration that records God's relationship with humankind. As the title implies,

Zikpuii-Pa featured the purpose, value, and influence of ‘*The Holy Bible*’ among the Mizos. Indeed, a reading of ‘*Bible Literature Hmanrawpui*’ facilitates the reader’s esteem and appreciation of ‘*The Bible*’. Although Zikpuii-Pa was not involved a great deal with the Church and its activities during his lifetime, it is evident that he was deeply spiritual, well versed in *The Bible* as well as Christian faith, doctrine, and theology. This spiritual aspect is vividly exposed in this specific work.

Certainly, the various religious books have served as a source of literature. When one thoroughly examines the history of English literature, it is obvious that *The Bible* had a profound influence on writers of various ages. Similarly, the central texts of other religions have been a source of inspiration for both writers and poets. Accordingly, Zikpuii-Pa stated that, in terms of Christianity, there is no doubt that ‘*The Bible*’ has been a source of Mizo literature, shaping the mentality of the writers in this critical essay. Among other important points, Zikpuii-Pa emphasised God’s unconditional love for humanity, which is, undeniably, the central theme of ‘*The Bible*’. While stressing the worth of ‘*The Bible*’, he further referenced that, as the historical backdrop of ‘*The Bible*’ has been associated with the history of the world, it is difficult to compose world history without referencing *The Bible*’s set of experiences. As Zikpuii-Pa himself puts it:

*Bible hi literature ropui a ni a, Literature workshop ropui a ni nghal bawk a ni. Amah Bible hi history a ni a...Tin, Bible pum pui hi hla a ni a.*

The Bible is great literature. It is a literature workshop too. The Bible itself is history... Likewise, the whole portion of the Bible is poetry (My Trans.; 205).

Despite being a brief depiction, it indicates Zikpuii-Pa’s deep love of ‘*The Bible*’. Hence, it is very effective and still relevant to modern readers.

Another interesting critical essay by Zikpuii-Pa is ‘*Liangkhaia: Thu leh Hlaa Mi Ropui*’. Lalzuithanga remarks, “It was the last work of Zikpuii-Pa just before he passed away” (45). As the title signifies, Liangkhaia is one of the most prestigious names in Mizo history. He was a religious priest, a hymn composer, a preacher, a

translator, and a historian, all rolled into one. Zikpuii-Pa admired Liangkhaia's diverse qualities as well as his enormous contributions to Mizo literature and history. As a result, he divides Liangkhaia's published works into three main categories: Christian literature, secular literature, and a combination of both Christian and secular literature (*Liangkhaia* 309). Moreover, it is worth noting that Liangkhaia's '*Mizo History*' was considered to be the first printed book on Mizo history. As such, it is the first of its kind in Mizo literature. For this reason, Zikpuii-Pa describes how Liangkhaia's '*Mizo History*' is important as being the first significant contribution to Mizo literature. It, therefore, reveals the composing abilities and innovative skills of Liangkhaia as a writer.

Another interesting and thought-provoking essay is '*Zosaphara Hla*' written in 1973 in Kathmandu. This critical essay is essentially a literary defence of Zosaphara (the dedicated Welsh missionary) and his works by Zikpuii-Pa in response to J.F. Laldailova, the so-called "Mizo Shakespeare". In this essay, Zikpuii-Pa refers to J. F. Laldailova's four omitted points about Zosaphara's life and works. Besides, he eulogised the various contributions of Zosaphara to Mizo literature in this essay. He, therefore, states that J.F. Laldailova fails to recognise Zosaphara as a forerunner, both in prose and modern poetry (*Zikpuii* 169). For this reason, Zikpuii-Pa felt that regardless of the quality of his works, Zosaphara deserves appreciation because he was determined to enrich Mizo literature in times of crisis. Presumably, during Mizoram's dark period, Zosaphara's works were truly significant for the evolution and development of Mizo literature.

#### 'Book Review'

When discussing Zikpuii-Pa's literary criticism, it is significant to note that after the introduction of Book Review in Mizo literary criticism, Zikpuii-Pa contributed twice, including *Ka Lungkham* by B. Lalthangliana, and *Lehkhabu Ramtiam* by Laltluangliana Khiangte. A book review is a detailed and evaluative account of a book's content, style, and merit. Since a large portion of the Mizo people were not aware of a book review by then, Zikpuii-Pa's book review serves as an eye-opener for the Mizo people. Zikpuii-Pa mentioned Karl Marx's dialectical theory in relation to poetry. While appreciating the dedication and diligence of the

two well-known writers in Mizo literature, he evaluated the two books in terms of content, subject matter, theme, and writing style. Obviously, Zikpuii-Pa's purpose is not to hurt the writers, but to urge them to progress in their artistic vocations. Thus, his judgement is viewed as reasonable and helpful, not damaging. In other words, as a critic, his assessment of other works is systematic and accurate, and his critical analysis is always supported by sound evidence. His extensive reading and in-depth knowledge of both literature and human nature gave him the confidence to express his beliefs.

Conspicuously, Zikpuii-Pa's rhetoric is manifested in his method of composition and articulation. No doubt, Zikpuii-Pa confirms himself as a gifted literary critic, both in prose and poetry. Based on his research, Lalzuithanga argues, "He was the first critic to write critical review on (sic) Mizo literature. He further mentioned that the greatness of Zikpuii-Pa lies in his utilitarian point of view between life and literature" (52). This argument authenticates the significance of Zikpuii-Pa in the ambit of Mizo literary criticism. His primary goal in writing critical essays is to expose the truth. His critical essays reveal fascinating details about Mizo society and culture.

'*Kan Mizia leh Insawiselna*' is Zikpuii-Pa's brilliant counsel to the Mizo individuals on the most proficient method to read and understand literature. According to him, "Literature, such as an essay or a poem, must be viewed objectively or impersonally" (*Zikpuii* 179). This specific exposition was essentially written because of the different reactions to Thanpuii Pa's controversial article titled '*Kan Mizia*'. In this essay, Thanpuii Pa called attention to the shortcomings and stagnation of the Mizos. Many readers of this essay probably had a feeling of bitterness towards Thanpuii Pa, the intimate friend of Zikpuii-Pa. For this reason, Zikpuii-Pa expressed that the individuals who scrutinise the same do not understand the principles of analysis. He defended his best friend, claiming Thanpuii Pa was daring enough to make such critical observations at the time. Significantly, he was impressed by Thanpuii Pa's nationalism and referred to him as "Kipling in Sarcasm". Furthermore, he stated that, while Thanpuii Pa is well-versed in political and social science, he lacks a sense of history. Zikpuii-Pa pondered why Thanpuii Pa wrote the essay, '*Kan Mizia*.' Does he have a grudge against Mizo society or a sense of

disappointments towards his fellow Mizo? He additionally expressed that the narratives of the *Count of Monte Christo* and *Romeo and Juliet* echoed the lives of the creator and the playwright. Most likely, Zikpuii-Pa's perspective on life is both positive and sound. He contended that Mizo individuals needed to accept the analysis. He further expressed that being unable to accept one's own weakness is very frightening and shameful as a nation. Consequently, he suggests that to make use of unpleasant remarks and analysis, Mizo individuals need to change their morality.

*Mizo Rilrua Hla Hnathawh Dan:*

Since time immemorial, there has been an enthusiasm for singing in Mizo society. Accordingly, Zikpuii-Pa stated that Mizo individuals have been related to poetry before the colonial time frame. He, therefore, emphasised the importance of poetry in Mizo history by citing significant events such as *Chhak leh Thlang Indo* (The War between the East and the West) and the touching story of Laltheri, daughter of the famous Mizo chief, Lalsavunga, and her beloved sweetheart, Chalthanga. He stated that Lalsailova, the alleged Mizo Capulet, and his son Vanhnuailiana, the purported Mizo Tybalt, were so repentant for their brutal act on Chalthanga, their daughter, Laltheri's dearest darling. As a result of their repentance, they vowed not to kill any Mizo young man, who might fall in love with their daughter in the future (ibid.192).

Apart from this, Zikpuii-Pa stated that Thailungi's poem had a profound impact on her fellow Mizo people, creating an awareness of the sympathetic and deplorable condition of the poor and orphans in early Mizo society. As stated earlier, poetry plays a prominent role in Mizo society. In the midst of happiness and sorrow, poetry is, to be sure, the expression of their sentiments. Every one of these reflected Zikpuii-Pa's immense and far-reaching knowledge of Mizo history. As an ambassador, he travelled extensively and was well-versed in the cultures and songs of other countries. However, from Zikpuii-Pa's observation, none of the western songs outperformed Mizo songs. In any event, he felt that Mizo singers like Lalsangzuali, Vanhlupuii, Siampuii Sailo, and others had the best melodious voices in his ears, even during the time he was abroad. This demonstrates Zikpuii-Pa's sense



of belonging as a Mizo. Considering this, it is evident that Zikpuii-Pa assumes a matchless part in Mizo literature in general and Mizo literary criticism in particular.

### 1:3 Significance of Zikpuii-Pa's in the Mizo Contemporary Literary Scenario:

Zikpuii-Pa's enthusiasm, his wide and intimate insight into early Mizo society, and the different societies in which he lived, made his works of incredible worth. He is one of the most influential and cherished novelists in Mizo literature. During his lifetime, Zikpuii-Pa enriched Mizo literature through the leading literary organisation known as the "Mizo Academy of Letters" (MAL). As a result, he wrote numerous articles for the Mizo Academy of Letters monthly magazine titled, '*Thu leh Hla.*'

Writers are indeed, the treasure of the nation. No writer can escape the impact of the historical and political milieu. As a result, Zikpuii-Pa's, *Nunna Kawngthum Puiah* is a complex and comprehensive account of the insurgency period, referred to as "*Rambuai*" and its impact on Mizo society. On the other hand, *C.C.Coy No. 27*, continues to be a clear reflection of Zikpuii-Pa's incessant passion for moral reformation and high aspiration. His fictional characters address the competency and resolution of the Mizo young fellows, which is, no question, Zikpuii-Pa's ideal Mizo youngster. One cannot deny that Zikpuii-Pa's fiction motivates and challenges Mizo individuals in general, and Mizo youngsters in particular, to be fruitful by their own doing. The value of Zikpuii-Pa's fictional contribution to Mizo literature is immeasurable and indelible. Like the Mizo poet, Rokunga, Zikpuii-Pa could not indicate the possibility of Mizos being persecuted and overwhelmed by non-Mizos. Instead, he somewhat planned to dominate and surpass his non-Mizo fellows in terms of insight, ability, and morality. His extensive reading and experience have enabled him to see humanity in the proper light. He was endowed with numerous talents and status, including being an incredible writer, a great Indian Ambassador to various countries, a media person, an essayist, a critic of great insight, a bard, and a nationalist, among others. It should be noted that Zikpuii-Pa's work has achieved increasing acclaim. As a result, some of his literary works were immortalized. His fictional works mirror the spirit of his age. All in all, his works, particularly his fiction and his travelogues, are a rare blend of fine humour, profound human

concern, and high insight, which has made him a unique figure in the Mizo literary scenario.

Significantly, excluding drama, Zikpuii-Pa has had an impact on all forms of literature. As previously stated, in addition to his contributions to Mizo fiction, he was also known among the Mizo people for writing memorable essays and composing fiction. In addition, his poetry collection, *Zozam Par* is an excellent resource for learning Mizo poetry. Additionally, his critical analysis fills in as an eye-opener for the readers in regards to the way of life, society, and political state of Mizo society. It should be noted with gratitude that Zikpuii-Pa left behind ideas and concepts for future generations in the field of Mizo literary criticism as well. His travelogues are not only entertaining but also educational. His perspective on life is basically Mizo. From a nationalist standpoint, he intended to pass on his knowledge to his fellow Mizos.

When one reads the works of Zikpuii-Pa, it is evident that his main message is to refuse the life of corruption and greediness, and to follow the right path to maintain integrity, bravery, and truthfulness in Mizoram. Obviously, all of Zikpuii-Pa's literary works exhibit his concern with the changing Mizo social and political scene. Since literature is a social document, Zikpuii-Pa's fictional and critical works, when contextualised within Mizo history, might be viewed as portrayals of Mizo society and culture. His diverse commitments in various literary genres demonstrated his versatility and creative genius. Thus, considering Zikpuii-Pa's originality and poetic talent, there is no doubt that he holds an important place in the history of Mizo poetry too. His preoccupation with morality is evident in the majority of his works. To put it somewhat differently, his fiction has investigated a morality for Mizo society, surpassing his predecessors and contemporaries and challenging the existing traditions and conventions of Mizo society.

Therefore, given Zikpuii-Pa's versatility in the Mizo literary context, it is true that he remains a literary giant who enriched Mizo literature. Simultaneously, there is a need to inculcate and emphasise the value of such a literary genius to today's generation. His invaluable literary works will live on in Mizo literature for

generations to come. Ultimately, his untimely demise left a massive void in the Mizo literary scenario, and he will never be forgotten.

End Notes

1. Mr. Khuangruma, a close companion of L.Biakliana living at '*Tumchung*' Madanriting, Shillong.
2. *Lasi* means a fabled creator of animals or the spirit which presides over hunting.
3. *Rambuai* refers the period of conflict due to the MNF uprising against the Central Government in early 1966 which changed the course of Mizo history and society.

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## Chapter - II

## REFLECTION OF RAMBUAI IN 'NUNNA KAWNGTHUAM PUIAH'

2. Meaning of *Rambuai*:

The term “*Rambuai*” plays a massive role in the political and literary history of Mizoram. The meaning of *Rambuai* has taken on a variety of interpretations. In a real sense, it implies the political upheaval in Mizoram that started in 1966. Essentially, the term *Rambuai* itself is a Mizo language. “*Ram*” denotes a nation, region, or country, while “*buai*” implies trouble, turmoil, or unsettling influence. *The American Heritage College Dictionary* defined the term ‘trouble’ as “a distressing or difficult circumstance or situation” (1473). *Rambuai* can be translated into English as ‘the period of disturbance’ or the ‘time of disorder’ in Mizoram. To put it in another way, *Rambuai* can be defined as a ‘period of insurgency’ in the Mizo District in 1966 that altered the direction of Mizo history and society. Scholars and academicians have interpreted *Rambuai* in a variety of ways, including the Mizoram conflict, the Mizoram Insurgency, the period of disturbance, and so on. The term “conflict” denotes battles, struggles, encounters, etc., while “disturbance” can be characterized as an upsetting event, commotion, or upheaval. Among these definitions, the term “insurgency” is frequently applied as a synonym for *Rambuai* by various scholars and politicians.

The root word of insurgency is ‘insurge’. According to *The New Shorter Oxford University Dictionary*, the term ‘insurge’ means ‘arise’ or ‘spring up’. Accordingly, an ‘insurgent’ is a person who rebels or rises in active revolt against authority, a rebel, a revolutionary”. Insurgency means “The quality or state of being insurgent, the tendency to be insurgent, a rising, a revolt” (1385). Meanwhile, the *Cambridge International Dictionary of English* describes that “an insurgent is a person who is fighting in a group against their own government or the person who is in charge of the country” (739). Moreover, the *Longman Advanced American Dictionary* defines, “an attempt by a large group of people to take control of their government using force and violence” (750). According to *The Random House College Dictionary*, insurgency means, “insurrection against an existing government, usually one’s own, by a group not recognized as having the status of a belligerent”



(691). Apart from these, the synonyms of insurgency which *Merriam Webster Dictionary* means are –insurgence, insurrection, mutiny, outbreak, rebellion, revolution, and rising (*n.pag*). William Van Schendel regards the synonym of *Rambuai* as troubles, and therefore describes, “the Troubles was originally used in Northern Ireland to describe a similar period of disorder and violence rooted in a bid for independence from the United Kingdom. Although many aspects of the Troubles in Mizoram as unique, it is enlightening to study the period in a comparative context” (243). According to Seilen Haokip, “The theme *Buai*, ‘troubles’ in the English language, deals with a tumultuous period (1966-1986) with far-reaching ramifications, which extend beyond the political boundary of Mizoram: the Peace Accord of 1986 brought to closure the twenty-years Mizo National Front’s armed movement” (*ibid* 212). Meanwhile, Rohmingmawii defines *Rambuai* as, “The dark period of 20 years in Mizoram aptly termed *Rambuai* reigned over with chaos and turbulences from 1966 -1986, when the Government of Assam declared the whole of the Mizo District as Disturbed Area thus exercising the power conferred by Special Power Act, 1956” (*ibid* 65). The preceding definitions demonstrate that there is no specific recognition of the meaning of *Rambuai*. However, based on these definitions by academicians and scholars, the term *Rambuai* primarily refers to the “troubled period” in Mizoram that began in 1966. Rather than applying insurgency, conflict, trouble, or disturbance, the current researcher believes that *Rambuai* is the most appropriate term to apply in the context of Zikpuii-Pa’s fiction. In other words, since the term “insurgency” is a bit sensitive in this context, it is preferable to narrate it as *Rambuai*, which encompasses all of the political and social issues that arose during the disturbance. Hence, the time of *Rambuai* has been generally known as “The Dark Age in Mizoram”.

In light of the preceding discussions, *Rambuai* is considered the most tragic period in Mizo history, as it severely altered the political, economic, and social lives of the Mizo people as a whole. In terms of literature, *Rambuai* divides Mizo fiction into two main categories: pre-*Rambuai* Mizo Fiction and post-*Rambuai* Mizo Fiction. Subsequently, there is no question that *Rambuai* enormously affected Mizo literature in general and Mizo fiction in particular.

## 2:1 Genesis and the Scenario of *Rambuai*:

Insurgency, terrorism, conflict, revolution, political unrest, riots, and communal hostility have spread throughout the world, particularly in small states or territories. The term ‘insurgency’ has become a popular term, particularly in the realm of politics, both in the past and present. As previously stated, the term ‘insurgency’ is frequently used interchangeably with *Rambuai*. Before thinking about the genesis and situation of the *Rambuai* movement in Mizoram, let us take a quick look at how conflicts and insurgencies affect human society.

As indicated above, the issue of revolution or uprising is one of the normal issues shared by most individuals. However, the emergence, nature, and causes of insurgency may differ from place to place. Rebellions and uprisings typically happen when there is dissatisfaction with the authorities of a particular location. Obviously, the accomplishment of a revolution or insurrection relies upon the support of the mass in the influenced region. Presumably, without widespread participation and mass inclusion, it is hard for the insurgents to achieve their objectives. Although many rebellious groups have emerged, their goals and missions vary, including political independence, Union Territory, statehood, sovereignty, and so on. In his unpublished Ph.D. thesis titled, ‘*Insurgency in Mizoram: A Study of its Origin, Growth, and Dimension*’, Lalthakima observes:

The main target of insurgents is undoubtedly the state authority. Their main target is the state authority that they think as the main cause of their discontentment. They targeted the very existing authority and try to gain control of it. It is an expectation of better status after seizing power which urged insurgents to fight till their last breath. Most of the insurgent groups are having clear cut socioeconomic goals; they try to achieve their ends by capturing a power of governance, which according to them is the only means to attain their desired goals (32).

This highlights the main purpose of *Rambuai* in Mizoram. Politics is primarily concerned with the well-being of the people and the abolition of injustices and social structures. Without a doubt, Northeast India is one of the primary spaces

of insurgency and conflict. Accordingly, it is necessary to discuss the reasons for the revolt in Northeast India. For various reasons, including identity crisis, community-ethnic region, lack of economic development, sense of isolation, deprivation, exploitation, and outward assistance, are among the various reasons. Because of their distinct appearance, the mainland Indians have referred to the Northeast people as foreigners, particularly Chinese or Japanese, in an insulting manner. Furthermore, they were sarcastically labelled as, “Chinky”. The Indian people, particularly the mainstream, were unable to accept such an appearance or a person from the ‘North East’. As a result, a sense of isolation or identity crisis has become ingrained in the minds of the people of the Northeast, and this is still a serious issue today. It is striking that among the reasons for the rebellion, outside help also played a huge part.

Notably, the majority of Northeast insurgents have received material and financial assistance from China, Pakistan, and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). Without a doubt, such outside assistance was beneficial for the achievement of their primary goal and struggle. Mizoram is not an exception. As previously stated, every territory in Northeast India has had a clandestine meeting with one of its neighbouring countries at some point. In the Mizoram context, the moral and monetary support acquired from neighbouring foreign countries inspired the MNF to achieve its objectives. If one observes the situation in the Northeast states nowadays, it may be perceived that the current situation in Northeast India is less aggressive than it has been in the past.

No doubt, the majority of the Northeast states have been directly or indirectly affected by the politics of uprisings in the recent past. Subsequently, the fictional works of the North-East primarily deal with the themes of upheaval, anguish, hostility, and reminiscence. Regarding the themes in literature, culture and politics have had a significant impact on Mizo fiction. As a result, Zikpuii-Pa’s *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* thoughtfully echoes the traumatized lives of the Mizo people during the period of *Rambuai*. Accordingly, this chapter deals with Zikpuii-Pa’s *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, which mirrors the time of the revolt, the issue, and the strife that crushed the Mizo Hills in 1966. Aside from the depiction of suffering and

trauma, the book also illustrates the social and traditional lives of Mizo people through memoirs that are often overlooked.

Focusing on Zikpuii-Pa's *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, the present chapter will examine how literature has the potential to capture the historical backdrop of an area that has gone through a period of disturbance and trouble. Set during the turbulent *Rambuai* period, *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* focuses on the lives of the Mizo people, the tribal community inhabiting Mizoram. The fiction, therefore, provides a view of a region that has been inflicted with wounds for twenty long years. It also depicts the cost of human life in the conflict and emphasises the importance of peace and cultural values to today's generation.

It is a well-known fact that revolutions, conflicts, and wars have played an important role in world history. Although they appear to be destructive and unfavourable, they have served as a source of inspiration for writers and poets. As a result, the First and Second World Wars, the French Revolution, the American Revolution, and other historical events have generated a plethora of memorable literature. Similarly, the Indian Freedom Movement, led by Mahatma Gandhi, and the Partition of India and Pakistan, also produced fascinating writing. Aside from the disadvantages of such great wars and revolutions, there is no doubt that they have been a boon to literature. Because both fiction writers and poets experienced the trauma of war and revolution, they were immersed in experiences of agony, and death. No writer, regardless of genre, can escape the impact of his age and society. For instance, one of W. H. Auden's most famous and frequently quoted poems, 'September 1, 1939,' vividly reproduces the mood of Europe on the eve of World War II. Likewise, the Second World War also influenced a large number of fiction writers. To name a few, Muriel Spark, one of the most famous novelists, began his literary career shortly after the outbreak of World War II. As a result, his most well-known novel, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, is about Fascism and the Spanish Civil War. Similarly, the English Industrial Revolution has served as a source of inspiration for English novelists. Since child labour and exploitation were serious issues at that time, Dickens depicted the sympathetic condition of children in many

of his novels, including *Hard Times*, *Dombey and Son*, *Great Expectations*, *David Copperfield*, and others. Besides, his well-known novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*, is set in the late eighteenth century, against the backdrop of the French Revolution.

When one looks at the history of the world, it is clear that World War I is a European-centric literary genre. During the First World War, popular poets were Rupert Brooke, Wilfred Owen, Edmund Blunden, and others. In this connection, Nayar states, “Edmund Blunden, who edited Wilfred Owen’s works, provided an honest appraisal of patriotism, jingoism, and disillusionment associated with war in his memoir ‘*Undertones of War*’ (345). Unlike World War I, World War II was impacted by different continents and nations, particularly the Americans. Furthermore, the Vietnam War played an important role after World War II, and it attracted many fiction writers. Among them is the English author, Graham Greene, who has written *The Quiet American*, which investigates the breakdown of French imperialism alongside American inclusion in the Vietnam War. Moreover, Jackie Collins and Dominique Lapierre’s *Freedom at Midnight* focuses on Indian independence. Apart from these, George Orwell’s *Animal Farm* (1945) is an allegory of the Russian Revolution. In addition, *The Collector’s Wife* by Mitra Phukan is also set against Assam’s uprisings.

As denoted earlier, North East India has been deeply intertwined with insurrection and conflict over the last several decades. Thus, the literature of North-East India has been related to the topic of conflict-related works. Mizoram is not an exception. The Mizo novelists, like other Indian writers, particularly those from the Northeast, were so emotionally attached to the independence movement that even after the Peace Accord, it was difficult for them to escape its influence. In this context, *Rambuai* has been a source of inspiration for Mizo writers and poets. Accordingly, several touching poems about *Rambuai* and its aftermath have been composed. Popular *Rambuai* songs include *Harh La, Harh La* (1962) by Rokunga, *Khaw Sawikhawm Hla* (1968) by Suakliana, *Chulhnu Vangkhua* (1966) by Roliana Ralte, and so on. Similarly, a number of fiction writers were also inspired by their *Rambuai* experience, and as a result, they created numerous vital fictions in Mizo

writing. Popular *Rambuai* fiction includes: *Thuruk* and *Zalen Hma Chuan* by C.Laizawna, *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* by K.C. Lalvunga, *Silaimu Ngaihawm* by James Dokhuma, *Lungrang Hmangaihna* by Lalhmingliana Saiawi, *Rose Par Vul Ve Ta Rih Lo Chu* and *Khamkar Senhri* by Capt. L.Z.Sailo, *Beiseina Mittui* by Samson Thanruma. Malsawmi Jacob has published the first English novel titled, *Zorami*, which depicts the protagonist Zorami's painful and traumatic experiences during *Rambuai*. Besides, C.LalawmpuiaVanchiau and Margaret Ch. Zama produced a book titled, *After Decades of Silence* which featured the *Rambuai* struggle and the accounts of both the supporters and detractors in an unbiased way. Apart from these, Hannah Lalhlanpuui has published her debut fiction titled, *When Black Birds Fly*, a historical fiction, based on *Rambuai*, which describes the bombing of Aizawl by the Indian Air Force.

To understand how disturbances occur in Mizoram, one must first understand the causes of the *Rambuai* movement and how the Central Government responded quickly to counter the disturbance in Mizoram. Simultaneously, understanding *Rambuai* in the context of Mizoram necessitates a look at the historical and political history of conflicts in Mizoram. Mizoram, one of the seven states of Northeast India, is located in the southern part of the region. It is bounded on the west by Bangladesh and Tripura, on the east and south by Myanmar, and on the north by Assam and Manipur. When *Rambuai* began in 1966, the social and cultural life of Mizo society had not been the same as before. No doubt, *Rambuai* was a significant milestone in the history of Mizoram till today. Regarding the Mizo people, 'Arunkumar, et al. describes thus:

The Mizo people are an ethnic group of people, native to north-eastern India, western Myanmar (Burma) including Tahan and eastern Bangladesh; who speak the Mizo language. Mizo is the name of a tribe in India, and are recognized as Scheduled Tribe under the 6<sup>th</sup> Schedule of the Constitution of India. The present Indian state of Mizoram (literally "Mizo land") was called the Lushai Hills and was a district of Assam, before it became a Union Territory and afterwards a full-fledged state. They also share similar tradition

of the Chinese as well to some extent in their folks story and way of life (1228).

The term “Mizo” has been broadly defined as “hillman”. When India gained Independence in 1947, the Mizos turned out to be liberated from the control of the British, and Mizoram became a vital part of India. It was an Assam district till 1972, when it was turned into a Union Territory. When compared to mainstream Indians, the Mizos had a distinct culture and particular traditions. Historically, they are thought to have lived in seclusion for several years. Despite their lack of sophistication, they have enjoyed their humble life in the village. In other words, they had no contact with the outside world.

Prior to the colonial period, the Mizo people were never controlled by any nation or country. Regarding the status of Mizoram, Zama states, “It was declared as an ‘Excluded Area’ from India during British India. Mizoram was an excluded area according to the Govt. of India Act, 1935” (vii). Each village was self-contained and governed by its own chief. In general, the chief of each village was a benevolent ruler, and his residents regarded him as a protector, especially in times of crisis. Except for the chiefs and their elders, everyone has equal privileges. In short, they were content with their simple existence. The outsiders referred to them as “*The Lushais*”, and they were unfamiliar outside of Assam. Within the village ambience, life was peaceful and comfortable. In such a secluded life, Mizo society was associated with respect for the elders, altruism, and honesty. Meanwhile, their serene and segregated lives were disrupted by the outsiders. At the point when India acquired autonomy from the British, it was concluded that Mizoram would be briefly consolidated into India. Notwithstanding, the choice was made dependent on conditions. Mizoram would have the option to leave India if they so desired. Thus, by the end of British rule, there was a trend among some Mizo individuals, particularly the educated elites, to eliminate chieftainship in Mizoram.

Every occurrence has a historical context. In this regard, the origins of the MNF uprising can be outlined as incredible starvation called the *Mautam*. Notably, the occurrence of the *Mautam* famine in the Mizo District in 1959 caused adversity

for the people. Although there are several reasons for *Rambuai*, including discontentment with the abolition of chieftainship, the imposition of the Assamese language, etc., the dissatisfaction with the maltreatment of the Assam government during the major famine, called *Mautam* was considered the primary cause. To put it somewhat differently, the *Mautam* famine in Mizoram in 1959-1960, was one of the major points of contention between Mizoram and the Indian government. The term *Mautam* refers to the flowering and fruiting of bamboo. Accordingly, Mizoram was devastated by the *Mautam* famine, which began in 1959. In Mizo history, the *Mautam* famine occurs every 50 years. This was followed by a plague of rats, which devoured the rice crops and caused famine. As conjectured, the Mizos needed to gather roots and leaves from the forest for food and sustenance. In such a complicated situation, they received no assistance from the Assam government who deliberately ignored the petition of the Mizo leaders. Hence, there was a sense of dissatisfaction and frustration among the intellectuals because of the mistreatment they had suffered at the hands of the Assam government. They felt neglected, as if they were stepchildren. Moreover, the Mizo people gradually realized that they had no interest in either the central government or the Assam government. At the same time, they heard that the Tibetan refugees were provided with adequate food and shelter by the government of India in the past. On the other hand, the Mizos were not provided with the same during the devastation of their land. Despite being incorporated into the Indian government, the Mizo people experienced a sense of dissimilarity and seclusion for many years. The Indians did not recognize them as Indians, and the Mizo people did not recognize themselves as Indians either. Certainly, politics cannot exist without identity, and the identity crisis is the most significant cause of the Mizo's dissatisfaction with regard to *Rambuai*.

As politics pervades every country, no country or nation is exempt from the world of governmental issues. Similarly, as a result of their broader experience, the Mizo people gradually became involved in the world of politics. Since some Mizo men served in the First World War, it was regarded as the first of its kind for Mizo involvement in foreign relations, which undoubtedly provided a more extensive outlook and vision. In short, it introduced the Mizo people to politics. Thus, even



before the formation of the first political party, the Mizos had political insight and consciousness. Despite their poor origins, they had a positive outlook and had been exposed to people from more advanced states and countries as a result of war and other events. Following this, a large number of them have been keen on nationalistic thoughts and values. Additionally, like in the First World War, the Mizo young people who participated in the Second World War gradually absorbed new political ideas. Thus, the Mizos felt compelled to form an organisation in response to the severe *Mautam* famine. According to Lalnithanga, “On April 25, 1946, the first political party in Mizoram christened ‘*Mizo Union*’ was born” (7). After a while, the Mizo people became increasingly interested in and involved in political issues. Therefore, the non-governmental organisation named, ‘*Mizo National Famine Front*’ (MNFF) was formed to assist the famine-stricken people. Chawngsailova asserts, “When the famine was over in 1961, its leaders felt that the time had come to form a political party with the objective of propagating (sic) separatist feeling. Therefore, in October 1961, the MNFF was transformed into a political party by dropping the word ‘famine’ from it. According to Laldenga, the date of establishment of (sic) MNF was 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1961” (47).

Evidently, the foundation of the Mizo National Front (MNF) party was a great milestone in the political history of Mizoram. Directly from its initiation, the formation of the MNF was well-received by most of the Mizo public, particularly youngsters. Remarkably, the newly framed MNF party’s chief strategy was to advocate for the ‘sovereignty’ of Mizoram. The party’s consideration could be for a variety of reasons. Firstly, the party’s message of nationalism successfully persuaded the Mizo public. Moreover, protecting the Christian religion was one of their essential approaches to achieving their objectives. As a result, they gained public support in terms of Christianity.

Notably, the appealing leadership of Pu Laldenga, combined with the promising goal of the MNF, effectively won the hearts of Mizo students both inside and outside of Mizoram. Consequently, numerous students were keen on the approach of the MNF and were enlisted as MNF volunteers. As recently expressed, the MNF got moral and financial help from neighbouring countries like Pakistan, etc.

Aside from these, various ex-servicemen joined the struggle of the MNF. Since they had a lot of experience in dealing with the weapons, they were useful in preparing the recently selected volunteers to use weapons and ammunition. Concerning the quick advance of the MNF, Fanai remarks, “The dilemma of the Mizo people in the event of British withdrawal from India, the impact of *Mautam* famine, the Assamese Language Bill of 1960, the poor economy, cultural difference, etc. had been responsible for creating a strong regional consciousness among the Mizo people, adding to the advantage of the newly formed Mizo National Front” (14). Likewise, Zamawia describes the circumstances thus:

In September 1963, Laldenga arrived in Shillong. Subsequently, a clandestine meeting happens between Pakistan’s Assistant High Commissioner, Moyd, and Laldenga, President of the MNF. Following their meeting, the MNF sent the young volunteers to East Pakistan for military training... Thus, two persons, J.H.Rothuama and Lalthangliana Philips, were sent to Dhaka in April 1965 and returned in June. After three months, 300 volunteers led by Sapzova were dispatched to the site to retrieve the weapons. These weapons were hidden on the outskirts of Buknuam, close to Runtung village (My Trans.; 204).

Evidently, the primary goal of the Mizo National Front (MNF) Party is to look for autonomy from India. Even though it was founded as a regional political party, it demanded the creation of a sovereign state of Greater Mizoram. In April 1964, MNF party leaders met with the Union Home Minister, G.L. Nanda, and later with B.P. Chaliha, the then Chief Minister of Assam, discussed various economic issues confronting Mizoram. However, they did not receive the assistance they had hoped for. Zama remarks, “In 1965 October the Prime Minister of India, Lal Bahadur Shastri, visited Assam. MNF Party High Command led by Laldenga met the Prime Minister and submitted Memorandum on the 30<sup>th</sup> October, 1965” (10). Furthermore, the imposition of the Assamese language on Mizo Hill sowed discontent among the Mizo people. Lalthakima remarks:

During these days when the storm of independence has engulfed the people's feeling, there was an incident to worsen the matter. The central government appointed a "Three member commission on the hill areas of Assam" in 1965 under the chairmanship of H.V Pataskar to look into the affairs of the District councils and their future. The commission came to Aizawl in 1965 to look into the political situation. They submitted twenty six recommendations for the administration of the hill areas of Assam. The MNF were discontented with the report of the commission. As it recommend the continued control of the Mizo District Council by the Assam government. At a time when they might not be contented with the separate statehood for Mizos, the continued control of the Assam Government over the Mizos was an unacceptable term for the Mizos. In pursuance of the memorandum submitted by the MNF to the Prime minister of India in 1965, on January 19, 1966, a member of planning commission, Tarlok Singh came to Aizawl to study `the political situation in Mizoram. Mizoram, the most neglected area in India became the headache of the Indian leadership and was, therefore, visited by Indian dignitaries one after another (86, 87).

Thus, Tarlok Singh saw and understood their plight, and he agreed to help them with infrastructure. As the extremist section inside the MNF advocated the use of violence, a special army wing or fighting force known as the Mizo National Army (MNA) was formed to fortify their movement. As a result, the central government became acquainted with the rapid movement of the MNF. A little later, Mr.Vishnu Sahay, the Governor of Assam, came to Mizoram on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1966, to inaugurate the ex-servicemen's gathering. Consequently, the MNF leaders candidly communicated their approach alongside their weapons. On hearing this, he became enraged and irritated and immediately went home, preventing them from having a peaceful discussion. Meanwhile, an independent movement among the hill people to withdraw from the Assam government proceeds. Since their procedure is to make a Mizo State, the Mizo Union Party is against the Patashkar Commission and has chosen to blacklist their visit also. No doubt, the Commission's goal, is to make known the "Scottish Pattern" to the hill individuals. It was also known as the "Nehru

Plan or Pattern” because it was recommended by India’s first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. They believe that if Assam relaxes or separates from the Assam government, the Mizos will be satisfied. On the other hand, separation from the Assam government is not exclusively a strategy of the MNF. They demanded that the Mizo nation be liberated.

Remarkably, the central government has somehow heard about the plans made by the MNF. Consequently, the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion BSF and a huge group of the Assam Rifles Battalion have entered Mizoram. Since such armed forces had never come to Mizoram, it was considered the first of its kind *in the entire history of Mizoram*. To avoid disorder in Mizoram, MNF President Laldenga intended to discuss the matter with B.P. Chaliha, but it was declared futile. Furthermore, R. Zamawia and Sainghaka had sent a telegram pleading for the Assam Rifles to be dissuaded. However, their appeals and prayers were ignored and turned a deaf ear. Thangvunga describes the situation:

Mizo leaders’ patience could not afford to wait till their people starve to death, they decided to force the hand of the Assam government, and thereby India’s by taking up arms. The MNF (Mizo National Front, a spearhead of all political parties in the then Lushai Hills District) volunteers took control of Indian forces stationed at Aizawl on the night of 28<sup>th</sup> February 1966 and declared Mizoram an Independent state (X).

Hence, it is clear that the MNF uprising was not inadvertent or a sudden occurrence, but rather the outcome of a pre-arranged goal. Hmingthanzuali remarks on the situation thus:

In February, 1966, the MNF had intensified its activities and the party decided to start an armed revolt by declaring independence for Mizoram on 5<sup>th</sup> March, 1966. Immediately the district was declared a ‘disturbed area’ under Assam Disturbed Areas Act 1955. The Armed Forces (Assam and Manipur) Special Power Act, 1958 was also enforced in the area. When the troops moved into the district, the MNF leaders and numerous volunteers went underground in East Pakistan (167).

This exposed the stealthy relationship between the MNF and the agents of East Pakistan (presently Bangladesh). Based on world history, it is clear that massive support or cooperation is the strength of revolution, upheaval, or political struggles. No doubt, the nationalistic zeal of the Mizo public was propelled by the *Mautam* famine, which prompted the development of the revolt by the MNF. Therefore, the fundamental reason for *Rambuai* in Mizoram is the sensation of economic deprivation and disappointment of the Mizo individuals towards Assam and the Central Government over their lack of interest during the *Mautam* famine, which urged the idea of separation from them.

Moreover, the Mizo people were also disappointed with the imposition of Assamese as the official language of Assam in 1960. Lawmkunga also describes, “We do not want Assam Government” was one of the slogans in their banner” (21). “This was followed by insurgency that took place in 1966 resulting in the attack of the military installations in Aizawl, Lunglei and other towns which followed by the declaration of independence of Mizoram by the Mizo National Front, formerly known as Mizo National famine Front (*The Tribes 1233*)”. For all these reasons, *Rambuai* in Mizoram occurred in 1966.

#### 2:2 Counter Insurgency Measures:

To counter the *Rambuai* movement and restore harmony in Mizoram, the government of India dispatched many army battalions and paramilitary forces, the majority of which remained on Mizo Hill until normalcy was returned. As a result of *Rambuai*, Mizoram turned into a battle zone for the MNF and the Indian Army, causing untold suffering among the blameless and dependable residents. Military strategies such as surprise attacks, vandalism, raids, and so on were used in the battle between the MNF and the Indian Army.

Notably, *Rambuai* in Mizoram prompted the government of India to implement counter-insurgency measures such as village grouping, village burning, ruthless killings, kidnapping, rape, curfew, and the bombing of the capital city, Aizawl. Without a doubt, village grouping was the most effective method of dominating the insurgent groups in Mizoram. The consolidation of several villages

into a single, large village for the accessibility of the Indian Army is referred to as “village grouping”. The village scheme was termed “Progressive and Protective Villages” (PPVs). Such military operations appear to have been carried out to imitate western countries.

Conspicuously, to counter *Rambuai* in Mizoram, the Indian Air Force dropped combustible bombs in Aizawl, which was a harmful experience for the Mizo public as it was considered the first time that the aeroplanes of the Indian Air Force (IAF) were used to counter insurgents in India. When the MNF began their movement, the Indian troops moved into the Mizo locale, and the MNF volunteers with their chiefs went underground. During *Rambuai*, the MNF battled with the Indian Army and many individuals lost their lives, and some of them were arrested. As a result, the *Rambuai* period may be referred to as the “Dark Period of Mizoram”. In this context, K. Remruatfela observes: “After we struggled for more than 20 years, our freedom fighters put their Guns down and surrendered to the Indian Government. The treaty of agreement, the “Memorandum of Understanding” was signed between MNF party (Mizo National Front) and Indian Government on Dt. 30. 06. 1986 at 1:00 P.M” (*n.pag*). Hence, the Mizoram Peace Accord was viewed as one of the most effective peace accords of its sort throughout the existence of Independent India. Following twenty years of the MNF uprising, *Rambuai* in Mizoram concluded in the year 1986.

Needless to say, every writer is a product of his or her time and cannot exist apart from society and culture. Consequently, *Rambuai* influenced, the social and cultural life of the Mizo public. No major Mizo author has remained silent with regards to the *Rambuai* movement, and no one has failed to respond to the human suffering caused by *Rambuai*. It is undeniable that Mizo fiction has matured and gained a distinct identity as a result of *Rambuai*. Specifically, the writers were affected by political disturbances, clashes, and revolts in their society. The composition of these writers moved Mizo fiction in the right direction. They found another topic as well as another world in Mizo fiction. Mizo fiction owes a lot to their efforts to gain solid ground and establish their own identity. A reading of Mizo

fiction reveals that the rising political consciousness in Mizo, which was gradually pervading the grassroots, was faithfully mirrored in Mizo fiction.

Meanwhile, in terms of literature, it is clear that *Rambuai* dissuaded the growth of Mizo literature to some extent. Mizo literature was in a state of crisis from 1966 to the signing of the peace accord. No doubt, *Rambuai* brought the cultural and literary institutions in society to a halt because they filled the Mizo people with fear and anxiety. In such circumstances, literature and culture are neglected. Although this period of crisis produced no great works of literature, it did inspire writers to see the world in a new light. They imagined the exposed truth of life. Positively, *Rambuai* turned into a source of inspiration for writers. At the same time, as Deka argues, “The bitter experience of the war made writers more realistic and conscious of their social responsibility. They began to question the validity of traditional values. This inspired them to have contact with the outer world and as a result, the impact of the new thinking was perceived in their writings”(60). The same has been experienced by Mizo writers.

### 2:3 Outline Story of *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*:

Zikpuii-Pa's *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* offers a thorough image of the social and political existence of Mizoram during the time of an uprising, prominently known as *Rambuai*. In short, Zikpuii-Pa paints a vivid picture of the *Rambuai* period in Mizoram through this account. The narrative has primarily focused on *Rambuai* and its aftermath, as well as the tragic love story of Chhuanvawra and Ngurthansangi. Ngurthansangi, a beautiful adolescent, has fallen in love with her Sunday school teacher, Chhuanvawra. The protagonist, Chhuanvawra, is the narrator and Zikpuii-Pa makes him his mouthpiece. Each occurrence in the story is described according to Chhuanvawra's perspective. The setting of the spot is the fictional village of Zopui, where the majority of the primary characters live.

At the very outset, Zikpuii-Pa expressed the wonderful ambiance of Zopui village, which is one of the developing villages in its vicinity. The first chapter focused on the protagonist, Chhuanvawra's upbringing and family status. Chhuanvawra's father, Dr. Selthuama, was a doctor who had served in the military

during the war. He was then promoted to the rank of Captain and remained in Burma for quite a while. After the war, he joined NEFA (now Arunachal Pradesh) as an Assistant Surgeon and was later promoted to Honorary Civil Surgeon. Since Dr. Selthuama's mentality is occupied by nationalism, he chose to settle down in Mizoram once again and remained there. Chhuanvawra has four siblings, one brother, and three sisters. After completing elementary school in Zopui, he went on to middle school in Shillong. Meanwhile, he decided to return to Zopui due to financial constraints, and his longing for his village. In the meantime, his educated brother, Chhuankima, is opposed to his decision because he despises the rustic atmosphere of Zopui. However, his sense of belonging compelled him to return to Zopui. Remarkably, Chhuanvawra is the offspring of Rolura, one of the most famous Mizo chiefs, on his mother's side. Although Khawvelthanga, the father of Ngurthansangi and the ex-chief of Zopui village, is a descendant of Vuta, Chhuanvawra's mother treats him as if he were her close kith and kin.

Zikpuii-Pa's description of the atmosphere of the Inter-village Sunday School Conference in the pre-*Rambuai* period is both interesting and delightful. Simultaneously, it reflected Mizo mentality as well as the tremendous influence of Christianity on Mizo society. Right from his boyhood, Chhuanvawra has been an inborn leader, and his fellow villagers respect him for it. The narrator proudly gives references that even in Shillong, the residents of Zopui are usually confident and intelligent enough to deal with non-Mizos. One of the interesting accounts in the narrative is the various personalities that contributed significantly to the development of Zopui village. The first to be mentioned is Pu Zalawma, Headmaster of Zopui Middle School. He is a foresighted church elder, who is also dependable and has good leadership qualities. Khawvelthanga, the ex-chief of Zopui, is the next significant person. He is a good administrator, who is well-liked not only by his villagers but also by his kindred chiefs. It should be noted that he was elected President of the Village Council without any opposition in the first Village Council election. Furthermore, Zopui is fortunate to have a brilliant, as well as a pious priest, Pastor Lianzuala, who is always concerned with the well-being of his people, particularly children, and their development. Fortunately, he also has a supportive



wife to back up his ministry. Because of such a group of wonderful characters, the villagers of Zopui were able to maintain unity and harmony. Meanwhile, despite being quite sophisticated amongst the surrounding villages, the High School was set up late in 1959, the preceding year of the catastrophic occurrence known as '*Mautam*' (Bamboo Flowering). The first headmaster in the village is Pu Thanthianga, B.A (Hons). Chhuanvawra was in the first batch of matriculation candidates in the entire village and received an incredibly high grade. As a result, he organised a small celebration at night, and Ngurthansangi, the heroine, was among those invited. She was a teenager studying in class seven at the time. Despite her young age, she appears to be a mature maiden due to her rapid growth. Ngurthansangi gave him a handkerchief with "CVR", stitched on the vertical side, which stands for ChhuanvawraRenthlei.

The following chapter focuses on the political situation in Mizoram, which is, no doubt, the Mizo Independent Movement. Pondering the small population of Mizoram and the poor economic condition, the prominent individuals mentioned above were initially uninterested. They believed that it was preferable to be included in the Indian government while retaining their culture, religion, and language. At the same time, they did not have an intense clash with them as they understood the attitude of young people. Meanwhile, in Mizoram, a new political party called the 'Mizo National Front' was formed, and numerous youngsters joined the new party. Subsequently, the young people organised a farewell programme for Chhuanvawra before he left Zopui. Accordingly, they emphasised the importance of independence as well as the preservation of Mizo culture and social values. Likewise, Chhuanvawra was relied upon to keep up with Mizo culture and customs even in Shillong, which is home to people from various ethnic groups. At that critical moment, Chhuanvawra was also perplexed with his idea of independence. Despite sensing the Mizos unique qualities as a nation, such as altruism, honesty, and humanity, he remains opposed to the movement because he believes Mizos are insufficiently competent and wealthy in comparison to non-Mizo Indians. That is the reason they are not yet prepared to fight such a major battle. However, he went to Shillong for higher education after passing his matriculations.

It is clear from the narrative that Mizoram was administered by the Assam government then. As a result, Assamese has become the state language, which was not easily accepted by the Mizos. In this regard, in *NunnaKawngthuamPuiah*, during a football match, the Assamese boys forced the Mizo boys to speak to them only in Assamese, which was very insulting to the Mizo boys. Knowing how easy it is to enrage the Assamese boys over such trivial matters, Chhuanvawra gradually became involved in the independence movement. At the same time, as he has already made a strong decision to be educated, he understands that it is not the proper time to get involved in politics, so he secretly gives up the same for the time being. Notably, Chhuanvawra has a nostalgic feeling whenever he attends the worship service at Shillong, especially on Sunday. Simultaneously, he had received an unexpected letter from Ngurthansangi, in which she expressed her loneliness as a result of his absence.

Chhuanvawra finished his studies in 1964 without any financial constraints. Finally, he returned to Zopui during winter vacation. In light of the discussion with his companions, Rohluta and Zoliana, Chhuanvawra realized that his former sweetheart, Lalhmingmawii, was not keen on him any longer as she had a relationship with the Block Medical Officer, Thanzuala, MBBS. This featured the Mizo's mindset regarding occupation during the *Rambuai* time frame. Significantly, Zikpuii-Pa portrays the hero, Chhuanvawra, as a young man possessing intelligence, determination, and courage. On the other hand, Ngurthansangi is portrayed as a lovely maiden, standing five feet, four inches tall, with a fair complexion, and a large breast. Because of the wide age difference between the two main characters, along with their distant family relationship, Chhuanvawra wonders whether or not to deal with her like a typical maiden.

The narrator further describes the political situation in Mizoram before the disturbance and claims that British colonization occurred due to their power. Before long, the British left Mizoram, and the Indians came to Mizoram. In fact, the Indians have never been brothers to Mizo individuals. Based on the conversation between Chhuanvawra and the Welsh missionary at Seling village, it is clear that even the Welsh missionary preferred to be included in the Indian government rather than fight for independence. Chhuanvawra joined his class in 1965 and resolved to study hard

for his upcoming exam. Meanwhile, he received another letter from Ngurthansangi expressing her deep affection for him. After spending the second year of pre-university in the first place, he stayed in Shillong as his sibling desired. On the other hand, his friends, Ngursavunga and Zaluta, did not return home and went to East Pakistan to support the independence movement. There, they met with their Mizo friends, providing military training to as many as 300 people and giving each a rifle. Chhuanvawra joined NCC because he was an adventurous young man. After joining the NCC, he completed NCC training on a route march, weapons training, camouflage, and other topics. A little later, he started his first year BA class, and studied history and economics. He is eager to return to his own Zopui village. Accordingly, after spending one night each in Silchar and Aizawl, he arrived in Zopui village at 4:00 p.m.

The next chapter exposes the love affair between Chhuanvawra and Ngurthansangi. Chhuanvawra purchased a brooch and a purse for Ngurthansangi, showing his profound love for her. The narration of their relationships is astounding. Chhuanvawra spent a memorable time with Ngurthansangi when he visited Mizoram to take advantage of summer vacation in his village. A sensation of sexual excitement filled Chhuanvawra's psyche when he met his adored darling Ngurpuii at their farmhouse. Initially, Chhuanvawra wanted to have sexual intimacy, but Ngurthansangi pleaded with him not to destroy her sanctity before marrying. Chhuanvawra was impressed by the honesty and purity of Ngurthansangi and later apologised for his misconduct. As a result, both promised to remain faithful to each other. Chhuanvawra had a strange dream shortly after leaving Zopui village, in which he saw Ngurthansangi being helpless and filthy. For this reason, he felt uncomfortable and made plans to return to Zopui. He does, however, return to Shillong. Soon after arriving in Shillong, a major political upheaval known as *Rambua* erupted in Mizoram. To put it another way, the MNF began their operation only two weeks after he left Mizoram. After the disturbance, the burning of houses, the killing of innocent civilians, the raping of women, and other heinous acts became common in Mizoram. Zikpuii-Pa strikingly depicts the hopeless and pathetic

condition of innocent civilians, particularly the more vulnerable sections like ladies and elderly individuals, during *Rambuai*.

At the very outset, the MNF launched an immediate assault on the Aizawl Treasury, which quickly spread throughout Shillong. As a result, Mizoram was designated as a “Disturbed Area”. Following this, Aizawl city and its vicinity turned into a combat zone. Meanwhile, the Assam Rifles were gradually withdrawn. The problem spread quickly, like a spark, to almost all the villages of Mizoram, including the DC Office and other significant workplaces. The worst part of the situation was the reckless life of the Indian Army. As previously stated, the Indian Army brutally raped Mizo women, regardless of their age or appearance, such as maidens, married women, elderly women, and so on. Knowing of the Indian Army’s atrocities, many Mizo young men rushed to Pakistan, then to Mizoram, to assist the distressed Mizo people.

In such a dire situation, Chhuanvawra paid heed to his own Zopui village. Unfortunately, he was unable to contact his relatives. In such a hazardous condition, he learned from his father that all the houses in Zopui village had been burned down, and many Aizawlers had fled to Shillong in search of peace and security. One of them brought a letter to Chhuanvawra, which was sent by his sister Thanzuali. This letter has some significance as it describes the agonising experience of the Mizos because of the disturbance. After reading Thanzuali’s letter, Chhuanvawra realised that Zopui village had been burned by the Indian army. Fortunately, their house, Ngurthansangi’s house, the church building, and the school building were spared, but the rest of the houses were destroyed. Because of these circumstances, they unanimously decided that their parents, along with Thanpuii, should leave for Shillong as soon as possible to avoid trouble. That is why he must seek shelter for his parents and sister. At the same time, on hearing the sad news about his family and village, Zopui, Chhuanvawra became heartbroken and curious about Ngurthansangi’s condition. Since she was a beautiful and charming maiden, he did not dare imagine her without a custodian in *Rambuai*. He was unhappy and uneasy as a result of his imagination. While he needed to look for his parents’ shelter, he was unable to sleep soundly at night and eat food properly. Fortunately, he

found a home for his parents with his former landlord. Whenever the villagers of Zopui met in Shillong, they related the bad news about their beloved village.

While applauding the young men's bravery to save their village, it is unfortunate that they were unable to defeat the two battalions of the Indian Army when they used their full military weapons. On the first day of their arrival, they shot every man they met. They did not even spare Pu Thangthianga, headmaster of Zopui High School, and the local carpenter, Pu Ruala. In addition, on the first evening of their appearance, they tied up all the males with ropes and did not show any sympathy, even for the elderly. This news irritated and hurt Chhuanvawra. At the same time, he was astounded and grateful that his father had escaped such a terrifying incident. Many questions arose in his mind, including what happened to his uncle Khawvelthanga? How about Pu Zalawma, Pastor Lianzuala, and his lovely wife, Pi Siami, among others? While reflecting on the brutal actions of the Indian army, he suspects that they were not only providing food for females but also doing something bad and detestable.

Amid such terror, Pi Siami and his younger sister, Thanpuii, visited Vanlaiphai when the army raided Zopui village. For this reason, they were unintentionally able to avoid the army's unfavourable action. Meanwhile, Chhuanvawra was still concerned about Ngurthansangi's condition and her whereabouts. Although he is eager to hear the news of his beloved sweetheart, he is also doubtful. Chhuanvawra overheard that they not only burned Khawvelthanga's belongings but also brutally slapped him. But the story did not simply end here. Being enthralled by the magnificence of Ngurthansangi, Captain Ranade wished to marry her and took her away to their hometown. When Chhuanvawra learnt of Ngurthansangi, he could not control his rage and imagined that his darling's chastity has been destroyed and defiled by non-Christians, which was one of the most painful news he had to endure. Out of sorrow and agony, he wished to detonate a bomb on the entire Shillong city. At the same time, he blamed God for not protecting his dearest love, Ngurthansangi, and not punishing the evildoers, claiming that if God did not protect him, he would become wicked.

Being frustrated, he could not even wait for permission from a higher authority. Although his parents disagreed with him, he hastily came out to Mizoram to investigate the issues. He encountered several difficulties on his way to Zopui. The MNF ambushed their convoy in Khankawn village and fired on the army. Around 30 armies were slaughtered on the spot. After the MNF left, some soldiers arrived to help their comrades, but they found no one. As a result of their desperation, they severely beat the Mizo passengers, including Chhuanvawra. As an educated gentleman, Chhuanvawra challenges the military and says, "For what reason did you beat us? You need to beat the disobedience". However, his words were in vain as he was brutally beaten by them once more. Thus, he decides and consoles himself that Ngurthansangi suffered more than him. Following this incident, he was arrested and imprisoned for three months. Chhuanvawra witnessed the harsh life of prison in one of the deplorable incidents. The prison was spacious, keeping around 100 prisoners. In prison, they did not get any proper and abundant food. They usually ate two meals a day and listened to the pathetic screams of women at 6 p.m. When he heard those pitiful voices, Chhuanvawra felt that the same treatment should have been given to Ngurthansangi, which irritated him even more. Due to the prestigious status of his father, Dr. Capt. SelthuamaRenthlei, Chhuanvawra was somehow released by the military and sent back to Shillong after spending more than three months in prison. Although he earnestly begged the army to set free his fellow prisoners along with him, they turned a deaf ear to him.

Consequently, the Deputy Commissioner invited him to follow Silchar. But he refused, as his final mission had not yet been completed. He further informed the Deputy Commissioner that his cousin Ngurthansangi was arrested and taken to prison for no apparent reason. The DC responded by saying that, all the prisoners in Zopui had already been released. Since Zopui is an MNF village, no one was permitted to enter or leave. For this reason, he encouraged him to get down to Shillong and return to Zopui with authorization. When Chhuanvawra begged the DC to let him go, for the time being, he was told that he had been released on the condition that he be told only in Shillong.

Simultaneously, Chhuanvawra guaranteed that if Ngurthansangi had been released, he would stay dedicated to the Indian government until the end of his life. When Chhuanvawra arrived at Shillong, things could never go back to normal again without Ngurthansangi. Life had become boring and monotonous for him, and he is still concerned about the whereabouts of his darling. When Chhuanvawra resumed his education, he was selected again as the leading speaker in the upcoming Inter-college debate. Consequently, he took part in the inter-college debate at St. Anthony's College Hall. The theme of the debate was 'Morality is more important than art and science for the development and goodness of the world'. Chhuanvawra worked hard to win the debate, so he consulted whatever Encyclopaedias were available at the college library, with the assistance of the Principal and Brothers. At the outset of the debate, he emphasized the significance of morality. He further referenced that various scientific inventions, including nuclear bombs, were destructive to people as they devastated the world previously. On the other hand, morality, based on the Almighty God, is significant for us. Human beings can only be promoted by their creator, God. Meanwhile, his opponent claimed that false religion causes turbulence in the world. Eventually, to develop and promote the world, both morality and religion were not effective. Humanism is the only answer. Chhuanvawra, being a leader in the debate, was allowed to wind up the debate. Thus, to make use of his limited time, Chhuanvawra compared the accounts of David and Nathan in the *Old Testament of the Bible* to demonstrate the importance of morality. Because David is not a humanist, he begged for God's forgiveness for his wrongdoings, and as a result, he led his Kingdom by upholding dignity and virtue. Furthermore, by referring to the cruel act of the Indian soldier, Chhuanvawra emphasised the distinction between a moralist and a humanist. A moralist who believes in God usually runs the government with honesty and love. In the context of *Rambuai* in Mizoram, the Mizo people were eagerly awaiting the media person to reveal their real nature. Even world leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Abraham Lincoln, and others have advocated dignity, compassion, and morality for the welfare of their fellow human beings. No doubt, his outstanding performance in the debate impressed the audience, which included dignitaries such as the Governor and Major General Randhawa. In other words, his powerful speech demonstrated that

he possesses the gift of gab, which was highly appreciated by the Governor of Assam as well as Major General Randhawa. Since then, he kept in touch with them, and they were supportive in his future endeavours. Notably, the inter-college debate competition became a turning point in Chhuanvawra's mission.

When Chhuanvawra arrived at his village, Zopui, even the lovely flowers were no longer in bloom. He had a fantasy that when he saw Ngurthansangi, he would embrace and kiss her passionately, ignoring everyone else. However, all his fantasies were broken as Ngurthansangi was not available in Zopui. As a result, he became despondent and lonely in Zopui. Nobody appeared to be welcoming to him to his village. When he entered Ngurthansangi's house, her parents were neither happy nor enthusiastic. Her mother was overcome with feelings of loneliness and nostalgia as soon as she saw him. Her father, Khawvelthanga, told him that, as the Captain of the Indian armed force cherished her so much, they sent her away to follow him for her welfare. Moreover, as Ngurthansangi remembered him, they, too, remembered him. At that point, when he heard the undesirable information about Ngurthansangi, Chhuanvawra was upset and blamed her parents for making such a significant decision without consulting him. It is clear from Khawvelthanga's narration that, Ngurthansangi was tortured by the Indian Army, which was very shameful and difficult for them to narrate. Chhuanvawra was becoming increasingly irritated and uneasy. He wandered around and entered Ngurthansangi's room, he noticed that the same mattress was placed there. However, he did notice that the army blanket had taken over her bed in place of her fine and fresh bedsheet. When he saw her photograph on the wall of her room, he realised how much he missed her and how he could not find any pleasure without Ngurthansangi. The whole world turned into a desolate land for him. It seemed all expectations for his future was lost without his beloved.

To make matters worse, Chhuanvawra learned that the army had also beaten Khawvelthanga and Pu Zalawma. Through the narration of Ngurthanhrangi (Ngurthansangi's elder sister) and Roziki, her daughter, it is clear that Ngurthansangi was forced to marry Captain Ranade, whom the Mizo named "*Mengranga*" to protect her father, who was brutally tortured by the army. The army beat and shot the men in



the village, while the women, including married women, were brutally raped. One of the victims was Pu Ngurtawna's wife. From that point forward, she lived in fear and desperation. As a result, she hanged herself and committed suicide because she could not bear her pathetic life any longer. Meanwhile, three ladies – Sangi, Kungi, and Remmawii – were also killed by MNF volunteers, which appeared to be rather a mystery so far. When Rohluta told him about Ngurthansangi's constant torture, Chhuanvawra lost control of his emotions and sighed, "Enough Rova". Subsequently, Chhuanvawra narrated the drastic transformation of Zopui village before and after *Rambuai*. In connection with *Rambuai*, Dr. Selthuama's dispensary and store were burned and demolished. Chhuanvawra's main reason for visiting Zopui was to meet and rescue Ngurthansangi. However, he failed to achieve his main goal. When he pondered on Ngurthansangi's beautiful smile, he felt agony and severe pain. As he cannot control his anger, he felt it was best to stay away from Zopui very soon. Since the wicked man took away the most beautiful creature, Ngurthansangi, nature had lost its allure and beauty to Chhuanvawra. He did, however, stay in Zopui for another two weeks. He spent most of his time lamenting over Ngurthansangi's absence. To comfort his distress, he yearned to visit Ngurthanhrangi (sister of Ngurthansangi) and Thanzingi (the mother of Ngurthansangi).

Before he left Zopui, Rohluta, and Thanhranga came to meet him. They encouraged and advised him to study hard so that he could serve his nation. Moreover, they expected him to influence the village community because he was the most eligible and admirable bachelor in the village. Besides, they expressed various hardships experienced by Ngurthansangi amid *Rambuai*. Obviously, Captain Ranade Mengranga had been warning her father and occasionally providing good food for him so that he could marry Ngurthansangi as his wife. In terms of the circumstances, Khawvelthanga was persuaded by Captain Ranade and later became his staunch supporter, using the lame excuse that Nguri was unfit for Chhuanvawra. Although Ngurthansangi emphatically went against his dad, it was in vain. On hearing this, he became enraged and sad. As a result, he desperately returned to Shillong during the Christmas season. When his family learned of Ngurthansangi's sad news, they sympathized with him. To make him feel better, his mother, Thanpuii, and his

friends, Zauva and Khawliana, teased him to look for another sweetheart. But he showed no interest. Indeed, only Ngurthansangi can fill his empty heart, not anyone else. Somewhat later, Thanpuii, Chhuanvawra's younger sister, was married to a fine gentleman named Prof. Remsiana in Shillong. Because Thanpuii was the family's youngest daughter, a grand celebration was planned, which was attended by many well-wishers, including their Mizo and Khasi friends.

Despite being broken-hearted and bewildered, Chhuanvawra was determined to save Ngurthansangi by any means. Gradually, life in Mizoram had become more peaceful. As a result, his parents returned to Zopui and resumed their daily life. After passing BA (honours) in Economics, he appeared for the examination under UPSC and was successful in his first attempt. When he went for his UPSC interview, some of the interviewers made fun of him and asked sarcastic questions like, "Does wearing a nice suit indicate that you expect to come up to? How unsophisticated were the Mizos? What, precisely, is the primary cause of *Rambuui*?" and so on. Chhuanvawra responded to the final question by stating that there could be several reasons for *Rambuui*, such as political, economic, social, and historical causes. Apart from these, government officials, who came to look after the Mizo people after independence, as well as the Indian army, who cruelly acted against the Mizo people, could be another cause. Then, the Assam government, who looked after Mizoram at the time, was also responsible for the matter. It appears that the troublemakers did not intend to cause trouble for more than two months, and the army that suppressed the trouble acted viciously, which is why the trouble cannot be resolved. To substantiate his argument, he cited an instance in world history. He further narrated various wars in which the Mizos were involved, including the war with the British. Remarkably, the British never killed guiltless individuals. They neither raided them nor assaulted women forcibly. Needless to say, they were reasonable enough in dealing with the Mizo public.

Meanwhile, to lighten the mood of the Interview Board, Chhuanvawra expressed his sense of humour in front of them, which made everyone laugh. Finally, the Chairman inquired as to which service he preferred. Chhuanvawra responded immediately, "I prefer IPS to other services". Each board member was astonished at

his reply. Since he was an Economics honours student, he was also asked about the status of Adam Smith and other related topics. When the results were announced, he was selected as an IPS Officer and informed to join the National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie, for training.

Although Chhuanvawra had the option of joining the IAS, to liberate his beloved Ngurthansangi from the bond of Captain Ranade, he chose the IPS. In his maiden speech, the Academy Director, National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie also states, “Considering his capacity, Mr. Renthlei was in a situation to join any sort of service, yet he selected IPS in his free will. Since he felt the need for service, he did not only worry about outward excitement” (My Trans.; *Nunna* 154). In light of this statement, it is evident that Zikpuii-Pa is deeply concerned about morality. Presumably, he is more concerned with his inner self than with his outward self. Since then, probationers from other services admired him, and one hundred and twenty probationers were treated as their superiors in a matter of moments. During his training, they were required to do Physical Training every morning. Aside from the lectures on economics, politics, and history, which were beneficial to him, horseback riding and firing were also included. Although he excelled in other subjects and activities, he was unable to do well in his Hindi subjects. As a result, his classmates in the Hindi class made fun of him.

Among the probationers, B.L. Singh, K.D. Sharma, D.M. Dixit, and Grewal were some of his close friends. After completion of the Foundation Course in Mussoorie, they went on to Police Officer Training at Mount Abu. Because Mount Abu is in Maharashtra, Chhuanvawra was more likely to meet Ngurthansangi. At the point when he examined the whereabouts of Ngurthansangi, one individual in some way or another caught wind of Captain Ranade, and let him know that he had gotten married to a Mizo woman, and brought her to Bombay in October 1966. At the same time, someone else informs him that when he saw Captain Ranade the previous year and he was still married to his spouse, named, Tripta. Thus, Chhuanvawra became even more perplexed after hearing the two contradictory pieces of information. After completing training at Mount Abu, they travelled across India. The entire batch was divided into different groups. Accordingly, Chhuanvawra and some of his friends

were assigned to visit North India. Consequently, they visited states like Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Kashmir, and so on.

Because she was forced into marriage with an army officer, Ngurthansangi was suffering from physical and mental agony. After some time, Chhuanvawra was allowed to visit Chandigarh. As proposed by his well-wishers, Chhuanvawra and his companions went to Prithviraj Restaurant, where Rita Moonlight Belle (Ngurthansangi) worked as a first-class prostitute. To ensure the presence of Ngurthansangi, Chhuana disguised himself as Sardarji, who had recently returned from Canada. As previously suspected, Chhuana discovered that the name Rita Moonlight Belle is the pseudonym for his beloved Ngurthansangi. Chhuanvawra was both amazed and gloomy. He recalled the appealing conduct of Ngurthansangi along with her religious zeal. On the other hand, unaware that her current client is none other than Chhuanvawra, Ngurthansangi tried to entice him with her charming eyes and body. But when Chhuanvawra revealed his disguise, she was stunned and ashamed. Despite her unfavourable experiences, Chhuanvawra revealed how deeply he still loved her after all these years. Then he embraced and kissed her passionately. On the same night, Ngurthansangi was emancipated by Chhuanvawra with the assistance of DIG Sharma, and they immediately left Chandigarh for their hometown, *Zopui* village. After getting their parents' consent, Chhuana and Nguri met their Pastor, Lianzuala. As a result, the two lovers were finally married happily and began a new life.

In the epilogue, after overcoming adversity, Chhuanvawra and Ngurthansangi enjoyed their new life and were blessed with two children. However, a sense of guilt remains in Ngurthansangi's mind, as a result of her poignant experience, which is, indelible. Meanwhile, she got an opportunity to reveal the man who had committed an inhuman act against her. Under the protection of her dependable husband, she could confront and expose the evildoer Captain Ranade (*Mengranga*) among the dignitaries. Ngurthansangi reminded him of his inhumane treatment of her. He was embarrassed and humiliated when Ngurthansangi disclosed his past misdeeds and realized her current respectable status. Unable to bear such humiliation, he finally

committed suicide at the end of the story. Eventually, virtue is rewarded, and evil is punished.

#### 2.4 Reflections of *Rambuai* and its Consequences on *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*:

As previously stated, writers in various parts of the world were sensitively drawn to the insurgency and freedom movement. Furthermore, as members of society, it was hard for them to get away from its impact. As a result, the majority of novelists recollected it in serenity and depicted their touching experiences in their fiction. Although the idea of nationalism was already embedded in the minds of the Mizo people during the British period, it is clear that the perception of national identity emerged during the *Rambuai* period. In this specific circumstance, Zikpuii-Pa displays sociopolitical insight and commitment. In *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, he presents political struggles that bring egocentricity and anarchy. He emphasised that there were numerous criminals in and around Mizoram during *Rambuai*. He has presented all aspects of society that the Mizo people encountered. As such, he has additionally talked about the issues and wrongdoings that occurred during *Rambuai*. As featured before, women were assaulted, and a few ladies were forced to become prostitutes. As in the case of Captain Ranade who compelled Ngurthansangi to work as a prostitute. Besides, in connection with *Rambuai*, this fiction highlights human trafficking, which is, in fact, a heinous crime and a serious issue, in the contemporary era.

Aside from the different outcomes of *Rambuai* indicated above, Zikpuii-Pa portrays that during the *Rambuai* period in Mizoram, simply being born as a Mizo is a sin. In the narrative, his Assamese friends insisted Chhuanvawra use Assamese, which irritated Thangsavunga, Chhuanvawra's friend. As denoted earlier, one of the main reasons for dissatisfaction with the Assamese government is the imposition of the Assamese language on the Mizo people. Furthermore, Chhuanvawra sadly recounts the problems caused by the non-Mizos in Silchar regarding the hiring of rickshaws. This suggests that during *Rambuai*, not only Mizos in Mizoram, but also Mizo young people studying elsewhere faced a number of difficulties. Lalrammuana Sailo, writes, "...an tan chuan hnam dang zinga awm chu a nuam tak tak lova, MNF

*a ni emaw ni lo emaw, Mizo-a a lo piang hrim hrim chu a tan tawrhna a ni*" (29). This indicates it is not comfortable for the Mizos to be present among the non-Mizo fellows, whether they are MNF or not. They are subject to suffering just because of their birth as Mizos. To put it another way, *Rambuai* causes a great deal of suffering to various people who are born as Mizo.

Since literature is a social document, Zikpuii-Pa's fiction, *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* depicted a disturbing aspect of the Mizo nationalist struggle. Set in the time of the uprising, *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* gives a far-reaching image of the social and political existence of Mizoram. Certainly, it is a political novel, portraying the battle of individuals against the Indian government. There has been *Rambuai* literature from the MNF perspective, which is synonymous with MNF narratives. Obviously, the account of *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* was revolutionary in some ways, because Zikpuii-Pa not only condemned the brutality of the Indian army but also depicted the unpleasant actions of the MNF during the political disturbances, which substantiates Zikpuii-Pa's objectivity as a writer. Notably, from a civilian perspective, even the MNF did not protect the Mizo people from the army's harmful actions. Since the civilians needed to obey both parties, they viewed themselves as, '*tuboh leh dolung kar a leng*' (being stuck between the hammer and the anvil), which is a typical Mizo adage indicating a decision between two complicated options. Although the narrative of *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* is based on *Rambuai*, Zikpuii-Pa did not intend to persuade readers with historical facts. Moreover, he did not advocate any political propaganda. He simply depicted various atrocities committed during *Rambuai*, which he believed were against humanism. As a writer, he focused on the problems of the rural people, and his writing often emphasised how the Indian army had exploited the villagers. In terms of the psychology of his characters, the narrative can also be classified as a psychological novel.

Remarkably, Zikpuii-Pa emphasised the constant fear that people feel as a result of the conflict between the Indian government and the MNF. Like his contemporaries, he was profoundly moved by the victimisation caused by *Rambuai*. While referring to the signing of the Peace Accord, Lalthakima describes the mood of twenty long stretches of *Rambuai*, "It was on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 1986 that one of the

protracted insurgencies of India had ended with the signing of Peace Accord between the Government of India and the insurgent group Mizo National Front (MNF). Twenty years of trauma and chaos became a memory of today” (40). This reveals the traumatic experience of the Mizo society during *Rambuai*. Since Zikpuii-Pa located the main issues of *Rambuai* in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, here is an attempt to investigate the reflections of the sufferings and consequences of *Rambuai* in the narrative.

#### 2:4:1 Drastic Change in Zopui Village:

Significantly, *Rambuai* divided Mizo social life into two parts, namely the pre-*Rambuai* period and the *Rambuai* period. Without a doubt, *Rambuai* had a significant impact on Mizo society as a whole, which is evident in Zopui. In the pre-*Rambuai* period, village life in Zopui was peaceful and united, with no enmity. However, when *Rambuai* occurred, Mizoram became a chaotic place, where everyone was reticent and timid, and the rule of law appeared non-existent. It was dangerous to criticise both the Indian army and the MNF. There was no sense of security or peace of mind. Additionally, even the wonderful Saron blossoms that covered the entranceway of Ngurthansangi became unappealing. Certainly, due to the disturbance, the Mizo people were low-sighted. They did not appreciate the beauty of nature anymore. In such an overwhelming circumstance, individuals and nature become unnatural and unusual.

Moreover, Zikpuii-Pa painfully emphasized that *Rambuai* made significant changes in the economic sphere as well. Zopui, like other villages in Mizoram, was self-sufficient and had nothing to envy in terms of the economy. During *Rambuai*, they did not have time to care for their paddy fields. For this reason, the economy degenerated and they faced a shortage of food. To affirm this, Chhuanvawra says, “Everyone attempts to express their poor and distressing condition” (My Trans.; *Nunna* 124). This authenticates that, as a result of the *Rambuai* upheaval, the Mizo people witnessed untold sufferings and tribulations.

#### 2:4:2 Grouping of Villages:

The term ‘grouping of villages’ or ‘village groupings’ refers to the forced migration of villagers by the Indian army. It was one of the major issues during *Rambuai*, affecting many people’s lives. Forced migration was basically a strategic activity carried out by the Indian army. In the pre-*Rambuai* period, the Mizos practiced land shifting, which is associated with their occupation. However, this typically happened where the land was acceptable and easy to cultivate for their crops. It was their choice whether or not to relocate. Thus, it is evident that the arrangement of relocation or migration in the pre-*Rambuai* period is not the same as in the *Rambuai* time frame. Certainly, such military operations were executed to facilitate control of the MNF insurgents and the Mizo public as well. In contrast to the pre-*Rambuai* period, the residents were not permitted to pick where they were being relocated to. Since they had no other choice, what they could do was to act by following the orders of the army personnel. After leaving their beloved village and proceeding to the grouping centre, the deserted village, along with their belongings, was mercilessly burned. In some places, after being evacuated their beloved homes were burned down during their presence without showing any sympathy, which is one of the most heartbreaking experiences for innocent civilians during such a critical time. During village grouping, the Mizos were not provided with adequate food and shelter in their new village. Since they turned into new individuals in the grouping centre, it was difficult for them to adapt themselves to other villages at first. Although Zikpuii-Pa did not explicitly specify the term ‘grouping of villages’ in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*. However, it is clear from the narrative that it occurred during *Rambuai*.

When the protagonist, Chhuanvawra, returned to Zopui village from Shillong following the disturbance, he attended the Church service on Sunday. No one appeared to be content or enthusiastic because their lives were not peaceful and comfortable. Moreover, the majority of the people in the Church were not the original inhabitants of Zopui. They appear to have lost all of their belongings and have thus been forced to relocate from their village to Zopui. That is the reason Chhuanvawra did not find any familiar faces then. Meanwhile, the young people of Zopui remained in the forest, bracing themselves for an encounter with the Indian



army. It is remarkable and intriguing to note that, while everyone else was depressed and living in a frantic situation, Pastor Lianzuala maintained his morality and confidence. He is, as a strong castle amid such turmoil. Obviously, he was uncomfortable and upset internally, like a normal person, yet he never displayed any uneasiness or anxiety. As a result, he is a typical and fine illustration of a devout Christian in times of adversity.

As signified before, Chhuanvawra describes the drastic transformation of Zopui village before and after the *Rambuai*. Prior to *Rambuai*, there were approximately 250 houses in Zopui. However, after the insurrection, the number was intensely expanded, with 750 houses in the village as a result of the village grouping. This indicates that Zopui was one of the grouping centres in its vicinity. From the perspective of the Indian army, Zopui village was one of the strongholds and rendezvous points for MNF volunteers. As a result, they were more envious of the villagers of Zopui and their ambiance. Everyone appears to be friendly and soft, but inwardly, a sensation of hatred for the Indian army is implanted in them. One important point to emphasize is that the majority of Mizos did not share their views with strangers. As a result, the Mizo people experienced a sense of insecurity in the aftermath of *Rambuai*. To substantiate this view, Zikpuii-Pa correctly observes, “In the past, we used to express our opinions freely when there was peace and security... yet we later acknowledged it is challenging to live without harmony and security (My Trans.; *Nunna* 124). This touching description confirms the value of peace and harmony, which had gradually dwindled as a result of *Rambuai*. After being victimized, the Mizo people lived in fear and agony after being victimised.

#### 2:4:3 Women’s Suffering:

Women’s suffering has been a recurring theme in both history and literature. Needless to say, women are the most vulnerable members of society. That is the reason they suffered greatly in the various incidents. In the context of *Rambuai*, while mentioning various atrocities committed by the Indian army, Zikpuii-Pa distinctively featured the MNF volunteers who killed their kindred Mizos under specific conditions. Consequently, during *Rambuai*, three young maidens in Zopui,

Kungi, Sangi, and Remmawii, were killed by the MNF army, but the people did not dare to express the incident as they did the Indian army's atrocities. Chhuanvawra was told about the incident by his friend Rohluta who related the incident from the MNF's point of view. He stated that these three maidens were garrulous about the raping of married women by the Indian army. While the rest of the women remained silent, they reiterated and mocked the unhealthy and easy manners of the spouses of the church elders. After being warned not to talk about such derogatory words, they were uninterested and continued to mock their fellow women, particularly the conduct of Pi Hrang, who was raped by the Major. Since their caution became null and void, all of them were finally killed by the MNF volunteers. From the aforementioned incident, it is clear that the MNF's perspective differed from that of the civilians in some incidents during *Rambuai*.

The account of the women's suffering and trauma did not end here. Zikpuii-Pa portrayed one more touching episode made by the Indian Armed Forces for wedded ladies. The army beat and shot the men in the village, while the women, including married women, were brutally raped. Subsequently, Pu Ngurtawna's wife, Pi Kungliani, lived in fear and guilt after being victimised by the Indian army. Unable to bear the trauma and atrocities she had witnessed, she committed suicide by hanging herself. Given the context of the narrative, it is safe to say that the majority of the Mizos had already converted to Christianity.

Apparently, Mizos, as Christians, thought of self-destruction as a genuine wrongdoing. Subsequently, Lalrammuana Sailo remarks, "Since committing suicide was against Christian doctrine, it seldom occurred around 1960" (27). Based on Christian morality, those who committed such a crime were supposed to have forfeited their place in heaven. Given Pi Kungliani's experience, it is touching that after losing her morality, she denied herself the blissfulness of heaven and dared to commit suicide, revealing her physical as well as psychological agony.

Certainly, rape is one of the most serious global issues in the world's history. Even in recent times, the Indian society has been confronted with the issue of rape and brutal killings, and the perpetrators have received harsh punishment. Particularly during an emergency, sexual exploitation or rape is one of the horrors of insurgency

faced by women in society. Similarly, during the *Rambuai* time frame, the issue of rape remained one of the horrible and deplorable experiences Mizo women had. Sex outside marriage is considered a crime in Mizo society. Consequently, every Mizo maiden was expected to keep her virginity intact before marriage in the pre-Christian era. If a maiden lost her virginity, she was regarded as a woman with a loose personality, and she was despised by every young man in the village. Similarly, if a married woman had sex with another person, her husband had the right to confiscate all of her belongings for committing adultery, which was referred to as ‘*Uire*’ (adulteress) in Mizo. Without mutual understanding, sex is not simply a matter of happiness. On the other hand, rape is the demonstration of forced sex on someone else without their assent. During wars and conflicts, the main goal of rape was to humiliate and subjugate the women of their adversaries. In *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, the protagonist tragically narrates the issue of rape and female victimisation in *Rambuai*. As denoted earlier, rape was used as a powerful weapon by the Indian army to humiliate and subdue the ethnic Mizo community. In this regard, rape is a symbol of victory for the Indian army, indicating that the Mizos were overcome and completely defeated. Since Mizo society is patriarchal, Mizo women need to keep up with their chastity to adjust to man-centric standards.

Notably, even the MNF volunteers have been trouble-makers and burdens from the civilian perspective. They have asked for food and confiscated their belongings in some places. Simultaneously, the Mizo women were also committed to fulfilling the sexual inclinations of the Indian armed forces during *Rambuai*. Considering the perplexing situation of women, Hmingthanzuali locates the bodies of Mizo women as ‘a territory to be conquered or a site of battleground’ (174). This distinctively infers the hopeless state of Mizo women. Presumably, they did not have any authority over their bodies. The dread of both the Indian armed forces and the MNF volunteers is implanted in them.

In *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, during the outbreak of the insurgency, Chhuanvawra visits Zopui village to rescue his beloved Ngurthansangi. On his way to Zopui, he was in a military convoy vehicle when it was ambushed by MNF volunteers in Zanlawn village. Following this, a severe encounter occurred between

the two parties, resulting in the fatalities of many Indian armies and the blazing of the military convoy on the spot. In retaliation for the MNF act, the enraged Indian army arrested all of the passengers in the vehicle, including the protagonist, Chhuanvawra, and imprisoned them. One of the heinous incidents Chhuanvawra endured was the harsh life in prison, which is linked with rape. The following room was designated for females, in which the Indian armed force mercilessly assaulted Mizo women every night. While some of them were screaming, others were crying and saying, "Please help me". At the outset, some of his friends mock the victims. But Chhuanvawra forbade them from mocking them because of the insulting and vicious behaviour shown to their fellow Mizos. To challenge and mock the heinous actions of the Indian army, Chhuanvawra instigated his fellow prisoners to use the slogan '*Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jay*'. This slogan satirizes the Indian army's representation of Mahatma Gandhi, the "Father of the Nation". When they realised the meaning of their slogan, they beat them severely, causing physical and mental anguish. At whatever point he heard those pathetic voices, Chhuanvawra feared that similar treatment would be meted out to his cherished darling Ngurthansangi, which made him more irritated. Undeniably, women suffered physically and mentally during *Rambuai*.

As stated before, the Indian Army severely assaulted Mizo ladies, regardless of their age and appearance, including maidens, married women, under-aged and elderly women. During *Rambuai*, married women felt helpless and pitiful. At the same time, even for their male counterparts, it was the worst and most humiliating experience of their lives. Ngurthansangi, like other girls in *Zopui* village, was a victim of rape during *Rambuai*, which irritated the protagonist, Chhuanvawra. When Chhuanvawra inquired about Ngurthansangi's situation, she wondered whether or not to tell him, and later said to him, "Chhuante, Mami is not here" (*Nunna* 109). To make matters worse, his uncle Khawvelthanga added that because Ngurthansangi was poor, she did not appear normal. The term "poor" in this context does not refer to a lack of money, but rather connotes her physical sufferings. However, the story does not end here. Thinking about Khawvelthanga's narration, there is no question that Ngurthansangi was tormented by the Indian Army in a heartless way, which is

surely disgraceful for them to describe. According to Ngurthanhrangi and Roziki, she married Captain Ranade, whom the Mizo called “Mengranga” out of desperation, to protect her father from the incessant torture. On hearing the sad news, Chhuanvawra turned out to be more disturbed and uncomfortable.

It is heartbreaking that the army slapped and killed the men in the village. Unable to bear such an incident, some young women desperately offered their bodies to the army to protect their beloved father. Although Ngurthansangi and some young girls intended to keep their virginity, they were unable to do so. In addition, some Mizo women joined the MNF to avoid being raped or beaten by the Indian army. O. Rosanga remarks, “One Indian major was very notorious and demanded girls for his pleasure. He also witnessed that the same major kept two girls’ nights each just to satisfy him” (52). Since writing is a blend of reality and fiction, the records of Captain Ranade might be viewed as a portrayal of the Major referenced previously.

Aside from the physical pain, raping Mizo women caused a great deal of discord in the family. No doubt, it caused family disintegration, a lack of understanding, and a loss of reliability, all of which contributed to unhappiness in the family. Sadly, rape victims generally face stigma from various sections of society. Zikpuii-Pa strongly condemned those who had committed such a heinous act against vulnerable Mizo women. It is, no doubt, an inhuman action against women.

#### 2:4:4 Village Fires:

Another ruthless measure executed by the Government of India to combat *Rambuai* was the “Village Burning Scheme”. As mentioned earlier, in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puih*, Zikpuii-Pa distinctively portrayed that the MNF assaulted Aizawl Treasury, which was quickly widespread even in Shillong. As a result, Mizoram was designated as a “Disturbed Area”. Therefore, Mizoram was set apart by the Indian government because the disturbance had completely saturated the entire state. As soon as the central government learned of the incident, they dispatched Indian soldiers to handle the circumstances. After all, the Indian government moves quickly, and as a result, Aizawl City is reclaimed in no time. Following that, they set fire to all the buildings at the heart of the city, *Bara Bazar*.

For this reason, many prominent business people became homeless and distressed. In the novel, Chhuanvawra learnt from his father that all the houses in Zopui village were destroyed by fire. Meanwhile, the houses of Chhuanvawra and Ngurthansangi, as well as the church and school building, were fortunately saved, but the rest of the houses in Zopui village were demolished by fire. Since life in Mizoram had become unbearable, many people, including Chhuanvawra's family, had fled to Shillong in search of peace and security by then. This demonstrates the pitiful and complicated situation in which many Mizo families found themselves during *Rambuai*.

Since writing mirrors society, the burning of buildings in Bara Bazar portrayed in the narrative truly occurred in Aizawl, the capital city of Mizoram. When Chhuanvawra arrived in his village of Zopui, it appeared deserted. All the houses in Zopui had been burned down, and a few people had built simple houses, but they could never look the same again; they looked more like huts. This indicates two things. Firstly, they lacked the energy and enthusiasm to build like they had in the past. Secondly, there was a scarcity of building materials as a result of village fires. No doubt, the Indian army destroyed the entire village, making it impossible to collect building materials at the time. Even the lovely flowers failed to bloom after the village was burned down. Unlike in the pre- *Rambuai* period, Chhuanvawra did not get a warm greeting in his village in the *Rambuai* period. This strikingly portrayed how the aftermath of *Rambuai* changed the Mizo community.

2:4:5 Brutal Assaults:

When there is an insurgency, war, or revolution in the public arena, the ruthless killing of innocent individuals is one of the significant military operations. Likewise, throughout *Rambuai*, this is one of the genuine and common issues encountered by Mizo individuals. The Indian army killed men in the village using several strategies. In *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, Zikpuii-Pa featured the fierce killing of numerous Mizo men by the Indian armed force. While some of them were tormented by using ropes, some of them were shot directly and died on the very spot.

In the narrative, when Chhuanvawra arrived at Zopui village to spend Christmas, he also attended the so-called 'Volunteers meeting'. Every young man in the village over the age of 15 was gathered. Around 400 volunteers marched with

their respective sticks in support of the independent movement. Among them, the senior young man known as Ngurtawna was chosen as their leader and given the rank of Lieut. Colonel. This demonstrates how the Mizo young people were deeply involved in the rise of the MNF Movement.

Conspicuously, the MNF leader Laldenga possessed the gift of the gab and farsighted vision. Apparently, his diplomacy and rhetorical skills contributed significantly to the rapid ascent of the MNF party. As a result, many young men, like Rohluta, were persuaded to join the MNF. Since the majority of them joined the MNF, a couple of men were left in the village alongside women and children. Certainly, they became powerless and vulnerable, which was a benefit for the Indian armed force. Chhuanvawra heard that the army did not even spare Pu Thangthianga, Headmaster of Zopui High School, and the local carpenter, Pu Ruala. Besides, on the first night of their arrival, they roped up all the men and showed no sympathy, not even for the elderly. Here and there, mass killings known as massacres occurred in the village, and at the same time, people were shot individually. This is highlighted in this fiction.

#### 2:4:6 Prison Reminiscences:

As the name implies, a prison is a place where evildoers are subjected to severe punishment and infliction. Based on the prison regulations, prisoners were subjected to the same harsh treatment regardless of the case in which they were convicted. In *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, Chhuanvawra was arrested by the Indian army on his way to Zopui as a result of the firing between the MNF and the Indian army. Consequently, he was sentenced to three months in prison. As a matter of fact, his primary purpose behind moving toward Zopui was to look for his darling Ngurthansangi, whom he adored and who had been captured by the Indian army. Contrary to his intentions, he was forced to stay there for an extended period with other Mizo young men. Life in prison was boring, frustrating, and monotonous as well.

Significantly, during *Rambuai*, many civilians and their relatives were arrested on mere suspicion and tortured, many to death, with the whereabouts of their

bodies unknown. Likewise, men, women (particularly spouses of the MNF volunteers), and unmarried women were imprisoned in various jails in Aizawl and elsewhere outside Mizoram, like Tezpur, Silchar, etc. Life in prison was, indeed, one of the most painful and traumatic experiences, which remained ingrained in the victims' memories even after many decades. Women and men both received less food, medicine, hygiene, and sanitary supplies. Without a doubt, being a mother assigns numerous obligations. Because loneliness is a fundamental issue in prison, women prisoners were unable to bear the separation from their loved ones, particularly their little children. Women were unable to care for their beloved children. In addition, they were also forced to surrender their bodies to strangers. Obviously, to obtain retribution for their battle with the MNF, the Indian armed forces tormented innocent civilians physically and mentally in jail. For this reason, many people experience the trauma of imprisonment. They seriously beat them by using ropes and logs while asking several questions. Some of them were killed, while others were paralysed for life. The elderly people were not exempt either. 2:4:7 Mental Anguish:

Obviously, the majority of Mizo people experienced psychological pain or turmoil as a result of *Rambuai*. The Mizos used to be an egalitarian culture with no class distinctions in society. In the pre-*Rambuai* period, they used to sing together because they were social and friendly. Apparently, singing is a significant and splendid aspect of the Mizo culture. As a result, when a group tour occurs, the Mizos have a habit of singing together. In like manner, when Chhuanvawra and numerous Mizo youngsters returned home from Shillong to their particular spot, they delightfully sing a song inside the bus in the pre-*Rambuai* period. Nonetheless, when *Rambuai* influenced Mizoram and its people, things could never be the same again. When Chhuanvawra went to Zopui again to rescue Ngurthansangi, although all the travellers were Mizos, they were not in the temperament or energy to sing together. Everyone was quiet and gloomy due to the severe effects of *Rambuai*. Chhuanvawra painfully narrates, “*Zai thiamlo kan ni lova, zai theihna thinlung kan nei lo a ni. Kan zavaiin eng harsatna emaw kan nei vek a*” (Nunna 79). This means that, although they were not bad singers, they lacked the enthusiasm to sing because everyone had



their own personal issues. This demonstrates that when people are unhappy and depressed, it is difficult for them to entertain themselves. It also demonstrates the mental anguish of young people as a result of *Rambuai*.

Besides, in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, Zikpuii-Pa portrayed the protagonist as a strong, brilliant, and prestigious gentleman, who is respected by the villagers, who envy no one, and everyone regarded him as their superior. Meanwhile, he was imprisoned in *Tawito* Camp for three long months due to *Rambuai*. Since prison is associated with violence, hunger, and thirst, Chhuanvawra has experienced the same. For this reason, his morality deteriorated day by day. As denoted earlier, he was well-liked in Zopui village and never bowed down to anyone. However, his mentality has greatly changed after *Rambuai*. Subsequently, he gradually developed an inferiority complex and a humble demeanour, prompting him to bow down to the DC for the sake of his beloved sweetheart, Ngurthansangi. Undeniably, his humble actions did not suit his previous mentality and nature. However, *Rambuai* forced him to beg for the mercy of others, which he found painful.

As Chhuanvawra was portrayed as a confident, brave, and intelligent gentleman, he was unafraid of the army's brutality during their first encounter. However, after enduring physical and mental anguish in prison, his psyche has changed concerning the military. He gradually absorbed the fear of the army. He became a coward, and he did not dare oppose Major Suala. Evidently, his behaviour during the *Rambuai* period was entirely different. At the start of their encounter, he showed no fear and continued to smile when they threatened him with a gun. However, during *Rambuai*, Chhuanvawra expressed, "*Zoram lamah min thawn haw leh ang a, lung inah bawk min khung leh ang a, min vaw leh nek ang tih ka hlau rilru hle mai a*" (89). This indicates that he was afraid of being sent back to Mizoram, imprisoned once more, and beaten severely as in the past. His mind was filled with fear and insecurity. Even Ngurthansangi absorbed feelings of fear and insecurity like Chhuanvawra, as a result of the terrible effect of *Rambuai*. When they returned to their normal lives, retrospection continued to haunt her mind, and her inner turmoil and pain did not leave her. Whenever her past life was recounted, it was immediately

followed by her negative experience as a prostitute, as well as her rescue, which reawakened her sense of guilt.

#### 2:4:8 Nature Loses its Beauty:

Remarkably, Zikpuii-Pa is one of the few Mizo novelists who recognizes the beauty and value of nature. In this regard, Lalthangliana argues that the uniqueness of Zikpuii-Pa's fiction lies in his wonderful blending of affection and nature (vi). *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* reveals this fact. For Chhuanvawra, the most delightful creation is none other than Ngurthansangi, his cherished darling. Unfortunately, she became the victim of a wicked person named Captain Ranade during *Rambuai*. Unable to find her in *Zopui*, he laments, “*Aw, chu Zopui hlui chu a ral ta!*” (ibid 125), implying that the old *Zopui* has vanished due to the absence of Ngurthansangi. Literally, it is a paradoxical expression, which refers to a situation or something that appears to be contradictory but is, in fact, true. As a matter of fact, *Zopui* village exists still, and its name has not changed yet. However, the former *Zopui* village, where he spent a wonderful time with Ngurthansangi, has vanished. Hence, *Zopui*, without Ngurthansangi, is no longer appropriate to call *Zopui*. He retold, “*Engkim mai chu a ngai a ni, mahse enkawl loh anih avangin a hlui thup a...Ni chu a en ngaiin a la eng reng a, mahse a mawina ber min tihlim tu chu a bo ta*” (110,130). These expressions suggest that, while everything remains the same, they appear stale and old as a result of negligence. Besides, the sun remains as sparkling as ever, but its primary magnificence, Ngurthansangi, who entertains him, has vanished. Even the lovely flower beside Ngurthansangi's gate is unappealing to him. Here, Zikpuii-Pa emphasized how an individual's perspective of nature is influenced by their mood. Consequently, nature is no longer appealing or beautiful to Chhuanvawra as a result of *Rambuai*.

#### 2:4:9 *Rambuai* Changes Mizo Mentality:

Mizo, as a tribe, had not been involved in governmental issues for a long time. During British colonial rule, they appeared to be politically oblivious. It could be a direct result of the British frontier rulers forbidding them to be included in any political exercises. However, after a while, Mizo turned out to be progressively

inspired by legislative issues created for quite a long time. Despite the fact that Mizo nationalism had existed in the past, *Rambuai* instilled in Mizo young men a nationalistic attitude as well as hatred towards non-Mizos. Accordingly, when the sovereign movement was at its peak in Mizoram, the Mizo people were broadly divided into two groups: supporters of the independence movement and opponents of the movement. While most of the youngsters were keen on the independent movement, the elderly opposed it. Thus, there was a misconception between the younger generation and the older generations.

Interestingly, because of the small population, prominent figures in Zopui village, such as Pastor Lianzuala, Khawvelthanga (father of Ngurthansangi), Dr. SelthuamaRenthlei (father of Chhuanvawra), and Headmaster Pu Zalawma, did not advocate the Independent Movement. At the same time, because of the enthusiasm and zeal of the younger generations, they did not openly oppose it. Notably, even Christian missionaries were not exempt from the spirit of the autonomous movement. However, like the other prominent people in Zopui, the missionary did not believe in the movement. However, as a well-educated gentleman, he did not reveal his thoughts. Instead, he carefully stated that if he claims they provide independence, the government disagrees with him. If he claims they cannot afford it, the young people will despise him. On hearing this, the fanatical Ngursavunga was not satisfied with his response and stated, “Even the English missionaries should be smashed away...Besides, Rohluta murmurs, “I detest all English people as they offer a negative status. If we were offered the same status as Japan and Burma, we would not need to fight for independence” (My Trans.; 26, 28). It is obvious that due to their strong will for independence, they do not appreciate even the British missionaries whom they used to admire previously. In other words, it is assumed that the determination of independence is easily intolerable towards non-Mizo individuals, irrespective of their nation and social position.

Apart from these, the Independent Movement had a significant impact on Mizo society. In this regard, Pu Zalawma stated to Chhuanvawra, “...*tlangval ho chezia hi a dang riau mai a, an thiltih han zawh hian a tu amah hian min chhang tha duh mang tlat lo mai a, bang chhah tak dan a awm ang kan ni*” (48). This indicates

that the conduct of the young men was not normal. As nobody responded well to him, he felt as if they were isolated by a thick divider. Since Chhuanvawra was an influential young man among his contemporaries, Pu Zalawma believed he would be more resourceful than the fanatical young men.

Since time immemorial, the Mizos have had a profound regard for the elderly. Respect for the elderly has been instilled within the family as well as at the social institution known as '*Zawlbuk*'. It is undeniably true that the elderly have the right to be respected as they have gone through several encounters compared with the younger generation. For this reason, every Mizo village has a *Val Upa*, who is either an older young man or a married man who commands the rest of the young fellows on any significant issues. As a result, the *Val Upa* has a significant and respected role in Mizo society. He serves as both a commander and a guide for the young and inexperienced. For this reason, his words are expected to be followed by young men, and no one dares to act against him. Even after the Christian era, some educated and intelligent people served as guides and advisers to young people. In Zopui village, taking everything into account, Pu Zalawma is one such person who is respected by the conventional individuals in the pre-*Rambuai* period. However, it is surprising that at the climax of *Rambuai*, Pu Zalawma, a prominent and respected figure, was no longer interested in and disrespected by the young people. This clearly demonstrated the moral decay in Mizo society.

Chhuanvawra became frustrated after hearing about the various atrocities committed by the Indian army against innocent civilians. He was upset when he could not find Ngurthansangi in Zopui and had to return to Shillong after *Rambuai*. In desperation, he wishes to drop a bomb and burn the entire town of Shillong on one occasion. No doubt, such a mindset, and decision would not suit a sober person like Chhuanvawra. This demonstrates that *Rambuai* has altered the mentality and attitude of the Mizo young men.

## 2:5 Outcomes and Victimization of *Rambuai*:

Like other struggle movements and insurgencies around the world, the Indian army tried to dominate and subjugate the Mizo people both physically and mentally.

In this context, the one thing that should be focused on is the mental impact of *Rambuai*. No doubt, it caused many problems, such as stress, insomnia, fatigue, and a sense of guilt, particularly among married women. Apart from these, the loss of loved ones, such as a father, brother, son, and so on, occurs. Moreover, rape causes a distrustful relationship between husband and wife, loneliness, feeling of rejection and abandonment, being disconnected from others, and, most importantly, dissatisfaction in life.

Considering the tremendous effects of *Rambuai*, it can be said that *Rambuai* has revealed the immoral qualities of the Mizos. Consequently, *Rambuai* has instilled fear and hatred towards non-Mizos in the Mizo mind. Unfaithfulness among sweethearts has become prevalent, which was uncommon in the pre-*Rambuai* period. In some places, immoral people make up incidents and use them to retaliate against their rivals. He goes on to say that the Mizos had declared themselves to be a loyal nation before *Rambuai*. However, *Rambuai* ruined their mentality, and they could no longer identify themselves as a loyal nation after *Rambuai*. Considering this remark, there is no doubt that *Rambuai* in Mizoram created immorality in Mizo society. Fear, hatred, disloyalty, and other inward evils have emerged and become common in society, which they were not familiar with. To put it another way, *Rambuai* hampered and ruined Mizos peaceful public activity of the pre-*Rambuai* Mizo society. Furthermore, it has an impact on the religious life of the Mizos. As narrated by the protagonist, even the worship service was no longer enjoyable in the aftermath of *Rambuai*. Visibly, despite being Christian, many people almost forgot their Christianity in terms of their mentality and actions during *Rambuai*, which validates moral degeneration. In other words, peace-loving and selfless people become selfish people, and a few people commit suicide due to the faults of their fellow beings. What is the cause of the strange and unfavourable behaviour of the Mizos during *Rambuai*? All of these show that *Rambuai* changed the ethical quality of the Mizos.

In the past, a typical Mizo maiden tried to keep her chastity before marriage. At times, they are willing to give up their loved ones who forced them to seduce her. Indeed, chastity is a source of great pride for a Mizo maiden because it demonstrates a person's integrity and morality. There might be two reasons for a Mizo maiden to keep her virginity. First, after being influenced by Christianity, they developed a

God-fearing nature. Second, their morality has been guided by integrity, purity, and self-respect. However, *Rambuai* has massively changed Mizo morality. Self-esteem and purity could no longer be maintained by a Mizo maiden, which is agonizing. The degeneration of Mizo morality brought about by *Rambuai* has been strikingly featured by Zarzozuali. In her article entitled, ‘*In Case We Forget the Bitter Struggle of the Civil Society and Women during the MNF Movement*’, she comments:

The sufferings and hardships faced by women was (sic) just unimaginable. The Indian Army raped women at gun-point. “The Indian Army personnel not only raped Mizo maiden, but also did not spare married women and under aged”. As a result, the young girls lost their dignity and chastity and extra-marital affairs, no doubt, had increased within the Mizo people. Moreover, due to extreme poverty and insufficient foods, people, especially women had to go to army camp as daily labourers to earn money or food. Thus, poverty compelled women to earn money from the army by ‘any possible means’. All these social evils and immorality had taken its root due to the insurgency (127).

These comments authenticate the Mizo women who set out to go through anything to get food from the Indian armed force, which likewise reveals the troubling circumstances of the Mizo people during *Rambuai*. To supplement Zuali’s comments, Zikpuii-Pa himself argues, “*mahni thu a lo inhlip ve mai mai lah bo lo. Mi leh sa lah kan inpawlh tawh si, kan hmingchhiat na te Zoram chhungah chauh a thang thei tawh lo va. India ram hmuntinah kan hmeichhe tangnem tlawmzia thu ngawt miten an nuihpui hluah hluah tawh mai a ni a; Kristian ram hmingthan nan chuan a mak hle mai, a va zahthlak em!*” (105). This argument indicates that during *Rambuai*, some Mizo women dare throw off their attire. Since various ethnic groups stayed together, their humiliation cannot be widespread within Mizoram. They made fun of the immoral Mizo women in various parts of India. Zikpuii-Pa felt sad that the sarcastic comments on the immoral behaviour of Mizo women were unsuitable, shameful and contradicted with the values of a Christian state. While depicting the trauma and terror of *Rambuai*, the main purpose of Zikpuii-Pa’s *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* is to highlight the moral degeneration or consequences of the characters

associated with *Rambuai*. Undeniably, *Rambuai* changed the morality of the characters, the interpretation of nature, the superb Mizo ethos, and so on.

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## Chapter III

### COLONIAL IMPACT IN THE NARRATIVES

#### 3. Definition and Nature of Colonialism

The term “colonialism” has a long history and has played an important role in the history of the world. Needless to say, every nation has felt the effects of war and colonialism, either directly or indirectly. For a long time, researchers and academics have had a strong interest in colonialism and its studies. Writing has regularly been utilized as a valuable tool to uncover the socio-cultural and political changes in the public arena. Furthermore, colonialism, like imperialism, has been a fascinating topic for writers, particularly in the realm of fiction. For instance, in English fiction, Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* revolves around the themes of expansionism, colonialism, and private enterprise. Moreover, the central focus of *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad communicates the experience of colonialism alongside western dominion by the Belgians. Colonialism, without a doubt, has had a profound impact on the writing of previously involved countries and nations.

Since this chapter focuses on the impact of colonialism in Zikpuii-Pa’s fiction, it is significant to characterize the foundation of colonialism in Mizoram. To put it another way, to understand and distinguish the term “colonialism”, consider the following definitions to clarify the concept of colonialism: According to *New Webster’s Dictionary and Thesaurus of the English Language*, “Colonial means an inhabitant of a colony, of or belonging to a colony, Colonialism means the economic, political, and social policies by which colonies are governed” (193). Meanwhile, the *Cambridge International Dictionary of English* defines, “A colonial is a person from another country who lives in a colony, especially, as part of its system of government. Colonial also refers to people who lived in a colony in the past and still have the opinions and habits of that period in their lives. Colonialism is the belief in and support for the system of one country controlling another” (259). These definitions describe a colonial as a person who once experienced domination by a bigger country, and colonialism also indicates the system of a bigger country controlling a smaller country or nation. Besides, the term ‘colonialism’ has been

defined by *The New International Webster's Collegiate Dictionary of the English Language* as, "The policy of a nation seeking to acquire extend or retain overseas dependencies"(139).Moreover, *The American Heritage Dictionary* describes colonialism as, "A policy by which a nation maintains or extends its control over foreign dependencies" (293). As a result of the preceding definitions, powerful countries dominate a small area or territory for a variety of reasons. Thus, it can be summarised that colonialism denotes foreign dominance and has a long history in various parts of the world.

### 3.1 Background of Colonial Rule in India and Mizoram:

Before deliberating further on Zikpuii-Pa's fiction, attention needs to be drawn to the way that the context of colonial rule in India and Mizoram. Essentially, the English rulers came to India under the name of the East India Company. Obviously, India has been one of the valuable frontier assets of England. As a result, for the past 200 years, India has been directed to assist the English. When they had been colonized, an inclination of inadequacy was established in the personalities of the colonised individuals. Hence, everything was assessed and perceived from a Western or European viewpoint. The term 'colonialism' encompasses a wide range of issues, including hybridity, liminality, mimicry, language, instruction, otherness, and so on. Besides, the colonised people generally regard whites as the dominant nation. As a result, white was associated with dominance and goodness, whereas reasonable and dark skin was associated with inadequacy and ugliness. Without a doubt, Europeans, particularly the English, who colonised India for a long time, taught their administrative system, educational arrangement, occupation, language, and way of life. Since writing is a social report, the majority of the events that occurred during the colonial period were revealed through the works of famous writers. As history has also been linked to writing, writing is a significant form of articulation for a nation's history. Therefore, fiction has become an important part of revealing a nation's set of experiences.

Needless to say, English domination was set up in India till she got autonomy in 1947. Mizoram, formerly known as the "Lushai Hills" was invaded by the English

in 1890, bringing many changes to society. Because of the effects of colonialism, Mizoram has grown into one of the fastest-changing and transforming societies in the contemporary era. In this regard, Joshi argues, “Mizo are fast giving up their old customs and adopting the new mode of life which is greatly influenced by the Western culture. Many of their present customs are mixtures of their old tradition and western pattern of life” (29). Considering this argument, it is clear that Mizo, as a nation, has been progressing from unpolished life to modern life. As expressed over, the issue of colonialism has been and remains a critical issue in the literature. It has always been related to identity, and the identity crisis has remained a significant issue in the contemporary situation as well. To put it another way, every nation has its own way of life, which is portrayed through its identity. Zarzovi remarks, “Culture is somehow subject to religion. For example, Indian culture is fundamentally based on their religion, Hindu culture, which is grounded. Notwithstanding the many changes that have happened due to the western effect, Indian culture cannot be broken by the English” (My Trans., 30). This argument demonstrates the close relationship that exists between culture and religion. Each country is thought to have its own set of beliefs and religions. Essentially, the early Mizos had convictions that played a significant role in reinforcing their way of life. They place their faith in the presence of evil spirits, which brought sacrifices, rites, and rituals. The Christian missionaries saw the Mizo primal religion as crude and animistic. Nobody came up to them and taught them how to live. Before they were related to the white English people, the Lushais lived a long distance away. In the traditional Mizo society, there were two sorts of priests, such as, ‘*Bawlpu*’ and ‘*Sadawt*’. They used to perform various types of customs. Thus, the *Bawlpu* went about as a doctor or a specialist who cared for various types of infection. In reality, the purported ‘*Sadawt*’ is the chief’s private cleric. As such, he performed matters identified with the chief’s sacrifices. Nonetheless, Christianity abolished such ceremonies and clerics during the colonial period. *Sadawt* was replaced by a Christian priest. Likewise, *Bawlpu* was replaced by a clinical specialist. Since time immemorial, medical doctors have occupied a place of unique significance in each society. Since healing is an important aspect of evangelism, even during the colonial and post-colonial periods, the role of a doctor remained significant.

In the pre-colonial era, the Mizos were known as head-hunters by the outcasts. Inter-village wars were common, and they frequently invaded the outsiders, especially the adjoining villages. There was no mental harmony in such an environment. When the pioneer missionaries J.H. Lorrain and F.W. Savidge arrived in Mizoram, they preached the Gospels, created the Mizo Alphabet, and established secular schools to help Mizoram become modern. Impressed by their exemplary services, the ethnic Mizo individuals quickly embraced Christianity. In this way, the Mizos, who were thought to be head-hunters until the end of the nineteenth century, could be transformed into soul-hunters who spread salvation to unbelievers with extraordinary zeal all over the world. As a result, Mizoram was also regarded as a 'Land of Peace' where everyone valued harmony and tranquillity. Since there were no written records of their history and literature until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Mizo literature can be viewed as absolutely oral. However, following British colonial rule, the Christian Missionaries presented more composed writing. As a result of the events surrounding the Christian missionaries, oral writing was transformed into composed writing, which is a significant milestone in Mizo scholarly history. Thus, the origins of Mizo writing can be traced back to the events surrounding Christian preachers. In the context of Mizoram, the terms 'colonialism' and 'Christianity' are inseparable, and both terms go hand in hand. As a result, colonialism cannot focus on dismissing the arrival of Christianity in Mizoram. Contemporary Mizo society is the product of many historical aspects. Mizo history reveals that the indigenous Mizo individuals have their own culture, tradition, and social values. As poetry is considered historical evidence, fiction is likewise regarded as a social document that features the numerous historic and cultural scenarios in Mizoram. During the last decade of the nineteenth century, Mizo as a nation experienced extraordinary political, social, and religious change. In other words, the Mizos have gone through several significant events in the past, such as British colonial rule, the arrival of Christianity in 1894, the rise and fall of the so-called "Puma Zai"<sup>1</sup> and its sequence, the notable famine known as the *Mautam*<sup>2</sup>, the formation of the first political party (Mizo Union) in Mizoram, the MNF uprising, and so on.

One of the most significant of these was contact with white Europeans, which occurred during the British colonial period in India. Although colonialism had many positive outcomes, it had disastrous consequences for the native colonised society. In other words, colonialism influenced and shaped Mizo society in both positive and negative ways. Pachuau notices:

To the Mizos in the third quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the notorious white men-whom the Mizos called *Sap*, a term derived from the Hindi “*Saheb*” – were powerful conquerers who subdued all authorities that came their way. By the time the pioneer missionaries reached Aizawl in 1894, the whole district had been subjugated and formally annexed by the British Indian Government. The conquerers had taken away all the firearms the Mizos possessed, and any chiefs who challenged the British authority were seized and deported for imprisonment. In this politically unsettled period, the two notably different white men appeared. They carried no guns and simply preached and sang about a man called Jesus in the village streets...In due course, however, the missionaries love and care for the natives stood out in the presence of the notorious conquerers resulting in a special relationship. The missionaries soon commanded the respect of the Mizos who learned to distinguish the missionaries from other white persons. To distinguish the, the Mizo’s called them “*Mizo Sap*” or “*Zosap*” literally “the Mizos’ white people (133-134).

As a result of these perceptions, it is clear that the Mizo people have been associated with two types of English people in the nineteenth century: the English frontier rulers and the Christian missionaries. Without a doubt, both of them have had an impact on the Mizos in their unique ways since their first appearance. Lorrain, the pioneer missionary observed the distinction between colonial rulers and Christian missionaries:

We were the first unarmed white men the Lushai had seen, and very quickly they adopted us as their own, giving us the name of ‘*Zo sap*’, which signifies ‘the Lushai’s White Men’- a term which has since become the appellation of

all missionaries...In his 1899 report, D.E. Jones wrote, "... and although the natives are always suspicious of other sahibs (white people), the '*Mizo Sap*' (Missionary) soon wins their confidence. Some of them say that they would like all the *Sepoys* (soldiers) and their officers to leave, but that they would wish the missionaries and the shops to remain (qtd in *Ethnic Identity* 134).

This demonstrates that when the missionaries arrived, they won the hearts of the Mizo people. Significantly, the British colonial rule in Mizoram marked the start of a new era in terms of administration and faith. Simultaneously, it revealed that colonisers recognized their disparities from the beginning of their appearance.

The primary motivation behind this chapter is to investigate the recorded truth about how Mizo society altered due to colonialism through the evaluation of Zikpuii-Pa's fiction. In other words, the primary concern of this chapter deals with the glimpses and background of colonial and postcolonial influence in Mizoram through an investigation of Zikpuii-Pa's fiction. As a writer, Zikpuii-Pa has been influenced by the socio-political milieu of Mizoram. He is one of the most renowned Mizo writers, who often analyze Mizo society from various perspectives, and observes it from a different methodology. Simultaneously, it is significant to bear in mind that every historical incident has both pros and cons. Accordingly, the colonisers served as saviours and trainers for the colonised people in some ways. At the same time, it has been a curse for colonised societies, as colonisers soon convinced them to adopt a modern and sophisticated lifestyle, which is, no doubt, opposed to their traditional culture and society. Some of Zikpuii-Pa's fiction balances progressive social change with indigenous traditions.

The term 'colonialism' plays an important role in the academic discourses of contemporary Mizo society. Considering the various genres of Mizo literature, the term has remained an intriguing and significant approach even in the modern generation. In terms of fiction, Zikpuii-Pa sharply examines the ethos of Mizo society as a result of the tremendous transition from colonialism. When one reads Mizo history thoroughly, it is obvious that diverse developments were taking place in Mizo society by the end of the 19th century. Needless to say, colonialism was



rapidly followed by Christianity in Mizoram. Significantly, the introduction of a new faith, namely Christianity, transformed Mizo oral literature into Mizo written literature. Therefore, even Mizo writing has become viewed as motivated by colonialism to a point.

Accordingly, the manner and composition of poetry have additionally been modified as compared to the pre-colonial period. The Mizos had rich oral literature, even before they were knowledgeable. Poetry or songs about brave warriors and valour were common in the past, indicating the value system in early society. As far as literature was concerned, Mizo people were associated with folk narratives, along with myths, legends, and folktales. However, such varieties of literature are considered primitive because of colonialism, as they nearly neglect those folk narratives. The hybridity of Mizo folktales and western shapes can be located in Zikpuii-Pa's fiction. To be more precise, the impact of Mizo folktales may be visible in the story of *Silvarthangi* which portrays the cruel aunt who unwell-dealt with Silvarthangi in a way similar to *Hawilopari*. At the same time, many colonial features can be observed in the story of *Silvarthangi* as well.

Since the Mizo folks have been associated with the First World War, the greatness and superiority of the white people have been narrated from generation to generation in Mizo society. Consequently, Malsawmdawngliana stresses how far the Mizos participation in the war altered the Mizo mentality(186). Evidently, the Mizos affiliation with the First World War somehow paved the way for the rapid progression of colonialism and Christianity in Mizoram. When the British missionaries came to Mizoram, they educated the Mizo people. As a result, the admiration of white humans has been steadily imbibed by the uneducated Mizo people. The greatness of the white people can be seen within the so-called '*Mizo Zirtirh Bu*'. Zosaphluia, the Welsh missionary, asserts, "*Mihring hnam nga ropui tak an awm a...Mingo an fing ber a, an lalber bawk*", There are five remarkable nations among people...the most intelligent and most effective are the white people (My Trans., 34). This notion reflects the imperialist attitude of the missionaries. The British rulers and Welsh missionaries were undeniably superior to the Mizos. Lalthangliana argues, "The Chaprahsi want to oppress the Mizo chiefs by making use of their colonial and authoritative energy. In this regard, the subsequent song has

been composed: “*Sappui bawngte keini min tai chuan, Lal laihrui ang insuih lo vang*” If we oppose the British officials like we used to, you are no longer a chief” (My Trans., 482-483). This satire exposes the imperialistic mindset and colonial powers over traditional Mizo chiefs, which was unpleasant for the Chaprahsi. Lalthangliana’s statement depicts that even the Chaprahsi was also harsh on Mizo individuals. Surprisingly, all of Mizoram’s notable assets were built under the direction of the Europeans. The cause for this could be either a Mizo inferiority complex toward white Europeans or a white superiority complex toward the Mizos (564). In this context, Mizo parents are accustomed to telling their children about Queen Elizabeth and the English people’s grandeur. Remarkably, over 2000 Mizos served in France during World War I. During the war, Mizoram saw the publication of only two magazines: *Mizo lehVai Chanchinbu* and *Kristian Tlangau*. While *Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu* primarily depicted the German’s cruelty and arrogance, it stressed the strength and force of the British soldiers. As a result, the merciless nature of the German soldier had already been instilled in the minds of the Mizos. Consequently, Lalnunchanga writes in *Zoram Mi Hrangte an Vanglai*, “One Mizo young man was questioned about the most miraculous thing he had noticed in France”. He responded that the most miraculous thing is that numerous English people have gathered in one place (My Trans.,120). Although it appears absurd, it demonstrates the Mizo people’s deep admiration for the English. Not only did the Mizos, but also ordinary Indians, have to deal with white people known as *Sap* (Saheb), implying their deep admiration for the whites.

### 3.2 Effects of Colonialism in Mizoram:

In the context of Mizoram, Christianity is indeed a blessing for the Mizo people. However, when the English arrived in Mizoram, the reputations of both the English and the Mizo chiefs were completely different, and there was a huge gap between them. Because the Mizo people had not been associated with education and learning prior to British rule, white humans had a preconceived notion that the colonized people were backward and unsophisticated. As a result, the Mizos were very clean and easy to dominate and controlled by the colonial rulers. In 1889, the

British attacked the Lushai Hills and burned down numerous villages in Mizo history. Needless to say, they succumbed to the Mizo chiefs and implemented a divide-and-rule policy, which is a key function of colonial rule. The Mizo chief's power and authority were dwindling, and they were regarded as nothing more than a source of assistance. The Chief has partial authority inside his jurisdiction, which is genuinely, very sad. In other words, they ruled their village while being overseen by British administrators. In a nutshell, British colonialism changed the attitudes of the Mizos and their socioeconomic situation. As Juneja observes, "Once the colonial forces acquire supremacy, the native culture tries to adapt and accommodate itself to the changed reality" (111). As a result, the Mizos, like other colonised peoples, attempt to evolve and adapt during the time of transition.

Moreover, the bachelor's dormitory referred to as '*Zawlbuk*' is considered the inspiration of Mizo *tlawmngaihna* in early Mizo society. It serves as an important meeting place for village management, battle preparation, and other matters. Moreover, the Mizo boys were taught numerous ethics and morality at *Zawlbuk*. However, the colonial rulers abolished *Zawlbuk* during their reign, which had a significant impact on Mizo society. Regarding the abolition of *Zawlbuk*, Zaihmingthanga has rightly pointed out, "The Christian community in each locality built their own chapel everywhere, now replacing the '*Zawlbuk*' and gather there regularly for prayer and worship, listening to the sermons that cover exhortations to the standard of life expected of a Christian"(9). This reveals that the '*Zawlbuk*' has been replaced by the Church in each locality. No doubt, colonialism contributed to the spread of Christianity. Colonizers skillfully infiltrated their subculture without rejecting altruism, bravery, and other virtues.

Regarding occupation, jhumming cultivation has been a primary occupation in the traditional Mizo economic system. Accordingly, their aim in life is to become self-reliant or independent. As a result, each village was self-sufficient and no village envied the others. However, with the arrival of the British, instead of attempting to be self-sufficient and independent, they aspired to obtain the so-called white-collar task or black-coatism. Subsequently, colonialism influenced the careers of some

Mizo people. Obviously, colonialism in Mizoram serves as an eye-opener to keep in touch with occupations other than agriculture.

From the beginning of the colonial regime, the British hegemony over the Mizo people can be seen in terms of names, the alphabet, and literature. Among the positive effects of colonialism, the appearance and spread of Christianity by missionaries may be regarded as the most significant transformation in the Lushai Hills. The traditional Mizo faith has been replaced by a new religion known as 'Christianity', which has resulted in significant changes in their attitudes, social life, and moral outlook on life. Christianity is undeniably a blessing to them, as it effectively modifies Mizo society as a whole. Colonialism, it appears, resulted in the abolition of the practise of head-hunting. Besides, by embracing Christianity, many primitive and indigenous practises and superstitions were abandoned. People who were illiterate and primitive became literate, people who were uneducated became knowledgeable, and so on. They were no longer afraid of supernatural beings, and they lived in peace and tranquillity. The typical Mizos dream place or assumption, known as '*Pialral*<sup>3</sup>', has also been replaced by 'Heaven'. In this regard, Varte comments, "It can be seen that Christian morality is intricately linked to the lifestyle of the people and has now formed an important part of their identity" (110). Considering her comments, it is true that Christianity has modified the Mizo lifestyle and identity. Accordingly, Mizo morality in pre-colonial Mizoram has been replaced by Christian morality. Lawmsanga observes:

Mizo Christians adopted western Christian marriage and its paraphernalia. The Gospel eliminated two notorious customs of pre-Christian marriage- one was throwing mud, water and rotten eggs at the bride's party when they were heading for the bridegroom's house. Secondly, eaves dropping on the first night of the newly- married couple was also stopped. Divorce was interpreted from the Bible and it was not as easy as before to obtain a divorce, while pre-marital sexual relationship were discouraged and did not fit with a Christian ethos (82).

This demonstrates that the traditional marriage system, as well as its ramifications, were abandoned in favour of the Christian marriage system

established by the missionaries. However, the Mizos adhere to the traditional marriage system in terms of marriage proposals and bride prices. In the post-colonial era, the pre-colonial Mizo marriage system is no longer effective. For this reason, the modern marriage system is regarded as a blend of indigenous and Christian marriage rituals. Zikpuii-Pa also employs the Christian marriage system in his fiction.

During the colonial period, inter-village battles, raids, and slavery were all abolished. Notably, the change in administration has had a positive effect. Mizo society was transformed by the new administration from an unsophisticated to a refined modern culture. When one reads Mizo records carefully, he can easily identify the striking contrast between the new colonial administration and the traditional chieftainship. Another positive effect was the observance of Sunday. In the past, there were no Sundays or vacations. They used to put in long hours every day. In addition to Mizo traditional festivals, important days associated with Christian factors such as Christmas, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, and Pentikos were observed during the colonial era. Moreover, many people joined white collar-tasks, leaving behind cultivation. Apart from these, the indigenous conventional apparel has been replaced by utilizing the western style. Last but not least, in order to maintain '*Tlawmngaihna*' (altruism) in Mizo society, the Welsh Missionaries established the 'Young Lushai Association' (now the Young Mizo Association (YMA)), which has proven to be a significant organisation even within contemporary society. Notably, in the current literacy scenario, Mizoram holds the second highest literacy rate in India next to Kerala. Significantly, the pioneer Christian missionaries did not confine themselves to proselytizing alone. They simultaneously carried out different vital tasks for the benefit of the Mizo people. They educated the Mizos, built schools and hospitals, established a printing press, and implemented other social programmes that brought the missionaries closer to the indigenous Mizo individuals.

Moving on to the negative impact, the Mizos have been diligent and honest in their occupation since time immemorial. Subsequently, the imposition of the so-called '*puakphurh*' (imposed labour) became a negative reference in connection

with British rule. Such imposition became unfavourable and insulting to the Mizos, who had never been governed by any nation, and created hostility toward the colonial rulers. For this reason, rather than encouraging hard work and perseverance, parents urged their children to go to school and study hard in order to avoid the '*Kuli*'<sup>4</sup>. This escapist mentality has gradually infiltrated many Mizo youths which affects their morality. It also authenticates that Mizo morality has been changed due to colonialism. Besides, compelled labour was distinct from what the Mizos referred to as *hnatlang*, or voluntary Mizo social work. Honestly, the Mizos had lost their trait and morality over the years as a result of colonial rule. As previously stated, many Mizo people changed occupations and began to work as government officials. In terms of the new occupation, corruption had been steadily ingrained throughout the colonial period. As Lawmsanga reiterates, "Village chiefs were frequently asked to supply labours and if they failed to do so on time, heavy fines and punishment immediately followed. While the Mizo society was suffering oppression and insult from forced labour, the missionaries praised the colonial officers" (73). This proves that both the British government and the missionaries reinforced each other and had strong internal coordination, which is why the ignorant Mizo people cannot resist but must comply with what has been imposed on them.

With regard to poetry, colonialism brought about the deficiency of much lovely conventional Mizo poetry. Subsequently, the brand-new songs generated by Christianity have in some ways ruined the old songs in terms of poetical phrases. Besides, the name of the village has been changed in someplace due to the influence of Christianity. Specifically, the British rulers left Mizoram without giving any genuine morals or professional ethics education to the Mizos, which is why the true sense of morality gradually became distorted and neglected. Corruption has become widespread in modern society, which was not prevalent in pre-colonial Mizo society. Vannghaka refers to such a tainted and immoral way of life as "Postcolonial Sub-Alternisation" (227).

It is a well-known fact that colonial countries used their efforts to subjugate and control the natives in their extensive territory and economic system, thereby

annexing them. To control the natives, the colonial countries used various strategies, gadgets, and weapons. Among their mechanisms, education and religion are beneficial weapons to overwhelm and convince the native individuals. Ngurliana asserts, “Mizo inherited a western conservative evangelical theology, which totally neglected the Mizo religion, culture and traditions. As a result, almost all the values of Mizo culture and traditions were marginalized as secular and pagan. Christianity inevitably takes the form of the western image” (25). Given this, although western conservative theology ignored Mizo tradition and religion, the Mizos needed to absorb western religion due to the strong influence of Christianity. In any case, the primary motive of colonialism is to reap benefits from the colonised region. Since colonized individuals are typically substandard in every way, there are no opportunities for adjustment, progress, and advancement. As a result, it generally leads to moral decay and the breakdown of culture and tradition.

In his famous article, “*Rihdil leh Mizoram*” (Rih Lake and the Jordan River), Siamkima, a well-known Mizo critic, identified the religious and cultural transformations brought about by colonialism and the arrival of Christianity in Mizoram. He curiously depicted the distinction between the vintage faith and the new faith. Accordingly, the term ‘*Rihdil*’ epitomizes the conventional Mizo subculture while the Jordan River signifies the Christian culture presented by the Western missionaries. Siamkima shares his thoughts, “*Kan pi pute thisen zawmpui leh thlah kan nihna a la bo siloh avangin Jordan luiral ram leh Rih dil piah ram chu kan rilruah hian a la lang kawp reng a, an pahnih a hming pawh hi kan lam kawp lo theilo a ni*”. Because we are still the blood descendants of our forefathers, with images of both beyond the Jordan River and the *Rih* Lake still fresh in our minds, it is necessary to express both names simultaneously (47). Furthermore, in his article entitled, “*Mizote Khawvel Pahnih*” (The Two Worlds of the Mizos), L. Keivom makes the following observations about the Mizo conflict culture and identity crisis:

When we embraced Christianity, a few groups considered that our old culture and the new religion had been inconsistent. Accordingly, they regard each Mizo culture as non-religion and discard the various Mizo cultural elements like celebrations and folk songs. The English people planned to subjugate

their way of life through the expressions of God. Foolishness is a fool, and so is stupidity! This occurs because of the approach of another religion, simultaneously, it occurs due to socio-political imbalance (My Trans., 5-6).

Considering Keivom's insight, it is obvious that Mizos experienced an identity crisis as a result of the impact of colonialism, which was followed by Christianity. When compared to pre-colonial Mizo society, colonial Mizo society is synonymous with modern Mizo society. Obviously, without their readiness and assent, the Mizos were controlled, dominated, and overpowered by the English. Simultaneously, taking everything into account, Major Mc Call asserted that the British administration had paralysed the social life of Mizo society. Thus, there is an intrinsic mindset developed by the Christian missionaries that Christianity is the lone true religion and that the rest of the religions are fake religions. This morality has been succinctly defined by Mc Call:

Within their lands, the Lushai people soon found two powerful contacts were at work. One was the Government, in the personality of the Political Officer, later the Superintendent, Lushai Hills, and the other were the missionaries, who had come into Lushai on the heels of the British conquest. The former aimed at securing peace, law, and order, while the latter aimed at converting the Lushais from their animists' beliefs to those of the Christian religion, as interpreted from their standpoint. The mission shared much in common among themselves, differing only in the particular. ...Against these varying contacts the Lushais had no equipment on which to fall back for strength, except the traditions and the stories to their grandfathers. But the pillars of their strength had tumbled down with shame and humiliation before these new and irresistible British invaders (196,197).

This substantiates the sympathetic and vulnerable state of Mizo individuals under colonial rule. It further highlighted how the Mizo people were forced to manage two amazing people, such as the English rulers and Christian missionaries. Consequently, the primary impetus for this chapter is to investigate the previous real factors regarding how far colonialism brought cultural domination in each segment of Mizo society through an analysis of Zikpuii-Pa's fiction based on the postcolonial



hypothesis and insight. To perceive how far colonialism has been one of the fundamental issues in Zikpuii-Pa's fiction, let us briefly recount his fiction. The current investigation will concentrate on five fictional works, such as, *Silvarthangi*, *Kraws Bulah Chuan*, *Hostel Awmtu*, *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, and *C.C. Coy No 27*.

### 3.3.1 Summary of *Silvarthangi*:

*Silvarthangi* is considered to be Zikpuii-Pa's first fictional work. The story mostly focuses on the protagonist, Silvarthangi, and her tragic predicament and the pitiless treatment she receives. Silvarthangi grew up in Saithah village and she is popularly referred to as 'Chowkidar Fanu' (Daughter of Chowkidar). She is a lovely young lady with pale skin and massive eyes. Everyone in the ambience of Saithah village knows that *Chawkidar Fanu* denotes Silvarthangi, daughter of Lianchhunga. Despite being famous as Lianchhunga's daughter, Liankunga is her biological father. In their youth, Liankunga and Lianchhunga had no ill feelings towards one another. However, their father, Lianluauva, separated Lianchhunga and his children from their main house when they married and had children. As time went by, Lianchhunga married a young lady named Lalthangpuii. Due to the untimely demise of her parents, Silvarthangi needed to stay at her paternal uncle, Lianchhunga's residence. Due to her extraordinary beauty and fascinating manner, every woman in her community were jealous of Silvarthangi. Meanwhile, life in her uncle's family was terrible for her due to her aunt's hostile and quarrelsome nature. She was subjected to a barrage of rude and despicable phrases and a curse. Her aunt, named Lalthangpuii, used to blame her for whatever unpleasant things that happened in their household. In one incident, Lalthangpuii accuses Silvarthangi of brimming over a pot while cooking a pig's food. Actually, her son, Rochuha was to blame for the incident. She did, however, cast a curse on her, "*Dawtsawisuh, mi sual nu, kan chhiahhlawh I nih hi. A thlawn a kan chawm che I ni lawm ni? rethei nu, I kawrte saw kan ta*". Don't tell lies, you wicked woman, you are our mere domestic servant. Are we looking after you without asking for anything in return? You wretched woman, your attire also belongs to us (*Silvarthangi* 97). These insulting remarks reflect the miseries of Silvarthangi. When she denies it and says no, Rochuhatears away the blouse that she planned to wear at the Sunday school conference. Her imagination was shattered, and

she frantically stayed in the house for the rest of the day. Not only her aunt, but all of her relatives, including the youngest, Rochuha, did not recognize Thangi and treated her as if she were merely their domestic maid.

Furthermore, the demise of her grandmother worsened Silvarthangi's depressing situation. Despite being tortured by her aunt, Thangi has been blessed with a stunning stare and great conduct. Accordingly, she has numerous courtiers. When the government official, *Babu* visited their village, everyone warmly welcomed him. Meanwhile, Silvarthangi's attractive appearance made him curious about her name and family background. Consequently, he invited her to have supper with him. Since *Babu* was keen on Thangi during his visit, rumours about their relationship began to circulate. Even Silvarthangi was curious about the *Babu* after he left the village. She imagined that if the *Babu* liked her, he would go with her to Aizawl away from the sight of her wicked aunt, Laithangpuii. However, she did not dare reveal her genuine feelings, not even to her close companion, Tlani.

Mangluaia, the son of their village chief, was captivated by her. Thangi, on the other hand, was uninterested in him due to his arrogance. Mangluaia was essentially a drunk with a loose character who was also conceited. One day, Thangi and Tlani went into the forest to fetch a log. Mangluaia, by some coincidence, got there and tried to seduce her while expressing his love for her. But Thangi fought back and did not intend to succumb by any means. So, she yelled and called her friend Tlani. Mangluaia was furious and threatened to shoot her if her body was moved. Thangi collapsed on the floor as a result of her fearful circumstances. The chief, Lalsailova, apologised to her uncle and aunty for his son's misbehavior. While Lianchhunga responded that it was common behaviour for young men, his wife, Laithangpuii, expressed disgust by saying that it was Thangi's fault because none of the other ladies had experienced anything like it. Everyone is astounded at her harsh and adverse words. Speculating that Thangi will bring a case against Mangluaia. However, to save their chief from humiliation, she accepted a sum of 40 rupees as mercy. Meanwhile, Lalhnuna courted Thangi as Havildar Lalhnuna. Hoping to get away from the oppression of her cruel aunt, she agreed to follow him. However, Thangi soon realised that Lalhnuna was nothing more than an unpaid Lance Naik, a liar, and a burglar. She further discovered that he was notorious because of his

misconduct in Kolasib. To confirm her doubts, Lalhnuna was arrested by the police in her presence when her child was just three months old.

Subsequently, Lalhnuna was sentenced to one and a half years in prison. After realising the true nature of Lalhnuna, Thangi reluctantly returned to her village, Saithah in shame. Her life in Saithah was once again miserable. She has a child to care for, which added to her misery. Her aunt, Laithangpuii, reprimanded her and made sarcastic remarks about her child on numerous occasions. Thanchhungi, her maternal aunt was supposed to be her next expectation. Unfortunately, when she arrived at her aunt's house, her uncle Kawlruma (Thanchhungi's spouse) informed her that her aunt was no more. Hearing such news made her frustrated and she lost all hope again. Meanwhile, Rokhuma, his cousin, consoled her and warmly welcomed her by slaughtering their pig. From that point onward, her uncle Kawlruma married another woman, she found solace and comfort in the family, where she was adored by her cousins.

Somewhat later, Lalsanglura (*Babu*) arrived in Thangi's village on duty. Since *Babu* had been staying at Thangi's house, he had come to understand that Thangi has her own child. Despite the fact that he was already married someone else, he still adores Thangi. He got married to a woman from a wealthy family, and they had three children. Since his spouse was arrogant, she often used derogatory language towards him and his own family. Consequently, his wife abandoned him and later married another person shortly after their divorce. After going through several years of wretchedness, there seemed to be a ray of hope in Silvarthangi's life. The *Babu* Sanglura proposed to Silvarthangi. When Lianchhunga and his wife, Laithangpuii, learned of *Babu's* proposal, they professed to love Silvarthangi, asserting that she was their cherished daughter and that the wedding ought to be held at their home. In any case, Sanglura did not agree with their plan and brought her to Aizawl for their wedding. Ultimately, the wedding service between Lalsanglura and Silvarthangi happened on wednesday at *Dawrpui Church* following the Christian marriage system with numerous well-wishers. Finally, after five years of disgrace and misery, Silvarthangi got back to Aizawl cheerfully and gloriously.

### 3.3.2 The Colonial influence on *Silvarthangi*:

If one thoroughly reads the story, he will discover many features of the colonial effect. Significantly, it was written at a time when chieftainship was about to be abolished. The people respected the overseers at the time. Besides, it was the starting point for the Second World War. The title itself, *Silvarthangi*, indicates colonial influence. As the title signifies, Silvarthangi was born during the silver jubilee year of King George the Fifth of England's coronation. Subsequently, to commemorate the silver jubilee of such a wonderful monarch, the chief of Saithah village, Lalsailova, named her 'Silvarthangi', which was one of the lovely and interesting names during those days. As the Mizos were unexposed during the pre-colonial period, they never composed such names as they were unfamiliar with English names other than Mizo names. Rosanga states that during the colonial period, Mizo names began to change with an addition of a prefix or foreign names. He further argues that the naming of babies and adults changes due to the emergence of a new culture (64). This corroborates that the name, Silvarthangi was created due to the influence of colonialism. The narrative demonstrates that the British were appreciated and esteemed by the Mizo people, especially their King.

Positively, one of the recurring themes in Mizo fiction is the enormous impact of Christianity, which is, without a doubt, the result of imperialism on Mizo society. As previously stated, the Mizo people were referred to as 'animists' and lived a secluded life in the early period. Because the Mizos were not aware of Christianity prior to the arrival of the British, they did not observe Sunday. Subsequently, there was no Sunday school gathering, and they made no fuss about their attire. However, during the colonial period, Christian missionaries educated the Mizo people. As a result, the Mizos gradually became more sophisticated, which resulted in changes in their cultural and social lives. As a result, the young people in the village, including Silvarthangi, were stressed over what outfit to wear at the Sunday school conference. As referenced before, Silvarthangi's cousin Rochuha annihilated her apparel, which she reserved for Sunday school gatherings. The Mizos were gradually imitating the western subculture in terms of Church administration, style, and outlook. It is a well-known fact that when Christianity arrived in Mizoram, Christian missionaries established a Sunday school in addition to formal schooling.

Accordingly, the portrayal of the Sunday school gathering is one more impact of imperialism in Zikpuii-Pa's fiction.

When the *Babu* visited Thangi's village in the narrative, everyone warmly greeted him and wishes to keep in touch with him. Since *Babu* was excited about Thangi during his visit, it sparked pieces of gossip concerning their relationship. Most likely, there were no administrative authorities in Mizoram during the pre-colonial period. Aside from the village chief and his elders, everybody enjoys equivalent privileges and opportunities. However, during the colonial period, the Mizos' social and cultural lives were altered and disrupted from the outside. Following the elimination of the chieftainship in Mizoram in 1954, the administration was profoundly influenced by white English rulers who were either new to the Mizo people or strangers to them. They hold a significant position in public authority and had grown to be extremely powerful. Because the colonial rulers were linked to the administration of the government, ethnic Mizo people aspired to come and be educated. As a result, white-collar workers have risen to become the Mizos new elite.

Since time immemorial, cultivation has been the primary livelihood of the Mizos. Because there was no other profession, everyone is working hard to ensure his or her survival. During the colonial period, they got familiar with some government administrators. Among them, the status of *Babu* is viewed as one of the esteemed positions in Mizoram. In general, government officials were respected and effective during the colonial era. When they come to the village, everyone greeted them warmly and made efforts to get along with them. The parents hoped to persuade their minds to become their future son-in-law. This clearly demonstrates white superiority over Mizos, which is, no doubt, one of the most significant effects of colonialism. The character of *Babu* in *Silvarthangi* reflects the love and admiration for the white-collar job. The *Babu's* excessive and revered popularity, as well as his power, reveals the colonial impact of Zikpuii-Pa's fiction.

Furthermore, the colonial impact on occupation can be seen in *Silvarthangi's* ancestors. Her grandfather, Lianluava, had been the *Chowkidar* in PWD Bangla, Saithah, and her family had been one of the well-to-do in the village. Liankunga and

Lianchhunga were the sons of PWD Bangla *Chowkidar* Lianluava, who worked tirelessly for the department until the end of his life. Following the demise of Lianluava, it is clear that the adoration of government servants has become a source of contention between the two sons mentioned above.

Furthermore, colonialism influenced Silvarthangi's mindset. Needless to say, the First World War is considered the primary participation of Mizo individuals in foreign relations. Since the Mizo men came into contact with the foreigners during the battle, the majority of the younger men have been involved and have tried to enlist as officers. Without a doubt, the Mizo young men who fought in World War II were financially independent, which gave them confidence and a broader perspective. As a result, such soldiers quickly became the most eligible bachelors in their village, and every maiden wished to marry such an army man. Silvarthangi is no different. Being vulnerable in the family and considering him as though he was a genuine Havildar Lahnuna, she progressively became attached to him. She later eloped and was given to him in marriage. The affairs of Silvarthangi and Lahnuna reveal the mentality of the Mizo maiden as their life partner, which is undeniably the influence of colonialism on Mizo society.

Historically, the most eligible husband for a Mizo maiden was a brave warrior known as a *Pasaltha*, who is revered in Mizo society. With the passage of time, the mentality of each Mizo maiden and their parents gradually shifted to that of either a government servant or a soldier, known as *Sipai* in Mizo. Every society has a good reflection on marriage and the process of selecting a life partner. Silvarthangi and Sanglura were married at *Dawrpui Church* in accordance with the Christian Marriage Act. This incident exemplifies the colonial impact even more. There was no such formal marriage ceremony in early Mizo society. Most likely, imperialism changed the marriage system in Mizo society.

One of the most significant effects of colonialism in *Silvarthangi* is the influence of Christianity. The account of *Silvarthangi* is about a sympathetic orphan girl who has been ill-treated by her aunt. Nonetheless, like Ralkapzauva in *C.C. Coy No. 27*, she believes that despite her many trials, the Almighty God never abandons her. Zikpuii-Pa states, "*Chutiang harsatna leh retheihna karah chuan Thangi chu Pathian malsawmna azarah hrisel tak leh ngaihtuahna famkim tak neiin a lo puitling*

ve a". Thangi has grown up healthy and mature in the midst of adversity and pitiful circumstances (98). Therefore, it is evident that Christianity is central to the Mizos existence, which is also a result of colonialism.

#### 3.4.1 *Kraws Bulah Chuan*:

Zikpuii-Pa wrote his second novel, '*Kraws Bulah Chuan*' in 1959 at Saitual (*Mizo Fiction* 104). The plot revolves around the protagonist, Lalsawma, who has fallen in love with a beautiful damsel named Thanchhingi. The narrative begins with a description of the Second World War and how it affected Mizoram and its inhabitants. In such a situation, Pastor Tlangkhuma, the protagonist, Lalsawma's father, maintains his faith in God and believes that nothing can destroy the bliss of his family. Despite his financial difficulties, he decides to send his beloved son, Lalsawma, to Shillong Government High School.

Lalsawma, being an obedient son, studied his lessons diligently and thus received the scholarship each month. Pastor Tlangkhuma has high aspirations for his son's future career as a doctor. Meanwhile, Lalsawma's sweetheart, Thanchhingi, was put under pressure to marry Subedar Lalzarliana by her parents. Lalzarliana was uneducated, wealthy, but boastful, and she did not want to marry someone like him. After Lalzarliana proposed to Thanchhingi, Lalsawma and Thanchhingi had a secret meeting about what to do at the moment. Lalsawma stated that both of them are having difficulties with their affairs. Lalsawma, like Thanchhingi, was unable to marry because he needed to complete his studies within four years. Unexpectedly, Thanchhingi's younger brother, Thankunga, had witnessed their covert meeting and immediately informed his father. Subsequently, gossip was spread throughout the entire village about their gathering. Everyone blamed Lalsawma for bothering Thanchhingi, the bride-to-be, and interfering with their lives. After hearing the gossip, Lalsawma's parents were ashamed and ungrateful of their son. As a result, Pastor Tlangkhuma chastised Lalsawma severely. Meanwhile, Thanchhingi married Subedar Lalzarliana, and Lalsawma also gradually matured.

During the outbreak of smallpox and cholera, many people travelled to Aizawl for injections and arm surgery. Among them, a fine and beautiful teenager, Hmingthansiami came there. She was the daughter of Pastor Laltawna, and she had been staying at her aunt's house. After a while, Lalsawma married her. Lalsawma

was pleased with his wife's appearance, conduct, and educational background. Despite the large age difference, both of them had a happy married life. A little later, Lalsawma took leave and went to Shillong. As it was one of Hmingthansiami's dream, it made her happy. The couple had three sons and one daughter. Lalduhkimi was the family's youngest and only daughter. After some time, Lalsawma was transferred to a remote area in Mizoram. As a result, the family decided that Lalsawma would go to his post by himself. Everyone in his new position wished him well.

At his neighbor's wedding, Lalsawma unexpectedly ran into his former lover. In light of their conversation, he realised that Thanchhingi had become a widow as a result of her husband's death. As they had no hostility between them, they continued their relationships not long after the gathering. As a result, word of their rekindled romance quickly spread throughout the entire village. Meanwhile, knowing about his son's illicit relationship with his former lover Thanchhingi, Lalsawma's father was enraged and did whatever it took to move his son. Simultaneously, Hmingthansiami became irritated and impatient with her husband's behaviour. For his part, Lalsawma was unable to contain his rage. As a result of his uncontrollable rage, he expelled both his spouse and his daughter. After a specific incident, Lalduhkimi, daughter of Lalsawma, became severely ill with diphtheria. As a doctor at Aizawl Hospital, he was the one who examined his dearest girl in order to provide clinical treatment. Unfortunately, despite his best efforts and abilities, Lalduhkimi died at the hands of his father, Lalsawma. As a loving father, the sudden demise of his beloved daughter had a profound effect on him. When he visited his daughter's grave, he was filled with guilt over her death. He realised God's love when he saw the cross planted on his daughter's grave. As a result, he knelt near the cross, confessed all his sins, and immediately asked for forgiveness. It was incredible that he had heard someone say Amen from behind. When he turned around, he saw Hmingthansiami standing silently with tears in her eyes. He hugged her and apologised for his mistakes as soon as he found her. As the title suggests, reconciliation and pardon eventually occur between the two individuals closest to the cross.

#### 3.4.2 The Colonial Influence in *Kraws Bulah Chuan*:



Toward the beginning of the account, the author presented the evolution of World War II, as well as its significant impacts on Mizoram and its inhabitants. Meanwhile, the first character introduced in the story is Pastor Tlangkhuma, the father of the protagonist Lalsawma. Such characters do not exist in the pre-colonial Mizo. Pastor Tlangkhuma keeps up with his trust in God and acknowledged that nothing can destroy the pleasure of his family. The portrayal of Pastor Tlangkhuma reflects *Sadawt* in pre-colonial Mizoram. Simultaneously, he is considered a colonial or postcolonial component in the story. To put it another way, the portrayal of Pastor Tlangkhuma, a Christian clergyman, reveals how Christianity influenced Mizo society in the post-colonial period. Christianity is, without a doubt, the result of Western imperialism.

Remarkably, the Second World War had an impact on Mizo society and destroyed family life. Meanwhile, Pastor Tlangkhuma wishes for his beloved son to become a medical doctor instead of joining the King's Commission Officers. In fact, in the early period, the Mizos were unfamiliar with the occupations of soldiers and other white-collar jobs. Although Thanchhingi and Lalsawma were profoundly infatuated with each other, they were isolated as Thanchhingi wedded Subedar Lalzarliana due to strong parental pressure. Lalzarliana was able to marry Thanchhingi solely because of his Subedar rank, demonstrating the respectable reputation of a *sepoy* (a soldier) among the Mizos. This reveals how important money was in colonial era Mizo society.

Third, because of the effect of colonialism, the hero Lalsawma, like most Mizo young men, expected to apply for the Military Commission, which was, without a doubt, one of the most prestigious positions during those days, because they partook in an agreeable life and were also in the good books of the public authorities. Even Lalsawma's sisters want him to pursue such a lovely profession. The obvious reason is that they had a stylish and alluring uniform, but their father was not allowed to do so. In terms of his Christian beliefs, Lalsawma's father tried to persuade him to study medicine. Being the son of a minister, Lalsawma's father believed that his son had to serve the weak people which is the best way to serve

God. This also reflected the incredible influence of Christianity among the Mizos as a result of colonialism. Following his father's wish, Lalsawma, an intelligent and obedient son, enrolled in Medical College. After getting his physician certification, he became a blessed gentleman, and everyone admired him. Parents with a lovely daughter make an attempt to win his heart, and they appear to be agreeable to him. It is true that since the introduction of education in Mizoram, Mizo young people have had a broader perspective and are more open to new ideas in terms of profession, business, and so on. Furthermore, one of the three major missions of the Christian Missionaries in Mizoram is the medical mission, or healing mission. To put it another way, the early Mizo religion was inextricably linked with the state of health, and healthcare was an important mission of Christianity, it became a valuable tool for attracting the unsophisticated Mizo people. Obviously, Lalsawma's decision to attend medical college is a result of colonial rule.

The title *Kraws Bulah Chuan* (Alongside the Cross), indicates that Christianity has had a significant impact on Mizo society. The term '*Kraws*' in the title refers to the Mizo language for Cross, which symbolises Jesus Christ's sufferings, which bring salvation to all humans, and is also the foundation of Christianity. Like the previous fiction, the title of *Kraws Bulah Chuan*, emphasized the colonial impact. Furthermore, the Bible teaches that those who sincerely apologise for committing a crime will be forgiven. Even the protagonist, Lalsawma, had an extramarital relationship with Thanchhingi, his first love, which caused him to divorce his wife. Nonetheless, the death of their beloved daughter, Lalduhkimi, proved to be a blessing in disguise for her parents. Both realised their error and moved closer to the cross. As previously stated, the cross represents Jesus Christ's commitment, and salvation is dependent on the Christian principle. It also implies forgiveness, which is highly valued in the Christian community.

Regarding the health condition of Mizo people, Chatterji describes, "The Mizos are hardy, industrious and healthy people like all other hill people of N.E. India. The indigenous Mizo doctors used to serve the sick and wounded with herbal medicines and chanting charms. Except Malaria (sic) and dysentery there were no

other epidemics. Once in 1874 they had a small pox epidemic” (366). This is a reference to the indigenous priest known as ‘*Bawlpu*’, who was an important figure in early Mizo society. He used to heal people with chanting and herbal medicines. Aside from that, Zikpuii-Pa emphasised the spread of epidemic sickness, which led to Lalduhkimi’s demise. It may not be wrong to state that the village ambience in pre-colonial Mizoram was fresh and healthy. However, as a result of their contact with outsiders, various epidemic diseases become widespread. At the same time, such an epidemic exposes the viability of the doctor.

Meanwhile, Lawmkunga has fittingly asserted, “The Missionaries had the fortune of enjoying the patronage of the then British officers in Mizoram namely Superintendents and Army officers who facilitated their works” (26). Taking this into account, there was good coordination and bonding between the British administrators and the English missionaries, which strengthened the effects of colonialism in Mizoram. As previously stated, the missionaries worked tirelessly to educate and develop the indigenous Mizo people. They established Sunday schools and formal schools, as well as dispensaries. Education and medical missions are an effective tools for persuading the indigenous Mizo people in primitive and unsophisticated nations such as the Mizo.

### 3.5.1 Summary of *Hostel Awmtu*:

*Hostel Awmtu* (1991) is basically a ghost story with a difference, one where the ghost is more a figure pathos be pitied than one who elicits fear of the unknown (*After Decades* 33). Since it has some elements of a horror novel, *Hostel Awmtu* may be considered a horror novel. As the title suggests, the story is about the ghost of one hosteller who is killed by an enigmatic person. One Sunday night, while his companions attended the Church service, Liankhuma was left alone in the hostel because of his unwell condition. While reading about the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 in Indian history, he noticed a distinction between the colonial period and the current administration. Because the book was written by the English, they emphasised the various torments and tortures inflicted on women and children by the Indians. Surprisingly, the current government claims that such rebellions become patriotic as

well as creates heroes. When Liankhuma was pondering the conflicting representations of Indian history between the past and the present, he heard an odd voice. He dashed out the door as soon as he heard this. When one person arrived, he had been beaten by his friends. As a result, he flees and is pursued by them. Then, fearfully, he exclaims, “Mother, I don’t want...” Meanwhile, another person instructs his friend to administer the injection. When he heard this, he screamed, “No, I don’t want to. Kindly pardon me, but do not pierce me”. The piercing voice is recognized right away by Liankhuma. As soon as he heard such a voice, he jumped up in anger. A fine young man stood before him as he was about to open the door for him. Despite the fact that his attire appeared antique, his handsome appearance did not suffer as a result of his smart appearance. When asked who stabbed Liankhuma, the man claimed it was him. Liankhuma inquired once more about the source of their contention. The man then described his love affair with a beautiful lady named Laltinchhingi, as well as their engagement. Liankhuma noticed in his photo that Laltinchhingi had a nice pair of eyes with feminine features. Since his sweetheart is beautiful and appealing, even his friends attempt to beat her up. The man went on to say that he was stabbed by some of his friends who made an attempt because they were jealous of him. Looking back at his agonising situation, the man began to cry. While Liankhuma was overcome with sadness, the man inquired as to his name and what he did. Subsequently, when Liankhuma narrated his story, the person let him know that he, as well, was a hosteller and that his room was right next to Liankhuma. The guy told Liankhuma about his inner turmoil, saying that the world was troublesome because of jealousy. Most likely, the pleasure of the world is love. Everyone’s dream is to marry the person they love and have wonderful children without the interference of others. Similarly, every parent cherishes their children. They have poured their hearts and souls into making their destination a reality. Since the hostel sentinel was taken away from his beloved maiden, Liankhuma felt that he had become a sympathetic person. Their main motivation for the stab is simply jealousy.

When the man left the room, his companions knocked on Khuma’s door. Then Khuma described his strange encounter with such a mysterious individual in

his room. Everybody was astonished and appalled. When he suggests going to the hospital, his friends are perplexed. But he responded that he wasn't talking about himself; he was talking about the guy who simply left his room, was stabbed by his friends, and needed to be escorted to the hospital. Meanwhile, he realised that he had locked his door after his friends had left him. Furthermore, a glass of water he placed on the table remained unaltered. When they thoroughly examined the room, they were astounded to discover that everything in the room was normal. According to the Hostel Chowkidar, everyone assumed that such a mysterious man would become the Hostel sentinel. The Chowkidar went on to say that the man has lived there since the hostel was built. He is, in fact, a handsome and brilliantly talented young man who is the only son of his parents. He got engaged to a lovely lady, but he was stabbed in the hostel out of jealousy. His corpse was thrown into the well because he was murdered secretly. When they discovered his lifeless body, he no longer resembled a human being. Although they had some suspects, they were yet to be confirmed. Hence, they did not punish anyone. The Chowkidar who reported the incident appeared to be elderly with grey hair. The narrator, Liankhuma, was profoundly moved by this occurrence. He felt compassion for the person who enjoyed worldly pleasures but was murdered and tortured by jealous people. Although the incident happened more than 100 years prior, he actually set a revile on them.

### 3.5.2 Colonial Impact in *Hostel Awmtu*:

It is clear from the account of *Hostel Awmtu* that Christianity has had a significant impact on Mizo society as a whole. Regardless of how foolish they are, everybody is keen on going to the church service, in Mizoram as well as outside Mizoram, which is reflected by Liankhuma's companions who attended the church. Furthermore, there is a disparity between colonial accounts of the Sepoy Mutiny and contemporary accounts. The elders used to tell stories about how the military rebellion, also known as the 'Sepoy Mutiny', in 1857, was the result of the rebellious, wicked, and robbers unburdening themselves. In this context, the present work of fiction can be viewed from a postcolonial perspective. Postcolonial literature, in general, opposes the literature of colonial people written by colonisers, particularly the English. Similarly, the English writers who wrote about the Sepoy Mutiny emphasised the wicked Indians various atrocities and burdens on women and

vulnerable people. Despite what might be expected, the Indian government views such individuals as nationalists and daring fighters. Whenever colonialism occurred, the colonial people and colonisers had a different interpretation of history, as depicted in this fiction. Despite being a small book, it contains a moral message. Jealousy, according to Zikpuii-Pa, is one of the most prevalent evils that pervades almost every individual and it is one of the main factors in the conflict in the world. In the nuances of notable literature, jealousy plays a significant role. Meanwhile, the juxtaposition of affection and jealousy illustrates the realities of human existence.

Despite the fact that it is a brief tale, in view of the plot, it can be viewed that it was composed based on actual events somewhere outside of Mizoram. In this regard, Khiangte observes the story as ‘a kind of urban legend’ (118). Moreover, colonial influence can be seen within the title *Hostel Awmtu* itself. Before the British colonial rule and annexation, the Mizos were never familiar with the term ‘hostel’. After being educated by missionaries, the Mizos gradually acquired a broader perspective and came into contact with outsiders. As a result, many Mizo young people aspired to be educated and, consequently, sought higher education in places other than Mizoram, such as Shillong and Gauhati. Many Mizo young people, including Liankhuma, stayed in hostels because they had no other option to stay. Certainly, the rural Mizo people were imitating the western way of life, which is a common feature of colonialism. After being colonised, the indigenous Mizo people had become accustomed to such colonial practises.

Last but not the least, the main theme of this fiction is the negative effects of jealousy. It may not be wrong to say that jealousy had no place in the Mizo mentality prior to colonization as they lived a simple life. Historically, Mizo morality was guided by the so-called *Tlawmngaihna*, which represents selflessness and humanity. Of course, there were probably a few wicked people in the public arena, but the vast majority of them were selfless, independent, and beneficent. In the narrative, it is revealed that a few jealous minds drove them to murder the hostel sentinel, who had a bright future. Because life is so valuable, it is poignant to take someone’s life. Apparently, losing one’s morality has a negative impact on a large number of innocent people. For this reason, everyone must maintain morality to live a peaceful

and comfortable life, which appears to be the primary message of Zikpuii-Pa in this narrative.

### 3.6.1 Summary of *C.C. Coy No. 27*:

The novel *C.C. Coy No. 27* portrays the scholastic life record of the protagonist, Ralkapzauva, who hailed from the far eastern part of Mizoram. The plot of the story is based primarily on the character of Ralkapzauva. During World War II, Ralkapzauva's father went to France to fight Germany. Among his precious gems, Ralkapzauva recalls the white faded blazer he used to wear during courtship in Marselli, as well as the *tukuli mal*<sup>5</sup>. His father is referred to as 'Vanrumi Pa' by his comrades, which is the traditional way of addressing men in Mizo society. *Vanrumi Pa* means Vanrumi's father, indicating that Vanrumi is the family's eldest child, and his real name is not given in the story. Since Ralkapzauva's father has the gift of the gab, his narration about the greatness of King Immanuel of Italy was well-received by his fellow villagers. Subsequently, because of his broad experience, men surrounded him every Sunday to listen to his exciting conversation. The account takes place in the peaceful period following Germany's defeat by England. The Chief, Dolura, asked the village school teacher, Zakiamlova, to read the first Mizo newspaper, *Mizo leh Vai Chanchin*. When Zakiamlova reads the newspaper, everyone fell silent. Ralkapzauva's father, had high hopes for his beloved son's career. After completion of lower primary, Ralkapzauva moved to Aizawl to continue his education at the age of 12. When he approached Aizawl, he became excited about seeing the capital city of Mizoram. Beyond question, Aizawl was his most desired destination during his adolescence. He had heard that Aizawl is a large city with a couple of thousand homes, and a large portion of the homes are roofed with corrugated iron. He felt fortunate to see the city of Aizawl, DC Bungalow, and government workplaces because he had never seen them before. As a result, he was the first of his companions to have the opportunity to visit Aizawl. When he thought about the *Babu*, he realised that, while he was powerful, there may be someone more powerful to whom he aspired. For all of these reasons, he felt sorry about his poor and unsophisticated upbringing. Remarkably, his father, unlike him, did not hesitate

to interact with government officials such as C.I., Rahsi, and others. A little later, his father put him in the Jubilee Hostel in Aizawl.

Ralkapzauva's first day of school was an unforgettable experience. His father accompanied him to school. As a brilliant and outstanding student, the headmaster informed him that he could receive a monthly scholarship of three rupees, which was welcome news for them. It may not have been such a big deal for the wealthy, but it works a lot for them, gives them life, and it is the path to their goals. Subsequently, he hoped to enter High School after completing one year. At the same time, they did not have enough money to pay for the admission, so he had complete faith in his father's *Tukuli Mal*. Apart from this, if he attained the first position in the sixth class, he might be eligible for a scholarship. Because of his diligence and perseverance, he won first place in the first terminal examination. However, his results have led to discrimination from his friends. He did not want to go home because he wanted to do well on his exam. For this reason, his father supported him and accompanied him throughout his exam. As conjectured, his diligent effort paid off, and he achieved 1<sup>st</sup> position in the final exam. Accordingly, Ralkapzauva was sent to Shillong for further studies. The local YLA, Young Lushai Association (now Young Mizo Association), organised a farewell event for him before he left his village. Consequently, they sang a famous Mizo patriotic song titled, '*Mizo Fate U, Finna Zawng Ula*' for him. To show their appreciation, the entire village, including the Chief, bade him farewell. Even the children bid him farewell on the day he leaves his village for Shillong.

Ralkapzauva's expectations were exceeded by the grandiose organization of the farewell programme. Furthermore, they also delivered a sum of money from their pockets, which has been carefully kept in his handwoven pocket known as '*Khiangkawi Ipte*'. Therefore, Ralkapzauva believed that the moment they organised the farewell programme was the start of his patriotic love. He had grown to love his home state of Mizoram since that time. No doubt, he realised his love and fondness for Mizoram through their humble demeanour and humanity. Moreover, from the day itself, he noticed the magnificence and greatness of Mizoram. But, in one sense, greatness does not imply worldly greatness; it rather lies in cherishing one's fellows. After an extensive and hectic journey, he arrived in the city of Shillong at 1 pm. But



he failed to see Shillong as he had anticipated. He envisioned that the greater part of the individuals in Shillong are English-speaking people. On the contrary, the majority of them were Khasi, with a few non-Mizo Indians among them, as the Mizo alluded to them as ‘*Vai*’. One of the most memorable events in his life was his meeting with an old Gurkhali porter (Kuli) Bahadur there. When they first met Bahadur was wearing a porter badge, a brass plate with the inscription ‘C.C. Coy No. 27’. As a result, Zikpuii-Pa has skillfully created the title of this fiction, *C.C. Coy No. 27*. In light of their conversation, Ralkapzauva realised that Bahadur’s father, like his father, was a World War II veteran who had served in France.

Since then, Ralkapzauva established a bond of friendship with Bahadur. In the narrative, Ralkapzauva was abused by his seniors while staying at the Earle Hostel in Shillong. Due to their insulting and despicable behaviour, he felt helpless and desperate at times. In such a pathetic condition, Bahadur was the one who always sacrificed his life to help him untiringly. Without any fault, he was bullied and looked down on by Saichhunga and his friends. As a result of his horrible involvement in Shillong, he missed his village, including the Chief, Rolura, and the teacher, Zakiamlova. Besides, he especially missed Sundays in his village. Meanwhile, his main problem was the lack of funds. His scholarship was insufficient to meet his needs because he wanted the entire textbook. Later, the headmaster invited him to join the Boy Scouts and promised to buy him a uniform. However, as a boy of integrity and faith, he declined such an offer, stating that he would rather pay the money he received from his father. Deeply touched by his act of honesty, instead of scolding him, the headmaster recommended that he be sure to be an excellent boy. That is why he no longer had to worry about money. Due to his sincerity and perseverance, he passed his lesson with an outstanding grade. When he left Shillong for his village, his father travelled to Aizawl to meet him. When he arrived in his village, he was greeted by a group of well-wishers who presented him with chickens and eggs. When the YLA hosted a welcome programme for him, Chief Dolura proudly eulogized Ralkapzauva for his educational achievements. He further emphasised the importance of recognising such an educated and brilliant mind in his village, and he directed that at least three young men carry his belongings.

Since Ralkapzauva kept up with integrity, hard work, and genuineness, he made a fine new friend, Chowdhury, whose father, S.N. Chowdhury, was an Assam Civil Service Officer with an adorable house and a spacious compound. After passing class VII, he went to Chowdhury's place as invited. It was a wonderful and memorable experience for him, as he had never experienced such a relaxed setting or a moment of joy in his life. Besides, he had the opportunity to visit Cooch Behar with the generous support and guidance of Chowdhury's father, S.N. Chowdhury along with his family. No doubt, his seniors were envious of him, but they could no longer despise and bully him. As time passed by, his diligence paid off, and most of his classmates treated him as their superior in terms of academics, discipline, and so on. Due to his good performance in his exams, he was titled, "Honorary Aide-de-Camp to the Governor of Assam". For this reason, he became acquainted with the renowned and respected personalities in Shillong, which his fellow students never did.

While he was in class 10, his father sold his *tukuli* for 150 rupees. It became Rs.600 after a few payments. Meanwhile, Chowdhury's father earned Rs.700 per month, revealing the financial disparity between Ralkapzauva and his friend Chowdhury. Despite their financial disparity, Chowdhury remained Ralkapzauva's loyal companion, which is admirable. Ralkapzauva's mother wanted him to go home and look for a job like Circle Interpreter, etc. after completing his matriculation. Meanwhile, he wished to enroll in a College in Shillong. He enrolled in Syhlet MC College while he was in a perplexing situation. After going through numerous hardships, Ralkapzauva completed his training and immediately joined the King's Commissioned Officers within the Indian Army, having previously attended Dehra Dun Military Academy. Even though they were competing with the Englishmen at Dehra Dun, the English treated them as substandard. Regardless, Ralkapzauva did not feel deficient and thought of them as equal. Since he did not treat them as his superiors, they later realised he was not inferior to them. During the training programme, they learned about the parade, map reading, signalling, firing, philosophy, and other topics. Since he performed very well in his training, he was granted the best cadet sword and therefore promoted to Second Lieutenant Rank.

When he arrived in his village, everyone welcomed him and respected him. He interestingly narrated the procedure of his training as well as his achievement at the YLA's celebration function. Subsequently, he contributed ten rupees, which were extremely valuable at the time, to the YLA. His father decided to slay a Mithun to commemorate his achievement. On that very day, the village chief, Rolura, demanded that Ralkapzauva wear his full uniform. Everyone respected and admired him for accomplishing such a feat as a boy hailing from a far-flung vicinity in Mizoram.

Somewhat later, Ralkapzauva moved towards Arakan, and later, Burma to battle against Japan. Finally, when America used the Atom Bomb to defeat Japan, the war came to an end. After the war, he stayed in Burma for a while before joining the Assam Regiment. When India gained independence, he was no longer a King Commissioned Officer, but an Indian Commissioned Officer. Then he took part in the Kashmir War and stayed for an extended period of time. By God's grace, he was then promoted to Major and transferred to the 3rd Battalion, Assam Regiment. On his way to Shillong, he unexpectedly ran into his old friend J.N. Chowdhury. He learned that, as a result of his father's wealth, he joined the IAS after passing his MA and presently held the Deputy Secretary status. When Ralkapzauva arrived in Shillong, he was eager to see his devoted friend Bahadur, but he was unable to locate him. A young Gorkhali porter approached him while he was looking for Bahadur and offered to carry his luggage. The young man informed him that he was the son of C.C. Coy No. 27 and that his father had passed away. To authenticate his narration, the young man displayed his No. 27, which he had inherited from his father. Ralkapzauva, deeply saddened by the untimely demise of his faithful friend, Bahadur, allowed his sympathetic son to bring his baggage and gave him Rs. 30/-, which he intended to offer to his dad.

### 3.6.2 The Colonial and Postcolonial Influence on *C.C. Coy No. 27*:

So far, the impact of colonialism on Zikpuii-Pa's fiction has been highlighted in the previous fiction. Similarly, in the present fiction, Zikpuii-Pa, depicts several colonial impacts. At the same time, an examination of this fiction reveals that some postcolonial elements have also been incorporated. Because postcolonialism is the

sequence of colonialism, postcolonialism cannot be examined without first addressing colonialism. Furthermore, colonialism has been linked to imperialism. At the start of the narrative, the author introduced the readers to the village and its people, to which the protagonist belongs.

Although the author did not specifically mention the village name, it is clear that the village is located in the far eastern part of the Lushai Hills. Even in the most remote areas of Mizoram, the village atmosphere was enthralled by colonialism from the start. In brief, colonial sentiments and perspectives have a strong influence on the majority of the characters. Following the traditional Mizo culture, the men of the village have a light discussion in the protagonist Ralkapzauva's residence, which is set up near the congregation on Sunday. During such a discussion, the village chief (*Lal* in Mizo) Dolura was roosted on his unique seat made by the western individuals. He, all things considered, underlined a topic, nothing farther than the magnificence of the British Sovereign, Queen Elizabeth of England, whom the Mizos named her '*Kumpinu*'. Besides, the Mizo menfolk's war experience occupied a significant topic in several conversations during those days. Given the historical context, familiarity with World War II was a source of pride and superiority among the villagers. As a result of his participation in France during the First World War, Ralkapzauva's father felt prominent and he is revered by the villagers, confirming the profound impact of colonial rule in the village.

The setting area is in the remote eastern regions of Mizoram. In this context, the setting can be viewed through the lens of '*Eurocentrism*'. In fact, Europeans saw 'Orientals' as unsophisticated and uncivilised people, not just as people from the East. Because the East represents ignorance and unrefinement, Zikpuii-Pa also placed Ralkapzauva's character in the postcolonial mentality and regarded his village as primitive, which is representative of the Orientals. In the narrative of *C.C. Coy No. 27*, the writer repetitively stresses the crude and primitive nature of the village. As a result, Ralkapzauva's mind has been profoundly influenced by the inferiority of his village in which the protagonist is located, his Mizo peers, and, at times, his father. In such a way, he often used the word '*Mawl*'<sup>6</sup> many times in the course of the story. To supplement this, Lalnunchanga's famous novel, *Pasalhate Ni Hnuhnung*, contains the colonial mentality of *Bawrhsap* Mc Cabe, who says, "To instill that we

are incomparable to the ignorant Mizo, we should spoil their self-belief. Therefore, we will be able to imbibe the white individual's supremacy" (My Trans., 221). Taking this into account, the *Bawrhsap*'s remark accurately reflects Ralkapzauva's colonial mentality in *C.C. Coy No. 27*. In addition, Zuali notices:

Colonial discourse is mainly manifested in Mizo culture and society through the consideration of the white man as being superior, and of the stereotyping of the Mizo ancestors as being savage head-hunters who are backward, unintelligent, foolish, weak, cowardly and helpless against the might of the British Empire. In accordance with the ideology of the colonising mission, colonial rule has been portrayed as effecting the transformation of the Mizos from being primitive and uncivilised to being civilised and modernised through the introduction of Christianity and education (11).

To keep this in mind, Ralkapzauva's attitude has been guided by the white man's superiority, and as a result, he regards the stereotypical Mizo human as backward and substandard. Thus, to overcome his backwardness and uncivilised nature in a rapidly changing competitive world, education appeared to be the only solution for him, which is, without a doubt, the result of colonial rule in Mizoram.

Moreover, Gayatri Spivak coined the term "othering", which is one of the central concerns of postcolonial discourse. As previously stated, Western colonial rulers regard themselves as 'self', while the rest of the colonial subjects are regarded as 'others'. Bill Ashcroft, et al., contends:

In general terms, the 'other' is anyone who is separate from oneself. The existence of others is crucial in defining what is 'normal' and in locating one's own place in the world. The colonized subject is characterized as 'other' through discourses such as primitivism and cannibalism, as a means of establishing the binary separation of the colonizer and colonized and asserting the naturalness and primacy of the colonizing culture and world view" (154).

Therefore, it is clear that Ralkapzauva's character has been portrayed as self-centered and egoistic. As a result, he prioritises his personal profession above all else. Thus, he represents the 'self', while the rest of the characters represent the

'other'. Given the time period, the narrative was written when the Sailo chief's superiority had gradually eroded as a result of colonialism. During the pre-colonial period, the chief, particularly the Sailo chief, exercised absolute power within his village. However, after being colonised and subdued by the British, the Colonial rulers instituted a new administrative system to ensure the smooth and better management of the Mizo people. The behaviour of Chief Dolura and his residents demonstrates that the Mizo people may have had respect, and uneasiness towards the white provincial rulers who ruled them.

Moreover, the protagonist, Ralkapzauva, and his father's demeanour and behaviour during their meeting with *Varsiar Babu* at Paikhai Bangla, reflected the power and supremacy of British colonialism. Following that, after being impressed by the *Babu*, Ralkapzauva began to question his father about the possibility of becoming a '*Sap*', which made his father astonished, and the incident is not surprising given the historical context. According to Ralkapzauva, the '*Babu*' represents an Indian, whereas the *Bawrhsap* represents a British administrator. Notably, at the end of the narrative, a simple rural boy from a distant location is transformed into *Sap*. When he arrived in Aizawl, he realised how filthy he had become in comparison to the kids there. As a matter of fact, they did not identify their unrefined manner in remote areas such as his village. Besides, they lacked the intelligence to protect themselves due to a lack of information.

The protagonist's name, Ralkapzauva, must also be mentioned. Ralkapzauva is a Mizo name that denotes a great deal of experience as a warrior. Since Ralkapzauva's father served in the First World War, it is assumed that he chose the name for his son in honour of his service. It is customary for the Mizos to give a newborn child a name that honours their bravery and outstanding achievement. As a result, the name Ralkapzauva has some colonial elements to it. Regarding the setting of time, Paul Lalremruata claims:

There is no exact record of the time when this fiction was written but the introduction in the book tells us that it was written during the author's training on District Administration at Nashik District near Bombay. It is recorded that the author joined the Indian Foreign Service in the year 1962; hence it can be assumed that *C.C. Coy. No.27* was written by Zikpuii-Pa

during 1963-'64 while having training. Through the period when the fiction was written was a Post-colonial era, but the setting, the plot and the characters portrayed a colonial era. This fiction interestingly portrayed how Mizo traditional culture and western colonial culture wrestled among themselves and how the Mizo traditional culture was surpassed and suppressed in every way by the whites (n.pag).

Taking this into consideration, despite enjoying the traditional Mizo culture, the indigenous Mizo people gradually absorbed the western style unintentionally as a result of colonialism. From the Mizo perspective, tea is an indication of welcome. Consequently, Ralkapzauva recounts how, as the gathering's host, they used to serve tea on an aluminium plate in their home every Sunday. Thus, the way of serving tea likewise shows the western impact. Moreover, it is clear that traditional Mizo songs have been transformed into Christian hymns. Ngurliana argues, "The Mizo native folk songs were rejected as satanic elements when they became Christians" (158-159). Accordingly, the young people practised the Christian hymns and solfa for Sunday, which could be heard from Ralkapzauva's home. Needless to say, the Mizos developed a rich collection of folk songs prior to the arrival of British colonialism and Christianity. Since they have never had anything to do with hymns or solfa, singing hymns and solfa exposes not only Aizawl (then Aijal) but also a remote corner of Mizoram that had been heavily influenced by Christianity as a result of colonialism. Therefore, it is clear that Christianity had a significant impact on the style and composition of Mizo poetry.

Let us now turn our attention to the main character, Ralkapzauva. His mind is fascinated and excited with admiration and imitation of the white colonial ruler from his first appearance in the story. Consequently, his primary goal is to attain the reputation of a *Babu*, which is far superior to that of his fellow villagers. When one thoroughly reads the account, it is clear that Ralkapzauva's spectacular success is primarily due to his determination and hard work. At the same time, it is undeniable that his unwavering faith in God is another reason, and it served as his guiding principle throughout his life. For example, whenever he was in financial trouble, he frantically expressed, "*Pathian ringa in hnem ngawt mai loh chu tihngaihna dang a awm thin lo a ni*". Believing in God is the most effective way to soothe me, and there

may be no other way (22). Without a doubt, Christianity has had a profound impact on everyone's life. Not only in difficult times but also in times of success, Ralkapzauva acknowledged that it could only happen by God's grace. For instance, "*Result chu kan khaw vai kal in an rawn hawn a, fur ruahtui hnuaia ka lallukhum hloh tawh chu Pathian khawngaihna ka hmu let leh ta a*". My result was conveyed by our fellow villagers who had gone to Aizawl. By God's grace, I can reclaim my misplaced crown in difficult times (24). This highlights the change in Mizo mentality in the Christian era. In this context, Ralkapzauva represents all Mizos. When they were sad, the Mizos would say, "God exists every time". Likewise, when achievement occurs in their lives, they would say, "It happens because of the guidance of God", which validates that the majority of the Mizos have taken on a profound connection with God.

It is obviously true that Mizo individuals have been affected by the war over the past several decades. Accordingly, some Mizo men fought in the First World War in France, which is considered the first of its kind in their involvement in international affairs. In this context, it is essential to refer to the Mizo experience in France, which led to many fascinating things and much humour. For instance, it is humorous that they frequently refer to France by saying, '*Feren ram kal theuh theuh*', which means, 'those who have previously visited France'. When Ralkapzauva arrives in Shillong, he discovers that his friend Bahadur, like his father, was a World War II veteran who had served in France. Since then, Bahadur turned into a reliable companion of the protagonist and stayed dedicated to him through the whole story without expecting anything in return. This account shows that, in addition to the Mizos, the other Northeast individuals have likewise been in touch with the Europeans.

One more central issue that should be focused on is the pathetic state of the protagonist, Ralkapzauva, because of the evil treatment of his seniors in the Earle Hostel, which is referred to as "ragging" in the modern era. Undeniably, ragging is one of the common issues even in the contemporary era. Almost certainly, Zikpuii-Pa has been an author with a broad perspective who was familiar with diverse issues that were consistently happening in various societies. Unlike the majority of Mizo fiction writers, he did not confine his fiction to Mizoram and its people, with settings



ranging from far-east Mizoram to the mainland and North India. Since he had a cosmopolitan outlook, he became aware of the various evils that run through society. Without a doubt, the Mizo people were unfamiliar with other societies and cultures during the pre-colonial period. However, after education was introduced in Mizoram and an educational institution was established by Christian missionaries, the ethnic Mizo people became increasingly interested in education and aspired to further their studies. As a result, many young people relocated to Shillong, which is regarded as the main centre of higher education in Northeast India.

Ralkapzauva's first year in Shillong was both terrible and pathetic. Apparently, he had two worlds: his village and Shillong. His villagers were proud of him for pursuing his education in a sophisticated city like Shillong, and they envied him. On the contrary, his experience in Shillong was an agonizing one and far exceeded his expectations. In reality, he had become a victim of ragging, which was unknown in pre-colonial Mizo society. It is clear that after being colonised, Mizo young people became acquainted with the hostel environment, and ragging is one of the most common issues in hostel life. The description of ragging depicts the great influence of colonialism in the Northeast, as Zikpuii-Pa located Earle Hostel in Shillong. The narrative shows the impact of colonialism on Christianity, education, social life, value systems, fashion, and so on. Besides, the Mizos involvement in the First and Second World Wars altered their outlook, mentality, value system, and so on. As previously stated, another impact of Colonialism in Mizo society as depicted in *C.C. Coy No. 27* is a preference for white-collar jobs. Some educated parents wish to relocate their children to Shillong for advanced studies and obtain white-collar employment as a result of colonialism.

It is essential to reiterate that both the First World War and the Second World War endorsed and instilled a sense of patriotism. As a result, many Mizo young men were determined to join the Indian army and serve their country, even though the common people were apprenticed as ordinary soldiers. After overcoming numerous obstacles, the protagonist, Ralkapzauva, completed his studies and entered the Indian Army as a King's Commissioned Officer, and he went to Dehra Dun for military training. When India gained independence, he was assigned to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, Assam Regiment, and he returned to Shillong. When India acquired freedom, he was

allocated to the third battalion, Assam Regiment, and he went back to Shillong. This reflected the impact of colonialism and the great wars on the North Eastern people. Aside from these, the story introduces readers to a variety of issues concerning educational institutions in Aizawl. Back then, there were only educational institutions that met middle school standards. Apparently, the English did not support the establishment of high school standards, which is extremely painful for the Mizo people. The description of the educational institution also reveals British educational policies. In general, a reading of *Zikpuii-Pa C. C. Coy No. 27* gives us a glimpse of the features of colonial impact as well as European magnificence. It depicts British rule over the ethnic Mizo community and their chiefs (Sailo Lal).

Significantly, Christianity and education had a profound impact on the overall mindset of the village. It had a particular impact on the actions and perspectives of the chiefs and their elders. The colonial culture and values, which included education and religion, appear to have eroded the traditional values and culture of the pre-colonial Mizo people. Ralkapzauva's enthusiasm during his first visit to Aizawl was remarkable. He admired Aizawl primarily because it was the administrative headquarters of his idols, the White British rulers. When he arrived in Aizawl, he realised his humble origins and compared himself to the children of Aizawl. He quickly adopted a sense of inferiority because he was dissatisfied with his humble village surroundings. Notably, colonialism reveals the superiority of the coloniser and the inferiority of the colonial nations, a phenomenon Nagarajan referred to as "Cultural Cringe" (187).

No doubt, Ralkapzauva's sense of inferiority exemplifies one of the key features of the colonial impact on Mizo society. At the same time, it is clear that the effects of colonialism in Mizoram did not spare even the most innocent children. Consequently, Mizo children consider white people to be demi-divine beings who manipulate and subjugate the entire world. This demonstrates the significant impact of colonial rule in Mizoram. *Rahsi, Bawrhsap, Pisa In, Babu*, etc. are true colonial products because they represent the supremacy and grandeur of the white Europeans who colonized the Mizo people.

The account further exposes the external impact of colonialism on Mizo society. The Mizos used to live a humble and simple existence. They were self-assured and envious of no one because they were ignorant of other cultures and lifestyles. However, as time passed, they regarded such humble life as primitive and unsophisticated due to the colonizer's enormous influence. Mizo individuals have become educated throughout pioneer rule as such an educational institution was set up by the Christian Missionaries. Hence, most Mizo children have been enthralled by the prospect of attending school. They gradually became more ambitious about their education outside of Mizoram as time went on. Because of this, Ralkapzauva is an archetypal Mizo young man who represents all the Lushai students around him.

In terms of his admiration for the white people known as '*Sap*', the protagonist continued his studies in Shillong. Even in Shillong, he was not kept apart by colonial influence. It also plays a prominent role in his life and career once more. Because Ralkapzauva could not abandon his admiration and reverence for white people, he quickly became the preferred choice of the white gentleman, who is the Headmaster himself. Later on, the Headmaster becomes his mentor in his future endeavor. Although he could be mentored by two other reputable individuals, Ralkapzauva's mentor required him to be an English gentleman because there is no one else who can supplant the white man. As a result of the colonial hangover, he gradually absorbed colonial sentiments and mentality. Through this narrative, it is undeniable that Ralkapzauva's entire life was spent admiring and envying the '*Sap*' (Englishmen). There was one individual other than the English individuals in his life, who was 'Bahadur', with whom he was promptly affectionate from their first meeting. Again, the main reason for Ralkapzauva's admiration for Bahadur appears to be that Bahadur's father, like his father, was an army man who served in the World War in France. Most likely, his interest and admiration for Bahadur, a *Kuli*, have been generated by a shared bond with his beloved father. Because colonialism and cultural imperialism are inextricably linked, the consistent notion of excessive admiration for the English people is a fine example of cultural imperialism. It is evident that Zikpuii-Pa skillfully situated colonialism and cultural imperialism in *C.C. Coy No. 27* in this regard.

As a matter of fact, Zikpuii-Pa's characters are deeply rooted in the Mizo tradition. They have no intellectual capacity and have never been abroad, with the exception of Vanrumi Pa, who had once been to France during the First World War. Because they do not interact directly with the white British colonisers, colonialism is an external power for the entire village. Another significant incident that deserves the reader's attention is when the protagonist, Ralkapzauva, returns to his native village after becoming an army officer and the people acclaimed him. To show his appreciation for Ralkapzauva's accomplishment, the chief presented him with fermented liquor in the sight of the Church elders. As previously stated, Mizos converted to Christianity shortly after British colonial rule, resulting in a radical shift in traditional cultures and values. According to Christian doctrine, drinking is a sin that must be avoided at all costs. It is surprising that the church elders did not dare to oppose and criticise their chief in such a religious milieu. Due to colonial influence, even the Church elders are unable to maintain religious morality. This incident also reveals Zikpuii-Pa's deep preoccupation with morality.

### 3.7.1 Summary and Colonial Impact in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*:

Since the detailed story of *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* has been featured in the preceding chapter, it is not necessary to reiterate a detailed description of this story here. As mentioned earlier, the narrative describes the social and political existence of Mizoram in 1966, the era of *Rambuai*. The protagonist, Chhuanvawra, recounts the narrative in a personal way, like *C.C. Coy No. 27*. The account mostly deals with the intricate romantic tale between the protagonist, Chhuanvawra, Doctor Selthuama's cherished son, and his sweetheart, Ngurthansangi. Their relationships come with numerous inconveniences as an outcome of the political turmoil called '*Rambuai*' in Mizoram. Zikpuii-Pa distinctively depicts the number of virtuous young ladies and wedded women who were physically taken advantage of by the Indian army during *Rambuai*. While addressing the various implications of *Rambuai*, Zikpuii-Pa likewise portrayed what the English colonial rule had meant for Mizo society, along with the Mizos reaction to the transition.

### 3.7.1 Colonial and postcolonial effects in Zikpuii-Pa's fiction:

The significance and nature of imperialism and how far Zikpuii-pa arranged colonialism in his fiction have been expressed previously. The terms "colonialism"

and “postcolonialism” have been integral to world history throughout the most recent two centuries. Colonial literature denotes writings composed in the course of the colonial generation, and it has been, for the most part, written by the colonial rulers, totally dependent on their perspective. On the other hand, postcolonial literature signifies literature written in a ‘postcolonial’ period, generally written by the members of the colonised nation. It is a common reality that every time colonialism takes place, works of writing from the colonised nations emerge that are usually a reaction against the colonizers. Such literary works are referred to as ‘postcolonial literature’. Like colonialism, most writers cope with the issue of post-colonialism in the current literary situation. In this fast-changing world, it is obvious that several writers, critics, scholars, and students have been fascinated by this subject matter.

To understand the meaning and concept of postcolonial theory clearly, it is necessary to discuss postcolonial theory. The term postcolonial is a combination of two terms such as ‘post’ which means ‘after’, and ‘Colonial’, which has been defined by *Longman Advanced American Dictionary* as “relating to the control of countries by a more powerful distant country” (246). As a result, postcolonial literature can be defined as writings about the dominance of large and powerful countries over small nations and territories following colonization. As determined by Shehla Burney:

Postcolonial theory is a contemporary school of thought...Indeed, postcolonial theory has been used increasingly as a methodology to research issues dealing with the nature of cultural identity, gender, race, social class, ethnicity, and nationality in postcolonial societies. ...Postcolonial theory investigates the impact of the European conquest upon colonized countries and studies their responses and discourses of resistance to cultural approbation and imperial domination. Postcolonialism does not simply imply “after the end of colonialism” but also “after the era of colonialism started” (41-43).

This is a clear description of postcolonial theory along with its key concerns. Besides, Nagarajan argues:

The nomenclature 'postcolonialism' is used to refer to all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day. Postcolonialism examines and analyses the aftermath of colonization, and the effects of colonial oppression... Colonialist discourse represents the language in which the colonizers expressed their superiority over the natives. The natives were uncivilized, lacking morals, and the Anglo-Europeans must educate them because they were advanced in life. The whole native culture must be set aside. The colonizers were the centre, 'the self', and the colonized were the margins, 'the other', This is the practice of 'othering' going by names such as the 'demonic other', or the 'exotic other'... This attitude, of raising the European culture as the ultimate standard by which to measure the other cultures, is designated Euro-centrism which employs what is called the philosophy of 'Universalism'. European ideas and experiences were universal, the standards of all others to follow (185-186).

This indicates that when imperialism happens, there will normally be social struggles, like those between native subcultures and the frontier culture. It also indicates there is an inherent perception that European ideas represent universality and are considered superior, which all other countries should follow. Besides, Barry contends:

Postcolonial criticism emerged as a distinct category only in the 1990s. The ancestry of postcolonial criticism can be traced to Franz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* published in French in 1961, and voicing what might be called 'cultural resistance' to France's African empire. Fanon (a psychiatrist from Martinique) argued that the first step for 'colonized' people in finding a voice and identity is to reclaim their own past... Hence, another major book, which can be said to inaugurate postcolonial criticism proper, is Edward Said's *'Orientalism'* (1978), which is a specific expose of the Eurocentric universalism which takes for granted both the superiority of what is European or Western, and the inferiority of what is not. Said identifies a European cultural tradition of 'Orientalism', which is a particular and long-

standing way of identifying the East as 'Other' and inferior to the West. The Orient, he says, features in the Western mind 'as a sort of surrogate and underground self' (194-195).

This argument highlights the ideology of European colonialism and imperialism towards the colonised countries. Thus, it becomes clear that the European egoistic mentality referred to as 'Eurocentrism' regards 'Universalism' has been limited to the Europeans only. Taking into account the inherent superiority of the European people, Said demonstrated the difference between Eastern and Western representations. Consequently, the term "Occident" represents the west and the "Orient" represents the east.' From the European perspective, the west is synonymous with 'self' which signifies civilized, sophisticated, moral, mature and so on. On the contrary, the east is synonymous with 'other' which indicates remote, uncivilized, simple, feminine, immoral, and so on. Edward Said further asserts, "Orientalism is a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (2-3). Therefore, Said's '*Orientalism*' can be outlined as European superiority and Eastern inferiority. No doubt, postcolonial theory is significant and comprehensive as it implies the beginning of colonisation up to the contemporary era. Meanwhile, one of the noted Mizo Theologians, Ralte, claims:

The white colonial rulers regarded the existing Indian religion and culture as awful, whereas the western culture was worthy. They manipulated their power and brainwashed the people to regard such an ideology with respect. With the passing of time, after being subjugated and converting our culture, some writers emerged who resisted colonial rule in literature... Those innovative thinkers observe how far colonialism has affected the colonized people. Such a perspective and ideology is what we refer to as "Postcolonial Theory" (316).

This argument reveals that some writers began to feel the need to attack the superiority feelings of the colonial rulers over the colonised people. Among many others, the fine specimens of postcolonial literature include: *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe, *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy. Generally, postcolonial

criticism and literature reacted to the coloniser who made them lose and neglect their old traditions and culture. Such resistance and reaction by the colonizers have remained a considerable subject nowadays within the colonized countries.

Significantly, it is apparent that Mizo morality came to be guided by Christian morality due to the influence of Christianity inspired by colonialism. Accordingly, the missionaries regard traditional values as artless and anti-religious, to show their superiority over the Mizos. Therefore, due to colonialism, the Mizos, like other colonised nations, gradually abandoned and despised their ancient traditions and culture. As a result, they adopted western culture and lifestyles. Accordingly, young people perceived Mizo as being simple and unrefined. The whites displayed every modernity and manners trend. Meanwhile, it is worth noting that patriotic feelings among Mizos emerged during the colonial period (1890-1947) that had previously not been heard of. Early Mizo academicians desired to eradicate the Mizos primitive and simple culture, which resulted in nationalistic thoughts and the recognition of national identity. Zikpuii-Pa is one such educated individual with a brilliant mind and far-sighted vision. Although war and colonialism have not caused significant problems in the current social situation, the effects of colonialism remain in the minds of the colonized nations.

Moving on to the various colonial ramifications of *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* from a postcolonial perspective. The narrative can be classified as both colonial and postcolonial fiction. However, the researcher discovered that Zikpuii-Pa did not incorporate all of the key concepts of postcolonial theory. Keeping in mind the Mizo context, he employs some key concepts of postcolonial theory depending on the structure, themes, plots, and characters in his fiction.

One of the main concerns of postcolonial literature is the emergence of nationalism. Accordingly, the colonised writers became increasingly interested in nationalism and wrote for the benefit of the entire nation. *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* exposes this fact. In this novel, it is evident that Zikpuii-Pa's mind is filled with nationalism, which is the influence of colonialism. Like other postcolonial writers, Zikpuii-Pa appreciates the natural beauty of Mizoram and encourages his fellow



Mizos to value their possessions and cherish them with care. In *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, the protagonist Chhuanvawra feels that, while other metropolitan cities are more sophisticated than Mizoram, it has become a place of shame as a result of his sweetheart Ngurthansangi's harsh experience. For this reason, he wished to depart from it. This suggests that colonialism created a sense of alienation towards outside places while also instilling fondness and nostalgia for their native lands. As previously stated, many young people go to places other than Mizoram to pursue higher education, such as Shillong, Guwahati, and so on. However, there is an adage that there is no place like home. Consequently, despite the fact that they have been dispersed in various locations, Mizoram remains a dominant habitation in the minds of the Mizos. Despite the fact that it is simple and unrefined, they regard it as the most comfortable and pleasant place to live in. To put it another way, Mizoram remains the best and the mainstay of the Mizo nation.

It is obvious that the setting of *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* encompasses everything from Zopui village to the metropolitan city of Chandigarh. The description of Zopui village represents the typical village of Mizoram. It is a lovely and fresh village that is economically self-sufficient and has a mild and comfortable climate. Regarding the setting, Lalramnghaka argues, "The setting of the place is an ideal place like Thomas More's 'Utopia'. However, due to the painful effects of *Rambuai*, it became a 'Dystopia'" (My Trans., 150). Thus, it is evident from this argument that Zikpuii-Pa is not only the product of traditional Mizo society, but also of colonialism inspired by English literature.

*Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* is set in the period of *Rambuai* in Mizoram. Chhuanvawra's parents and family were worried when he went to Zopui during *Rambuai*. But, he had already become an IPS officer and was dressed in his full uniform. Nobody dared to hold a grudge against him; instead, the army and the police became his close friends. For this reason, he earned respect and admiration. Significantly, Zikpuii-Pa exposes his nationalism through the character of Chhuanvawra, which is a common feature of postcolonial literature. He will not allow the Mizo nation to be suppressed as a subordinate nation by other nations. Consequently, he attempts to highlight the Mizo gentleman's ability and potential.

In other words, he wished to awaken the Mizo nation through morality, integrity, and academic excellence without utilizing any physical weapons.

Undoubtedly, postcolonial theory promotes self-sufficiency and the preservation of one's own culture and traditions. Accordingly, Zikpuii-Pa argues that the Mizos ought to be independent and self-sufficient. The conversation between Chhuanvawra's friend Rohluta and Thantluangi exposes this fact: "Mizos must not bow down to non-Mizos, we must stand alone. Our commendable culture should be spread everywhere. Chhuanvawra was expected to maintain the same even in Shillong, where various ethnic groups reside" (My Trans., *Nunna* 16). This reveals that Chhuanvawra, as an educated Mizo young man is likely to uphold traditional Mizo culture and morality.

Certainly, postcolonial literature has been associated with language. The 'Appropriation of Colonial Languages', which mandates the adoption of the colonizer's language, is a significant component of postcolonial literature. Undoubtedly, language integrates every nation. Because English is the former coloniser's language and remains an elite language, learning the English language is associated with modernity in the colonial and post-colonial eras. Obviously, English is a global language that is spoken in the majority of countries and is also used as an official language. Not only in Mizoram, but educated people from all over the world want to learn English in order to maintain a certain standard. Besides, English is seen as the dominant language, with the rest of the language being substandard. Given the preceding discussion, the issue of language is undoubtedly another major effect of colonialism. After becoming acquainted with the English language, they effortlessly abandoned their native tongue in favour of a plethora of English words. In this context, many English words are found in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, such as yes, please, bodyguard, lecture, experience, drinks, food, debate, bill, and so on.

Significantly, the term 'Mimicry' is another obvious social change that occurred in Mizoram as a result of colonialism, as featured by Zikpuii-Pa. Mary F states:

Mimicry in colonial and postcolonial literature is most commonly seen when members of a colonised society imitates the language, dress, politics, or cultural attitude of their colonisers. The colonised copies the person in power because one hopes to have access to that same power oneself. Presumably, while copying the master, one has to intentionally suppress one's own cultural identity, though in some cases colonial subjects are left so confused by their cultural encounter with a dominant foreign culture that there may not be a clear preexisting identity to suppress (68).

In light of this remark, the term 'mimicry' has been found in the story of *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*. Almost certainly, Mizo attire today is merely a shadow of Mizo traditional attire. On the traditional Mizo attire, Chongthu remarks, "Until the advent of the British the Mizos never wore mill cloths. They solely depended on the locally grown cotton processed in such a way and indigenously woven for the need of all the members of the community"(40). This implies that as is no other dress to imitate in traditional Mizo society, the Mizos wear their indigenous clothing. However, the colonial rule changed the way Mizo women dressed. During the colonial period, it appears that educated Lushais were appointed as instructors, doctors, government servants, and so on. As a result, they imitated the fashions of the colonizers. Appropriately, English dress such as uniforms, suits, neckties, saris, and so on have become popular with the Mizo public. Aside from these, the western way of life was imitated, as evidenced by house plans and room materials. As a result, Mizo bedding materials such as *Siksil*, *Pawnpu*, and so on have been supplanted by English items such as bed sheets, mattresses, and so on. Considering the various impacts of colonialism on the Mizo way of life, Zikpuii-Pa portrayed such alterations in his fiction. In *The Mizo Society in Transition*, Nag writes, "The Mizo society is now more inclined towards Western culture which finds expression in the Mizos dresses, music and dance. Men wear pants, shirts, coats, ties, etc., and have given up using their traditional garments" (163). Such a kind of imitation is called "mimicry" and it is a key feature of postcolonial literary theory. Since traditional attire is a meaningful representation of every nation and subculture, it must be protected and treasured for that reason.

Historically, it is clear from the narrative that colonialism had an impact on the Mizo value system. Erstwhile the colonial era, the Mizos admired and respected brave warriors known as '*Pasaltha*', a name for valour and a selfless Mizo young man. Indeed, they had been recognised as their 'heroes', as they served as a comforters and protectors for the entire village. The village chiefs and elders were completely dependent on them as well. In contrast, during the colonial and postcolonial periods, the heroes of Mizo society evolved. Instead of honouring *Pasaltha*, educated people, doctors, the central services, and other scholars have become their new heroes. To put it another way, the educated and government officials turned into the new elites in Mizo society in the colonial regime. The representation of Chhuanvawra reveals this fact.

In *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, Zikpuii-Pa has delineated various things unacquainted in the pre-colonial period, such as prostitutes, whisky, honeymoons, rest houses, and so on, which shows the impact of colonialism. Certainly, colonialism had a positive impact on Mizo society. At the same time, because of the rapid adoption of western culture, it is clear that even the heroine Ngurthansangi was a victim of such drastic changes. As indicated earlier, Zikpuii-Pa introduced the adjustment of occupation following British colonial rule. Cultivation has been the primary source of income in Mizo society since time immemorial. It is noticeable that the main occupation of Mizo people has gradually been discarded in favour of "white-collar jobs". Undeniably, the Christian missionaries who educated the ethnic Mizo people inspired a love of white-collar jobs. Maj M.C. Mc Call labelled the term 'Black-Coatism'. Then he describes:

Black-coatism involved monthly salaries which secured the beneficiary from subjection to the inevitability of traditional village life. Monthly salaries gave the beneficiary a special, in fact, quite a new material power, while Christianity provoked a challenge to spiritual forces among the people. Christianity and material independence from the soil were clearly two main characteristics of the new "white Chiefs", and their assimilation would eliminate her difference between the primitive and the all-powerful (205-206).

Since the arrival of British colonial rule, the indigenous Mizo people have grown to love and admire such black-coatism, and as a result, their occupation has also undergone changes. Because occupation has always been a part of every subculture, a change in occupation caused community disintegration. In the pre-colonial generation, the Mizos used to help each other in their occupation, which was known as '*inlawm*<sup>8</sup>'. They share a similar occupation, and there is no envy in the village. Everyone has equal rights, with the exception of the chief and the elderly. That is why they were regarded as an egalitarian society. However, colonialism gave rise to a wide range of occupations, such as pastors, doctors, police officers, teachers, soldiers, *Babus*, businessmen, and so on. In terms of occupation, there is a significant disparity between the rich and the poor. Such a diverse occupation was reflected in Zikpuii-Pa's fiction.

Another key issue of colonial impact is disrespect for colonised culture and tradition, or the change in Mizo mentality and sentiment, as reflected in the character of Chhuankima, the elder sibling of Chhuanvawra. Since the pre-colonial Mizo society was economically self-sufficient, they lived happy lives. Zopui, like other villages, is economically self-sufficient and does not look to others for help. Chhuanvawra, the protagonist, is raised in Zopui village before continuing his education in Shillong. After a while, he began to miss the wonderful ambience of Zopui, as well as its people. Meanwhile, his elder brother Chhuankima tried to persuade Chhuanvawra to go to Shillong because he believed Zopui was not urban and refined. For this reason, he believed that Chhuanvawra needed to become acquainted with other cultures. In this way, Chhuankima is depicted as the inheritor of colonial ideology and discourse, looking down on his traditional village of Zopui with contempt. On the contrary, Chhuanvawra is ingrained with a sense of belonging and satisfaction in being a Mizo. Consequently, he has no desire to visit Shillong, where he feels like an outsider. Chhuanvawra preferred to be humble in Zopui instead of being inferior in Shillong. Chhuankima represents the western way of life, whereas Chhuanvawra represents traditional Mizo culture. However, from the above instance, it is apparent that a postcolonial mentality has been steadily embedded among the Mizo youth. The outcome is that they have come to appreciate and esteem

their underlying foundations and culture, as displayed through Chhuanvawra, the protagonist in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*.

Conspicuously, Mizo society has always been viewed as an egalitarian society, so there was no class distinction. Moreover, pre-colonial Mizo history reveals that Mizo culture has always been characterised by a culture of sharing, generosity, and self-sacrifice for the well-being of others. In *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, Chhuanvawra was arrested by the Indian army on his way to Zopui and was imprisoned with other young Mizos for three months. However, by virtue of his father's prestigious position along with the high reputation of his elder brother Chhuankima, he was set free from prison alone. Sadly, his friends who belong to the common people have not yet been released as they do not have any prominent relatives like Chhuanvawra. Notably, favouritism towards one's relatives is called "nepotism", which is one of the common issues even in the post-Millennium era. The above incident signifies that colonialism has brought discrimination to the Mizo community that they are not accustomed to. In other words, due to colonial influence, there is a wide gap between the rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated in Mizo society. Besides, sharing was a pervasive experience and intrinsic to the Mizo culture. However, it is evident from this incident that the Mizo culture of sharing, altruism, and self-sacrifice to others was forsaken in times of trouble. As far as Mizo morality is concerned, Chhuanvawra should decline the offer to get out of jail. Although he was concerned about his friends in prison, he dared not reject the offer of release. It also reveals that colonialism brings a lack of traditional values and Mizo morals. Certainly, the morality of the Mizos has gradually deteriorated, and selfishness has prevailed in their lives in the colonial era.

Another fascinating point to note is that, while whites are regarded as predominant, Mizos regard their kindred Indians as substandard. **For instance**, there is a popular Mizo humour known as 'vaichhia'. In this context, the term 'vai' refers to Indians who are not Mizo, whereas chhia refers to something negative or unfavourable. This reveals the Mizos hostility toward non-Mizo Indians. Meanwhile, such a mindset does not imply that the Mizos are racist. Evidently, the *Rambuai* incident, as discussed in the previous chapter, appears to have instilled

hatred and fear in non-Mizo Indians. In terms of language, while the majority of Mizo young people prefer to learn English, many do not believe it is necessary to learn Hindi. This attitude has persisted even among the post-millennium generations. Despite the Central Government's efforts to impart the importance of learning Hindi to all Indian citizens, it has not been as successful as it should be. Even some well-educated elites fail to learn Hindi. Such a mentality was depicted in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*. Surprisingly, despite being a brilliant gentleman, Chhuanvawra did not learn Hindi. As he confesses, "In Hindi class, my friends used to snigger at me. It was so troublesome" (My Trans., 154). Although *Rambuai* was partially responsible for the neglect of the Hindi language, it is clear that the one significant motive of British Colonialism was to focus solely on the English language and set aside another language, which Edward Said referred to as "Eurocentrism". In view of this, the colonizers were reasonably fruitful in their goal.

As far as the postcolonial theory adopted by Zikpuii-Pa is concerned, hybridity deserves worthy attention. The term 'hybridity' is one of the significant theories in postcolonial studies. Ashcroft, et al. define hybridity thus:

One of the most widely employed and most disputed terms in postcolonial theory, hybridity commonly refers to the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization. As used in horticulture, the term refers to the cross-breeding of two species by grafting or cross-pollination to form a third, 'hybrid' species. Hybridization takes many forms: linguistic, cultural, political, racial, etc." (108).

According to this definition, colonisers radical influence resulted in so much cultural mingling during the colonial and postcolonial eras, resulting in 'hybridity or hybrid culture'. Mizoram is not an exception to the fact that many colonial nations have incorporated this hybrid culture. Obviously, significant factors that intensify the issue of post-colonialism are hybridity, language, dress, nationalism, and value system, all of which are vividly depicted in Zikpuii-Pa's *NunnaKawngthuamPuiah*. It is clear that language and dress were important aspects of the cultural transformation in colonial society, which Zikpuii-Pa's fiction also touches on.

In *NunnaKawngthuamPuiah*, the protagonist, Chhuanvawra, expresses his admiration for the British in front of the Union Public Service Commission's Interview Board (UPSC). He stated that the Mizos fought the British in 1889-90, but were defeated. Moreover, he underlined that, while the British killed numerous Mizos all through the contention, they never assaulted Mizo ladies or burglarized Mizos without reason. They did not take anything for granted; even if they took water and food, they paid a fair price for it (My Trans., 149). His expression further discloses that his mentality is deeply rooted in Britain's greatness and courtesy to other nations, which is, the impact of colonialism.

In literature, an identity crisis and colonialism are inextricably linked. Based on the foregoing, it is clear that Zikpuii-Pa's fiction addresses both colonial and postcolonial themes. With the arrival of British colonialism, the Mizo people experienced radical changes in many areas, including religious, economic, cultural, and social. In the current social scenario, the Mizos have become modern, but the main factor that has facilitated the transition from old to modern is western culture. Following colonial rule in Mizoram, the Mizos embraced both Mizo culture and the English way of life. Since colonialism transformed their primitive way of life, the Mizos have imitated white Europeans, regardless of their status, appearance, or behaviour. Needless to say, the Church deterred the Mizo subculture to some extent at the start of the Christian era. Sailo claims, "It is very sad that the increasing Mizo language and culture have become stagnant due to the Church's resistance to the Mizo culture" (My Trans., 2). This argument demonstrates that, while Christianity has been a blessing to the Mizo people, it has also had a negative impact on Mizo culture. Needless to say, the missionaries instilled some Mizo traditional values as 'sin'. In other words, when colonialism arrived, Mizo society underwent an extensive change that prompted the decay of their social life. Because whites held a position of superiority in the minds of the Mizos, indigenous culture was gradually displaced by western culture. The incredible impact of imperialism and Christianity should be visible in the names of individuals or places. This is reflected in the narrative of *Silvarthangi*.

Certainly, the British ruled over the Mizos to subdue the Mizos as a result of raids and interference in their lands. No doubt, they did not intend to upgrade the



Mizos as their equivalents. Despite having lived in the Lushai Hills for decades, the white people did not live like the Mizos. They felt superior to the indigenous people and distanced themselves from them. Given the preceding discussion, it is obvious that Zikpuii-Pa is a good postcolonial writer. Except for *Silvarthangi*, all of the protagonists in Zikpuii-Pa's fiction are well-educated, highlighting Zikpuii-Pa's deep admiration for education and colonial outlook. Moreover, postcolonial culture can be comprehended in Zikpuii-Pa's *KrawsBulahChuan*. The dominant purpose of this fiction is to depict how Christianity has brought about radical changes in the Mizo way of life. It transforms the ancient religion, value system, and social existence. Consequently, the chiefdom of Sailo has been supplanted by the British Kingdom. Conspicuously, Christianity has influenced the choice of life's partner in the Mizo society that is contemplated in this story. Lalsawma, the protagonist, wished to join the King's Commission. Meanwhile, his father wishes for him to become a doctor so that he can help the poor and needy. No doubt, this medical venture had never been heard of in pre-colonial Mizo society. Besides, a brave warrior and a self-sufficient individual were highly respected in the past, and parents wished for their daughter to marry such an individual. However, during the colonial period, parents preferred a soldier or a subedar for their son-in-law to be idle and comfortable.

In today's Mizo context, the terms "colonialism" and "Christianity" are considered inseparable. Subsequently, formal education brought by Christian missionaries changes the Mizos attitudes. Without a doubt, the majority of people are caught between social and religious changes and their cultural practices. Colonised humans generally despise their traditional subcultures and traditions. At the same time, they did not yet abandon the entire culture and customs. Hence, it is possible to consider Mizo society to be in a state of liminality, i.e. partially traditional and partially western. The Liminal concept has a prominent place in postcolonial literature. Although Mizo society retains some Mizo values, they are gradually abandoning Mizo culture in the modern era. Therefore, in light of the postcolonial perspective, Zikpuii-Pa exposes in his fiction, that the postcolonial Mizo culture is a blending of both the English and the Mizo cultures, which has shaken the Mizos stable morality.

It is a well-known fact that even after the end of British colonial rule, the colonial legacy is still deeply embedded in Mizo society, which has many negative consequences. In *'The Wretched of the Earth'*, one of the renowned postcolonial theorists, Franz Fanon, argues, "Europe has declined all the humility and all modesty; but she has also set her face against all solicitude and all tenderness...Let us decide not too imitate Europe; let us combine our muscles and our brains in a new direction. Let us try to create the whole man, whom Europe has been incapable of bringing to triumphant birth" (251-252). Fanon's interpretation confirms that the morality and abstinence of the colonized countries have been annihilated by the British colonial power. For this reason, colonised nations must awaken and stop imitating European culture and style in order to restore their own culture.

Remarkably, Zikpuii-Pa has created three religious clergymen in his fiction, including Pastor Lianzuala in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, Pastor Tlangkhuma and Pastor Laltawna in *Kraws Bulah Chuan*. This highlighted the profound influence of Christianity, which is a product of colonialism. Infidelity in marriage or an estranged relationship between husband and spouse highlighted in Zikpuii-Pa's fiction is a common issue in Mizo society, which is, perhaps, the result of the negative impact of western culture. Prominently, Zikpuii-Pa is the child of Aizawl Chief, Hrawva. Consequently, he had been in contact with the colonial rulers, for example, the English public. Moreover, being a diplomat in several countries, he has a deep insight into how colonialism has been affected by individuals in several provincial countries, particularly those who have a place in the little domain. To put it somewhat differently, it is assumed that his upbringing and colonial background influenced the colonial mentality in his works in some way. All things considered, he has been comfortable with the honorable and splendid culture of English individuals in different spots, and he might be impressed by Western culture. Meanwhile, his son, Andrew Lalherliana, declares that his father is not an individual who respects Western culture and despises the Mizo culture. Although he holds high regard for English people, he considers them as the same. Even among high diplomats, he has never been ashamed of his Mizo heritage. He is pleased with the Mizo nation, its

culture, and its beautiful land, which is regarded as one of his distinguishing characteristics as a writer (Andrew Latherliana).

Leaving aside the various benefits of colonialism, Zikpuii-Pa's fiction depicts traditional Mizo society and how peaceful Mizo rural life has been ruined by historical events, particularly British colonialism and *Rambuai*. Although colonialism brought many positive changes to Mizo society, traditional Mizo values were somewhat shaken. To put it another way, indigenous Mizo people were confronted with new morals and customs that were unfamiliar with their cultural heritage. Through an investigation of his fiction, it is observed that Zikpuii-Pa gives a credible image of Mizo society after the colonial time frame.

Therefore, by delving into the possible parameters of Zikpuii-Pa's fiction, as a result of British colonial rule in Mizoram, it is clear that Mizo morality has been shaped by individualism. As far as morality is concerned, Lalthankimi argues that materialism is perhaps the most significant factor which brought the alteration of Mizo morality (141). Based on this argument, it is true that Mizo morality has been greatly influenced by materialism and individualism which were brought about by British Colonial rule in Mizoram. In other words, the Mizo communitarian and sharing subculture has been replaced by western individualism, which prompts moral degeneration in Mizo society. After being colonized, the indigenous Mizos started evaluating with contempt their conventional morals through the mirror of their colonial rulers. The characters of Ralkapzauva and Chhuankima reveal this fact. Eventually, Zikpuii-Pa's moral message is to abandon the various evils and bad practices of the Mizo society due to colonialism and to restore the vanishing commendable traits of the Mizo community. In this context, the young people of the present-day generation are responsible for regenerating the Mizo morality.

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup>*Puma Zai*: - The Dictionary of the Lushai Language (1940) describes the word '*Puma Zai*' as the name of an anti-Christian song (also known as *Tlanglam Zai*) the avowed purpose of which was to oust the Christian hymns. It became unbelievably popular throughout the Lushai country during 1908, and was sung everywhere with feasting and communal dancing such as had never been witness in the Hills before. It soon, however, passed into oblivion, leaving the Christian hymns more popular than ever (Dictionary of the Lushai Language 371- James Herbert Lorrain (Pu Buanga) Published by The Asiatic Society, 1 Park Street, Kolkata.

<sup>2</sup>*Mautam* Famine: means to die down simultaneously as the *mau* bamboos do periodically about every fifty years after flowering and fruiting. The *phulrua* bamboos also flower and fruit and die down at the same time. This occurrence is followed by a plague of rats which devour the rice crops and cause a famine. The name given to the periodic dying down of the above bamboos and to the subsequent famine (ibid 309).

<sup>3</sup>*Pialral*: The Lushais Paradise, the further side of the *Pial* river

<sup>4</sup>*Kuli*: Impressed labour

<sup>5</sup>*Tukuli Mal*: An ordinary muzzle-loading gun used with a percussion cap.

<sup>6</sup>*Mawl*: Without common-sense, slow-witted, foolish \*

<sup>7</sup>*Inlawm*: To take turn and turn about helping one another in any kind of work or occupation in Mizo society. Source: *Dictionary of The Lushai Language* by James Herbert Lorrain (Pu Buanga) \*

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## CHAPTER 4

## ANALYSIS OF CHARACTERS AND GENDER DYNAMICS

Character plays a significant role in literature, especially in works of fiction. They are an integral part of fiction. The present chapter is an attempt to examine the characters in Zikpuii-Pa's fiction within the framework of morality. Consequently, to comprehend the significance of characters, let us first mention the meanings of characters. According to *The American Heritage Dictionary*, "The combination of qualities or features that distinguishes one person, group or thing from another" (259). On the other hand, *The Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics* defines character as, "A fictional representation of a person", and characterization as, "The way in which a character is represented in a literary work" (5100). Meanwhile, Cuddon defines characters as, "The person portrayed in a narrative or dramatic work. Also, a short prose sketch of a particular individual type. As a literary genre, 'the character' became popular early in the 17<sup>th</sup>C" (116,117). Considering those definitions, a character indicates a portrayal of a person in literature that has a distinctive quality of their own. Consequently, characters in fiction can be differentiated into two kinds, such as major and minor characters. As the name suggests, major characters are characters who play a predominant role in a story. The protagonist is the main character who dominates the narrative and around whom the story revolves. Every incident in the narrative affects the main characters, and through their characters, the novelist creates internal and external conflict. On the other hand, as the name signifies, minor characters are those characters who perform less significant tasks in fiction. Although they play minor roles, they significantly impact the story. Without their contribution, no work of fiction would be complete. They certainly helped the main characters progress and kept the plot interesting. Characters, like humans, can have a wide range of personalities. Protagonists and major characters are generally dynamic, indicating that they are adaptable rather than static. These characters are known as "round" characters. Minor characters, on the other hand, are usually unchanging and monotonous, and they fail to change their behaviour in critical situations. For this reason, they are known as "flat" characters. In short, minor characters represent the various personalities that exist within humans.

Since writing and society are firmly associated with one another, it is difficult to deliver works of writing except if there is an occurrence in society. As Matthew Arnold observed, literature is a criticism of life, and it is clear that historical, political, and social circumstances influence contemporary literature. In the context of Mizoram, it is undeniable that the major significant incidents in Mizo history, including *Rambuai* and British Colonial Rule in Mizoram, transformed Mizo society in numerous ways. Needless to say, these occurrences served as a great source of inspiration for Mizo writers. Because writers pay close attention to human nature, they artistically depict such historical facts through their plots and convincing characters. This reality is revealed in the previous two chapters.

To put it somewhat differently, the story cannot progress in a work of fiction unless there are characters and their development. Some characters also serve as the author's mouthpiece. Zikpuii-Pa's characters are generally dynamic, and the circumstances are reasonable. His fictional works, whether novels or short stories, endear themselves to ordinary people as a result of his keen observation and deep insight into human nature. Remarkably, his fiction contains a wide range of characters. In his fiction, he is lauded for the skillful construction of characterization. He has a diverse cast of characters, ranging from the Central Service to *Kuli* (a porter). His portrayal of characters is a fantastic example of his talent. Needless to say, there are numerous immortal characters in various literary genres. An author's talent can be evaluated through his depiction of characters. Characters in fiction can be classified into two types based on their behaviour: good characters and bad characters. Additionally, there are various types of characters based on their characteristics, such as flat characters, round characters, dynamic characters, and static characters. Because themes and characterization in fiction are inextricably linked, the themes pondered in Zikpuii-Pa's fiction will be addressed alongside an evaluation of the characters. Themes in Zikpuii-Pa's fiction include sex, alcohol, prostitution, human trafficking, and domestic violence. His thematic treatment reveals Zikpuii-Pa's extensive insight into human nature and his general views. As previously stated, the characters in Zikpuii-Pa's fiction can be classified as good or evil.

Based on his research, Lallungmuana suitably observes, “Characters in Mizo fiction are necessarily human beings. Action and speech are the chief means of character revelation. The author’s own comments and the comments of other persons in the novels are also used to supplement the above two methods” (172). Given this remark, it is clear that Zikpuii-Pa’s fiction reveals the characters true nature through their actions and dialogues. His characters are some of the most memorable in Mizo fiction. Characters are the personification of human nature. In other words, characters in fiction convey the writer’s point of view, beliefs, interactions with the public, and dealings with incidents that happen around them. Accordingly, characters in Zikpuii-Pa’ fiction express their ideas and opinions on morality, social and cultural change, and other topics. His significant characters are fascinating because of the depth of meanings conveyed through their communications and actions. The present chapter is an attempt to observe, analyze, and evaluate the portrayal of characters, their functions, behaviour, attitudes, temperament, aspirations, good or bad qualities, and their relationships with other characters. It further attempts a comparison of the characters portrayed by Zikpuii-Pa.

To put it somewhat differently, the present chapter is an attempt to highlight gender dynamics in Zikpuii-Pa’s fiction. The term “gender” has been characterized by different researchers and academicians. *Dictionary of Critical Theory* defines, “The term traditionally refers to both the classification of nouns and their corresponding modifies as ‘masculine’, ‘feminine’ and ‘neuter’, and the sense of being male or female (156). According to Collins Dictionary, gender means, “the state of being male or female with reference to socially and culturally defined characteristics of masculinity or femininity” (n.pag). Hence, it is clear that the gender can be broadly defined as the identification of social relations between males and females. Gender roles are dynamic and change over time because gender status is socially constructed. *The Thesaurus* defines gender dynamics as, “Relationships and interactions between and among girls, boys, women and men. Gender dynamics are informed by socio-cultural ideas about gender and the power relationships that define them. Depending upon how they are manifested, gender dynamics can reinforce or challenge existing norms” (1164). Moreover,

*Urban Dictionary* defines ‘gender dynamics’ as, “The way in which men and women are treated or behave differently in society, either with their own gender or with each other. The changes in gender dynamics and roles in society for an individual or group can be changed by either economic standing, age or other factors” (n. pag). Taking the above definitions into account, it is clear that the roles played by men and women in a family and society are distinct. Zikpuii-Pa’s fiction contains insight through various attributes and characters. The juxtaposition of good and bad is a common theme in literature, particularly fiction, and Zikpuii-Pa is one of the Mizo novelists who skillfully exposed it. The contradictions of love and hatred, humour and sorrow, separation and reunion abound in Zikpuii-Pa’s fiction. Chhuanvawra and Ralkapzauva’s personalities represent the intellectual and imaginative Mizo who can think, sense, and communicate with others.

The characterization in Zikpuii-Pa’s fiction is superb. In this chapter, the protagonists and villains of the characters are also discussed analytically. For the audience to recognise their good qualities, Zikpuii-Pa tries to depict the moral and ethical aspects of the characters. Meanwhile, villainous characters are associated with wicked or immoral characteristics or characters. In his fiction, heroes are more important than heroines. Each of Zikpuii-Pa’s works is distinct in terms of themes, style, characterization, and so on. No doubt, love has always been the central universal theme in literature. Accordingly, the bulk of the Mizo novelists have also portrayed romantic love in their works. Even in the pre-colonial era, the Mizos had rich folktales, and love has been the predominant theme. For instance, the Mizos have interesting and touching folktales like *Liandova leh Tualvungi*, *Tlingi leh Ngama*, *Duhmanga and Dardini*, and so on. It is universally accepted that the term “love” can be divided into myriad ways, such as romantic love, parental love, friendship love, sibling love, and so on. Among these, romantic love plays a substantial position among the Mizo novelists.

Characters in fiction are normally recognised by their activities, capacities, and sorts of jobs in fiction. Fiction generally incorporates a hero who features a heroic look and a villain who features a villainous appearance. One can clearly distinguish between the hero and the villain by their roles and functions. Meanwhile, in contrast to other novelists, Zikpuii-Pa was not concerned about creating a villain

and heroes in his fiction. While a number of his narratives consist of villains, some of his fiction does not have any villains. In this way, one can still suppose that there is no consistency in Zikpuii-Pa's fiction. At the same time, his skillful manipulation of different styles is his unique and remarkable trait as a writer. It may not be wrong to say that Zikpuii-Pa's fiction did not necessarily contain a heroine or a villain. Consequently, it is amazing that Zikpuii-Pa is an author with exceptional qualities who did not utilize uniformity in characterization.

The portrayal of the male-female relationship is not a new theme in literature; it has been the most loved subject matter of numerous authors till today. If one reads Zikpuii-Pa's fiction thoroughly, he can easily recognize that romantic love has been depicted through the major characters, except for *C.C. Coy No. 27*. Accordingly, *Silvarthangi* deals with romantic love. In other words, triangular love can be observed through the characters of Silvarthangi, Lalhnuna, and Overseer Babu. Similarly, love is the predominant theme in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* as it mainly deals with the tragic love affairs of Chhuanvawra and Ngurthansangi. Further, the narrative of *Kraws Bulah Chuan* is primarily based on romantic love. Like *Silvarthangi*, triangular love can be seen through the three major characters, Lalsawma, Thanchhingi, and Hmingthansiami. Meanwhile, Zikpuii-Pa created a unique love affair in *Hostel Awmtu*. The love portrayed in this fiction reveals both authentic love and erotic love.

Despite not being based on romantic love, friendship love is interestingly depicted by the characters of Ralkapzauva and Bahadur in *C.C. Coy No. 27*. As a novelist, Zikpuii-Pa's incredible quality lies in his characterization. Like Shakespeare, Zikpuii-Pa locates characterization as the most prominent place in a work of fiction rather than the plot. A reading of Zikpuii-Pa's fiction reveals that without a villain and heroine, interesting fiction can be created. Zikpuii-Pa has created immortal characters in Mizo literature, which include Chhuanvawra, Ralkapzauva, Silvarthangi, and so forth. His characters give a vivid and realistic image of the society of his time. They are typical Mizo men and women. They are living creatures. They think and feel like ordinary individuals. He shows splendid insight in portraying his male characters, in

particular Chhuanvawra and Ralkapzauva. Zikpuii-Pa has handled the conflict between good and evil in all of his fiction- *Silvarthangi*, *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, *C.C. Coy No. 27*, *Kraws Bulah Chuan* and *Hostel Awmtu*. Remarkably, women play a minor function in his fiction except for *Silvarthangi*. The plot of *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* is a multifaceted plot. The novelist has adopted the indirect technique of narration through the predominant character, Chhuanvawra. The popular theme of the clash between tradition and modernity is suggested in the different attitudes between Chhuanvawra and his elder brother, Chhuankima. While Chhuanvawra wishes to remain at home in Zopui village, Chhuankima urges him to continue with his lessons in Shillong because he believed it is not possible to develop in Zopui as it is considered uncultured and unsophisticated. Chhuankima's affection for modernity contradicts his brother's cherished traditions and conventions. In this way, Zikpuii-Pa portrayed Chhuanvawra as the epitome of tradition and Chhuankima as the epitome of modernity. At the same time, in view of Chhuanvawra's intelligence, capacity, and confidence among the non-Mizos, he also represents both tradition and modernity.

Significantly, Zikpuii-Pa's characters and plots are indistinguishably intertwined together. The purpose of this chapter was to examine how characters are portrayed and how gender roles are depicted in Zikpuii-Pa's fiction. It is a well-known fact that every writer is a product of his or her own social milieu. Accordingly, Zikpuii-Pa has been affected by the social and political existence of his time. He is a writer who thoughtfully portrays his characters, with no preference for male or female characters. Moreover, he is a writer who focuses on domestic space and the complexities of its relationships. His characters are realistic in every way. Through his male and female characters, he exposes social evils.

Zikpuii-Pa's fiction deftly depicts the typical relationship between siblings and families. For the most part, Zikpuii-Pa writes about the lives of the characters in rural areas. His fiction includes both real-life and fictional characters and incidents from the lives of real people. He tries to incorporate everyday issues, widespread human suffering, and social crises into his fiction. Like the Indian novelist, Mulk Raj

Anand, Zikpuii-Pa is sensible while depicting characters in his fictional works. Accordingly, he portrays a wide range of characters and their mentalities. His characters have reflected his incredible knowledge of human nature. No doubt, life is a blend of happiness and sadness. What is noteworthy is the way that it was tackled. Through the plot of his fiction, Zikpuii-Pa exposes the manner in which his characters confront numerous hardships in their lives.

As a novelist, Zikpuii-Pa may be considered a realist. His presentation of realistic characters and his skillful use of rhetoric may be viewed as his two essential features as a writer. He creates some dynamic characters who have an effect on other characters. In his fictional works, one can observe some similar and dissimilar aspects of his characters. To begin with, Zikpuii-Pa's fiction usually includes family members as well as background information. Family members include fathers, sons, daughters, mothers, and other relatives such as uncles, aunts, and so on. Second, reading Zikpuii-Pa's fiction provides insightful information about the individual, the political and social conflict, and discordant relationships, among other things. Third, with the exception of *C.C. Coy No. 27*, the primary focus in Zikpuii-Pa's fiction is heartfelt love. All of these themes and aspects show Zikpuii-Pa to be a family man who values family relationships and matters.

Moreover, Zikpuii-Pa employs a diverse cast of characters to provide his readers with a range of colours and shades of stories. He is a talented writer who explores the life and its many facets in his own particular style. As a writer, Zikpuii-Pa has depicted the problems and minds of Mizo society in vivid detail. Thus, he is a versatile personality who has touched on the numerous issues of his life period. Through his fiction, he has very creatively touched and employed his more persistent issues of affection and marriage. No doubt, Zikpuii-Pa appears to be very interested in marriage. Marriage dissatisfaction is universal, and it is one of the most ubiquitous issues in many societies today. In fact, it is also the subject of infidelity and deception. Whatever the reasons, divorce causes a slew of social ills. Through the characters, it is clear that a hasty marriage leads to sorrow and, eventually, tragedy.

The female characters in Zikpuii-Pa are always the victims of their husband's infidelity. A few instances would make the point clear. Silvarthangi is a victim of her husband, Lahnuna's infidelity and immorality. The same is true for Ngurthansangi, who has also suffered as a result of her husband, Captain Ranade's infidelity and inhumane actions. Similarly, Hmingthansiami suffers as a result of her husband, Lalsawma's secret relationship with Thanchhingi.

Through his fictional works, Zikpuii-Pa has developed his own identity as an author who enjoys conducting various investigations. He is acutely aware of his surroundings and the issues of his time, such as colonialism, *Rambuai*, and so on. Accordingly, he chose the lives of ordinary people and how they were transformed by historical circumstances as his themes. He has presented himself in a very friendly manner through his novels. He has blended fact with fiction in his narratives. His specific interest is in the set of experiences and culture of Mizo society. He may, therefore, be regarded as a social novelist. At the same time, he is a somewhat insightful satirist. Furthermore, he is a daring novelist who depicts the vices of his generation. His travels and personal experiences inspire several themes in his literary works, including love, sex, alienation, and the human condition. His novel writing style can be described as post-colonial. The normal issues fused into his works include unsuccessful connections, social insufficiencies, and moral inadequacies. Thus, Zikpuii-Pa employs the concept of love in his fiction. In *Silvarthangi*, using the theme of love, Zikpuii-Pa focuses on the personal life of the main character, Silvarthangi, such as being born, being neglected, being disillusioned, getting married, conceiving a child, and becoming frustrated again. These are the miracles and wonders of the main character Silvarthangi in the narrative *Silvarthangi*.

Certainly, some of his characters are flat and serve only as functionaries, while others are round and well characterised. Notably, despite coming from a decent family and having a good job, his deep insight into different human characters, as well as his humanity, is admirable. The primary themes that his characters reflect on in his five novels are love, marriage, humanity, jealousy, and career. *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* depicts Chhuanvawra and Ngurthansangi's elaborate love affair.



Despite the fact that both have extraordinary qualities, they were raised in the rural village of Zopui. They share the same environment and value the small-town atmosphere. Through the narrative, the readers can witness the magnificent Mizo culture and social life in the past alongside the love story of Chhuanvawra and Ngurthansangi. As a result, *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* demonstrates the difference in the social environment between the pre-*Rambuai* and post-*Rambuai* eras. Zikpuii-Pa portrays his protagonist, Chhuanvawra, as a brilliant, ambitious, supportive, and obedient gentleman, whereas Ngurthansangi is a fascinating, innocent, and graceful adolescent.

Similarly, *C. C. Coy No. 27* portrayed the protagonist as an inquisitive, intelligent, goal-oriented, and far-sighted child. His unwavering determination to complete the *Sap* had paid off by the time he reached adulthood. Surprisingly, the novel *C. C. Coy No. 27* is unique in that it bears no mention of any romantic love. Through the character of Bahadur, a *Kuli*, this fiction raises awareness of Zikpuii-Pa's humanity. Although Ralkapzauva is the protagonist, the readers are captivated by the character of Bahadur, which shows Zikpuii-Pa's literary expertise.

#### 4.1 The Portrayal of Major Characters:

The male protagonists in Zikpuii-Pa's fiction are dependable and cooperative, and their relationships with their families are amazing. Significantly, the majority of his protagonists cherished Mizo culture. At the same time, they are highly motivated to achieve high status. *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* and *C.C. Coy No. 27* have been narrated by the protagonists, Chhuanvawra and Ralkapzauva themselves. They inform the readers about their rural foundation and upbringing, their academic heritage, their sufferings, and their prosperity from the beginning to the end of the account.

In *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, Chhuanvawra is both the main character and the most exceptional. He is both the protagonist and the narrator. He is the son of Dr. Selthuama, a medical doctor who has been in practise for many years. For this reason, Chhuanvawra's family is economically and financially self-sufficient. From various perspectives, he serves as Zikpuii-Pa's mouthpiece. Many of his comments

are insightful and witty. The majority of the plot revolves around Chhuanvawra. From the beginning of his life, he exudes masculinity, will power, patriotism, and nationalism. Being the protagonist of the novel, many of the observations captured in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* are from his point of view. He possesses many positive characteristics, including an optimistic mind and self-assurance in social interactions. A significant part of the account is introduced through his sharp and savvy dialogue with different characters. Because he is the protagonist of *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, the narrative follows the evolution of his feelings and attitudes as he strives for success and happiness. Chhuanvawra's name is inextricably linked to a young, passionate lover who is willing to go to any length for the sake of his beloved sweetheart, Ngurthansangi. Although he is portrayed as a sensitive, witty, and intelligent individual, he shares some similarities with Shakespeare's Hamlet in his tragic flaw. Chhuanvawra's tragic flaw is his deep love for Ngurthansangi, which causes inner turmoil at times. On the other hand, his genuine love for Ngurthansangi, demonstrates his dependable personality. Chhuanvawra was born in the pre-*Rambuai* period in the village of Zopui. As a result, he fell in love with a fascinating teenager named, Ngurthansangi, who had been his Sunday school student. Soon after he moved to Shillong to further his studies, the troubled period in Mizoram known as *Rambuai* had begun, affecting the Mizo people physically and mentally. As denoted earlier, Ngurthansangi is one such victim.

In Mizo society, virginity is respected and appreciated. Accordingly, young men in Mizo society have looked down on and despised a maiden who have proven to have lost her virginity. Ngurthansangi had been raped during *Rambuai* and was subsequently kidnapped by Captain Ranade, who pretended to marry her. In normal life, a typical Mizo young men would turn down their loved one and marry another maiden in such a circumstance. Notwithstanding, Chhuanvawra neither despises nor forsakes his beloved, Ngurthansangi. Instead he chose to make an attempt to free her from the subjugation of Captain Ranade. Through various challenges, he at long last meets his cherished sweetheart in the brothel. Chhuanvawra himself touchingly narrates the situation of their meeting, "*Chu nawhchizuar hmelah chuan Vantirhkoh ka hmu a.....*" says Chhuanvawra, implying that he saw the image of an angel in the

appearance of a prostitute. In this way, Zikpuii-Pa's rhetoric is noticeable. Under normal circumstances, it is impossible to find an angelic face in the appearance of a prostitute. Meanwhile, it exemplifies the greatness of literature. When works of literature persuade our minds, readers naturally suspend their incredulity. Because of the aforementioned circumstances, the readers are convinced by Chhuanvawra's assertion. According to Chhuanvawra, a prostitute is purer than any other maiden, revealing his genuine affection.

Shakespeare, in his sonnet, "Let Me Not to The Marriage of True Minds" claimed that authentic love is never shaken by circumstances. The same is true for the affection between Chhuanvawra and Ngurthansangi. Their affection and fondness have not been harmed nor altered by any circumstances. In other words, Ngurthansangi has been ruined by an outside force. She has suffered physical abuse. As a result, an unknown person has ruined her innocent mind and uncontaminated body. In the narrative, Chhuanvawra expresses his desire to liberate his dear love, Ngurthansangi, as follows: "*Ka hmangaih chu amah leh amah a inngaihsan leh theihna turin a taksa leh rilru chhanchhuah ka duh a ni*" (190), which implies that in order for Ngurthansangi recover herself self-worth and self-esteem once more, he wished to rescue her both physically and mentally. When the IGP hears this, he appreciates his motivation and says, "*Tlangval chu chu I dam chhung hna tur a ni. Misual ten an sualte an sim theihna tur leh hnehchhiah tuarte'n thinlung zalenna an neih theihna hi Police tehna ropui ber a ni*" (ibid). This articulation demonstrates that Chhuanvawra's genuine obligation as a police officer is to protect vulnerable individuals. In other words, the most important task of a police officer is to convict sinners and assist oppressed people in liberating themselves. Subsequently, the conversation between Chhuanvawra and the IGP reveals the primary motivation of the police as well as the Christian philosophy. According to Christian teaching, a sinner is forgiven if he truly repents his wrongdoings. Despite admitting to committing a heinous crime, Ngurthansangi was unable to find a way out of such a dungeon. In such a dire situation, her true lover, Chhuanvawra, recognised her real nature and wished to be free her. Therefore, she stays a pure individual for Chhuanvawra in light of the fact that he likes her because she is immaculate both mentally and morally. In this regard, Chhuanvawra's moral integrity is remarkable.

To put it somewhat differently, Chhuanvawra has a strong sense of dignity. He does not regard women as commodities that a man can acquire by virtue of his power, wealth, and status. Accordingly, he is determined to free Ngurthansangi from Captain Ranade's shackles by any means necessary.

As the family's youngest son, Chhuanvawra bears many responsibilities, such as looking after his parents and caring for his sisters. There are times when he disagreed with his brother, Chhuankima. But, in reality, family is the most important factor in any situation, as demonstrated by Chhuanvawra's family. He has proven to be an obedient and dependable son to his parents, especially during difficult times. He is also a caring, compassionate, and trustworthy brother for his siblings in general, and Thanpuii in particular. As a lover, he has achieved his goal of rescuing his beloved sweetheart, ignoring her previous unhappy encounters. Above all, his everlasting love and sacrifice for Ngurthansangi are astounding. Thus, based on his actions toward Ngurthansangi, he has proven to be a caring, dependable, and forgiving lover, all of which are ideal characteristics of a Mizo gentleman for an ordinary Mizo maiden. Meanwhile, Zikpuii-Pa has shaped realistic characters, with strengths and flaws like real people. In this way, his characters do not appear to be individuals with exceptional qualities. They have the same feelings and thoughts as we do. For instance, despite being the protagonist, Chhuanvawra succumbs to temptations when alone with Ngurthansangi at their farmhouse. Like any normal young man, he attempts to seduce his beloved sweetheart, due to her appealing appearance, but he fails. Besides, when he returned to Shillong after visiting Zopui during the *Rambuai* period, he was so disturbed and frantic when he could not find Ngurthansangi. When he contemplated what could have befallen her, he could not control his emotions and wished to annihilate the entire Shillong city out of agony. Again, then, his family acted as his comforter and protector from such harmful acts. Therefore, it can be said that Chhuanvawra is the prime example of solidarity in Mizo society. His heroism lies in his endurance. He has played multiple roles in the story. He does not merely prove himself to be a true lover of Ngurthansangi, but he also proves himself to be an obedient son to his parents and a reliable sibling to his sisters throughout the novel. He demonstrates his authentic love and genuine affection for Ngurthansangi.

Next to Chhuanvawra, Ralkapzauva is the protagonist as well as the narrator in the story of *C.C. Coy No. 27*. Ralkapzauva's character exemplifies the major theme of 'diligence and determination bring achievement'. Through Ralkapzauva's character, Zikpuii-Pa emphasises the importance of parents delicate attention and deep concern for their children's education in Mizo society to turn this into a triumph. Like Chhuanvawra, Zikpuii-Pa created Ralkapzauva as his mouthpiece, and every incident in the account has been described from his perspective. Unlike other works of fiction, Ralkapzauva did not have romantic feelings for a woman in this narrative. He prefers to think about the possibilities of his future. To put it another way, he adores the prospect of becoming successful. Although Zikpuii-Pa did not specify the name of Ralkapzauva's village, it is probably located some distance away from the capital city of Mizoram, Aizawl. He hailed from the remotest, distant eastern part of Mizoram and lived in an isolated village. Like Zopui village in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, Zikpuii-Pa created such a village as the traditional Mizo village. The protagonist, Ralkapzauva, is a brilliant child who has a far-sighted vision. Right from his childhood, he was a unique figure. He was not satisfied with the rural community, and his mind was filled with experience outside the village life. No doubt, he yearns to go to another world, in contrast to his unsophisticated companions. His progressive father, who once served in the Second World War, inspired him to be so ambitious. He later accomplished his dream as a result of his determination, diligence, and God-fearing nature. Ralkapzauva is a Mizo gentleman who is wise, insightful, and brave. Aside from Ralkapzauva's heroic character, his emotional bond with a *Kuli* named, Bahadur is significant in the story. Ralkapzauva was greatly impressed by Bahadur's humble and honest nature. As previously stated, Bahadur remains loyal to the protagonist. Significantly, from a common perspective, Bahadur is not a decent individual, he is simply a *Kuli*. Remarkably, Bahadur is the only person who can offer appreciation to Ralkapzauva by calling him *Babu* whilst he is a mere student. Whenever he faces adversity, Bahadur appears in his life as an angel to support and save him. It is a wonder that, in spite of being poor, Bahadur did not seek remuneration for his service to Ralkapzauva, revealing his integrity and humble nature, which cannot be purchased with money. In other words, while assisting Ralkapzauva, Bahadur never took advantage of his position.

Such humanity and selfless service truly touched the heart of Ralkapzauva. As a result, he regards Bahadur as a father figure. Therefore, he is eager to share his accomplishments and current reputable status at the end. But the one who always lends a helping hand to him has passed away. Because of his humble nature, Bahadur regarded everyone as superior and considered himself to be inferior. As a result, he is free of corruption, selfishness, and enviousness. To put it in another way, the world of Bahadur is a world of sympathy, humility, and integrity, which contrasts with the arena of Ralkapzauva's senior fellows, which is a world of hatred, vanity, and rude manner.

Through the protagonist, Ralkapzauva, Zikpuii-Pa demonstrates patriotism. His character demonstrates that patriotism is something that can be learned and developed through education and social interaction, rather than something instinctive. Ralkapzauva's patriotism demonstrates his affection for his homeland, Mizoram. However, he did not extend his patriotism to the rest of the country. When his fellow YLA members organised a farewell programme for him, he acknowledged his patriotic feelings. Later in the story, he joins the army as the King's Commissioned Officer and gained many non-Mizo, Indians, and foreigners' associates. Subsequently, he gradually realised that his patriotism was not limited to Mizoram; his patriotic feelings toward foreigners identified him as a true Indian. This is demonstrated by Ralkapzauva's subsequent account: The English individuals' contempt on the Indians. Therefore, we compete with them. They basically have a presumption that we are inferior in comparison to them. On the other hand, we assert that we are not inferior to them in terms of capacity. Since then, they have been able to treat us as equals (My Trans., 65-66). This account describes Ralkapzauva's ability and competency as a hero. In addition, he finished first in the last race and was named the "All-Round Best Cadet". It is not incorrect to say that the protagonist, Ralkapzauva, plays a central role in the plot; he is included in each episode. Besides, he is a heroic character in the plot who displays moral strength and undergoes much pain through conflicts, but he finds ways to overcome them. On one occasion, the protagonist was accused of being a burglar by his seniors. His morality made him dare to mention the name of the instigator. Ralkapzauva himself

sympathetically narrated, “Since it was the last and most critical time in my entire life to settle on such an urgent choice about my destiny, regardless of whether it was positive or negative, despite fearing Saichhunga, I am certain it was the ideal opportunity to disclose the truth” (My Trans., 30). This narration asserts Zikpuii-Pa’s deep concern about morality. In the meantime, it is to be noted that since he had a cosmopolitan outlook, he did not simply manage morality from a Christian point of view.

Despite being one of the rural boys in the remotest eastern corner of Mizoram, Ralkapzauva ignores his humble and inferior background, attempting to move forward in his career. In contrast to other fiction, the protagonist has been strongly stimulated by western imperialistic ideology. Consequently, to imitate and to attain the status of what he called ‘*Sap*’ (the white administrators) was his main goal in life. In the end, his God-fearing nature, obedience, strong determination, and hard-work paid its price and he achieved his goals. Significantly, in every walk of his life, Ralkapzauva upholds his morality. Like other successful personalities in the world, he at times wishes to give up his ambition due to numerous hardships. In such a perplexing and dangerous situation, Bahadur transformed into a divine messenger for him. When he accomplished his goal and became successful, he wished to meet with him again and thank him. Unfortunately, Bahadur was no more. Significantly, many successful people disdain their humble upbringing, their parents, friends, and relatives, believing that they no longer require their support and do not wish to communicate with them. In short, some individuals almost despise their prior foundation. However, like Bahadur, Ralkapzauva represents goodness and humanity, and he did not despise or abandon his humble contacts.

Meanwhile, when Ralkapzauva was a student, his main problem may have been a lack of cash. Although he wished to own the complete textbook, his scholarship was not enough to meet his needs. A little later, the headmaster asked him to join the Boy Scouts and intended to buy his uniform for that purpose. Nonetheless, as a boy of integrity and faith, he denied such an offer by saying that he preferred to pay with the cash that he got from his father. Profoundly touched by his act of honesty, rather than scolding him, the headmaster encouraged him to be a virtuous

boy. For this reason, he did not need to stress over cash any longer from that point onward. This incident once again reveals Zikpuii-Pa's sense of morality.

As stated earlier, Zikpuii-Pa did not demonstrate any lady characters in *C.C. Coy No. 27*. However, in preference to citing romantic love, he emphasized the strong bond of attachment between Ralkapzauva and Bahadur. At the same time, Ralkapzauva's determination and enthusiastic zeal are remarkable. He is regarded as Zikpuii-Pa's ideal Mizo young man who is enduring, honest, diligent, and stubborn in his endeavour. In *Kraws Bulah Chuan*, the protagonist, Lalsawma, has been created to be a hero. Apart from being interesting, the story reveals human nature. Forgiveness, reconciliation, and reunion shape the key subjects of the story. Through the character of Lalsawma, Zikpuii-Pa demonstrates that no one is perfect in this world; everyone has both strengths and flaws. If a person tries to change his life, there may be a way for him to repent of his sins. As the title suggests, the Cross, where Lalsawma and Hmingthansiami were reunited, exemplifies reconciliation and absolution, which is the centrality of Christian doctrine. Like a normal human being, Lalsawma fell in love with Thanchhingi during their teenage years. However, due to the disapproval of their parents, they had to be separated, and Thanchhingi got married to another young man known as Subedar Lalzarliana. Similarly, Lalsawma also married another maiden named, Hmingthansiami after getting his medical degree. After many years of separation, Lalsawma and Thanchhingi renew their love affair, which is, indeed, the main cause of Lalsawma's offended relationship with his spouse. Surprisingly, *Kraws Bulah Chuan* has no villain. Like in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, the protagonist, Lalsawma, may be considered a hero turned villain. Through his character, Zikpuii-Pa represents common issues in Mizo society. Lalsawma is a hero turned villain when he became involved with certain vices like extramarital affairs, consumption of liquor, and domestic violence, as there is no other villain in this fiction. As a result, his spouse, Hmingthansiami, continually grumbled and nagged him for his misconduct. Lalsawma became frustrated and could not manipulate his spouse. As a result, one vice led to another, and he began drinking alcohol out of despair, prompting him to hit his wife.



As previously stated, extramarital affairs are discredited in Mizo society, and the same has been one of the leading causes of divorce in Mizo society. However, due to the loss of their beloved daughter, Lalduhkimi, Lalsawma and Hmingthansiami are finally reunited and reconciled. Readers are provided facts near the end of the narrative that shed light on the main characters. Adversity and death cause a person to turn to God, even in real life. This is surely happening to Lalsawma and Hmingthansiami. Second, the role of Lalsawma's parents, particularly his father, is crucial throughout his development. Notably, Lalsawma's father, Pastor Tlangkhuma, has been a significant influence on his son. From the start of his career, Lalsawma has followed his father's advice and therefore studied medicine. Although his sisters encouraged him to enroll in the Army Commission, he dared to abandon it. In this way, Lalsawma validated that he is a sincere son who fulfills his father's desires. Not only in his career, but Lalsawma's father is also quite involved in his married life. His father, Pastor Tlangkhuma, was enraged and ashamed when he learned of his son's illicit affairs with Thanchhingi, his first love. As a result, he took swift action and harshly reprimanded Lalsawma in this respect, which stopped him from further immoral behavior. His father's wise counsel and proper direction may be credited to his reconciliation with his wife at the concluding part of the story. Thus, the character of Lalsawma may be summarized as a passionate, intelligent, and obedient son as well. Furthermore, Lalsawma and Thanchhingi's relationship demonstrates that first love never dies, but it may not necessarily end in marriage. Further, it also depicts the ill effects of extra-marital affairs. At the same time, it further displays that the wage of sin is death. In this way, Lalsawma is blessed to have such a pious and responsible father. Therefore, the portrayal of Lalsawma reveals that he is a womaniser who continually had affairs with women everywhere. Even after being married, he could not control himself from keeping in touch with his former sweetheart.

The portrayal of the protagonist in *Hostel Awmtu* may be a bit controversial. It may be tough to identify who the real protagonist is in *Hostel Awmtu*. There might be different interpretations of that matter. Some readers considered it as Liankhuma, the narrator in the story. While some believe that, as the title suggests, the

protagonist is *Hostel Awmtu* (hostel sentinels). However, after a comprehensive reading of the story, it may be concluded that hostel sentinel is the protagonist. He is, nevertheless, the protagonist in a unique way. He does not appear physically, unlike the other protagonist. But his ghost does appear at times throughout the story. The hostel sentinel contributes to the pathos of the story right from the beginning to the end. In a nutshell, he appears to be a pathetic figure. At the same time, despite his brief appearance, he is shown to be a compassionate, broad-minded, obedient, and humble individual. His character impressed the readers and made them sympathise with him. His genuine love for Laltinchhingi was the cause of his tragedy. He made the readers aware of the fact that he had been killed due to jealousy. Despite being a brief narrative, the story also reveals human nature. The narrator, Liankhuma, mentions that the person commonly called ‘hostel sentinel’ was a hosteller in the past. He was, however, stabbed to death by unknown assailants.

According to Liankhuma’s narrative, the deep bond of love between the Hostel Sentinel and his adored sweetheart, Laltinchhingi, was broken by someone else because of jealousy. No doubt, his sweetheart is a stunning maiden who embodies attractive behaviour. Apparently, the murderers did not allow the hostel sentinel to marry such an exquisite maiden. Since love is universal, a person who does not experience love may be considered abnormal. Consequently, romantic love is one of the most common subjects in literature among the various types of love. Indeed, it is not a sin to love somebody, but it becomes a sin when someone hurts or kills a person out of love. In fact, nobody can compel someone who is not in love with him. From the account of *Hostel Awmtu*, it is clear that the murderer of the hostel sentinel creates a negative impact on both the hostel sentinel and his parents, which is extremely sad. Due to heartbreak, the hostel sentinel could not pass relaxation in peace. Based on his account, it may be observed that the hostel sentinel is a person who takes things seriously. His character also demonstrates the negative consequences of jealousy and envy in our daily lives. Jealousy is, of course, a difficult emotion to deal with in humans. It can spoil human relationships among lovers, friends, families, colleagues, siblings, nations, and so on. Envy and jealousy appear to be the conspicuous and terrible sins in our lives. When a person becomes

jealous, he naturally loses his morality and integrity, and as a result, some people commit major crimes. His touching narration proves that the hostel sentinel is a kind-hearted, passionate, humble, helpful, and sensible person. It is an undeniable fact that while love has been a blessing for humans, hatred has been a curse for them. Similarly, the world is wonderful when love reigns supreme. On the contrary, when people hate one another, the world becomes a horrible place. As a matter of fact, everyone desires to live collectively with their cherished ones by getting married and having amazing children. This is the dream of a normal person. As shown by his expression, hostel sentinel understands human nature. Since the story narrates the account of the hostel sentinel along with his tragic end, he is considered the real protagonist in the story. Although the hostel sentinel is introduced momentarily, he demonstrates morality throughout his life. From his talk with Liankhuma, it is evident that jealousy has made his life miserable. He also makes a distinction between love and hatred. Love and hate are, in reality, completely opposed. With the exception of *Hostel Awmtu*, the heroes of Zikpuii-Pa eventually gain high esteem as a result of their high aspirations, tenacity, and hardworking temperament.

#### 4.2 Major Female Characters:

Although Zikpuii-Pa's protagonists are predominantly male, female characters also play an important role in his fictional works. He creates a wide range of female characters and places them in various social contexts to highlight the sorrows and unpleasant realities of women in Mizo society before and after *Rambuai*. He portrays male-dominated and traditional types of women as characters. *Silvarthangi* is Zikpuii-Pa's lone female protagonist in all of his fiction. Like another protagonist, she hails from a remote rural area named 'Saithah village' that is far from modernity. She embodies perseverance and a stoical nature.

Remarkably, Zikpuii-Pa's heroines, such as Ngurthansangi in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, Laltinchhingi in *Hostel Awmtu*, and Silvarthangi in *Silvarthangi* share striking similarities. They have all been blessed with attractive looks and personalities. Despite their diverse backgrounds, each of these maidens attracted several suitors. In this sense, their beauty has become a trap for many young men,

eventually leading to their misery. Notably, although they all face several challenges in their personal and social lives, they never lose sight of their graceful hearts. They are modest, meek, obedient, and loyal to their partners and circle of relatives.

It would not be an overstatement to say that Zikpuii-Pa is one of the famous Mizo writers who has realistically depicts female characters. Ngurthansangi is the epitome of the female character, displaying all the positive traits. She grew up in the village of Zopui. In *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, she is the most innocent and endearing figure. She displays traits of kindness, conformity, commitment, and, above all, honesty. Aside from Chhuanvawra, she is the most significant character in the story. Initially portrayed as a naive, impressionable young girl, she undergoes a drastic transformation during *Rambuai*. To put it another way, she becomes the victim of political turmoil in Mizoram and loses her virginity. Chhuanvawra loves her so much that he almost loses his morality when he confronts her. The seriousness of her love for Chhuanvawra contributes to her nascent maturity and understanding in many ways. Her intense will power and unwavering devotion to Chhuanvawra are the most compelling aspects of her character. Her dedication is obvious from the fact that, despite going through unfavourable experiences, she, in the long run, marries him.

Certainly, Ngurthansangi is one of the most impressive characters in Mizo fiction. She is a stunning teenager, having massive breasts, and a pleasing appearance. She is the youngest and most delightful daughter of Khawvelthanga, the old chief of Zopui. She has been the apple of her parents eyes. She is innocent, docile, gentle, and graceful. She is a typical Mizo maiden who is respectful of her elders, young men, her parents, and her elder sister. As in other societies, a woman in traditional Mizo society is expected to fulfil a range of duties. As a result, Ngurthansangi also takes on the roles of a daughter, a sister, an aunt, and a sweetheart, among other things. She is physically and psychologically engaged in all of these relationships. Women's issues are almost universally addressed in literature. Sexual exploitation and sexual assault are widespread in this context. This is

ordinarily due to gender differences. Due to their physical frailty and lack of confidence, women lack the ability to fight such heinous acts in some societies.

Ngurthansangi's portrayal demonstrates that she is a dynamic figure who can regulate herself to changing circumstances. Surprisingly, she was able to reclaim her life after such a lengthy and painful ordeal. She never crumbles in any situation because of her patience and morality. She has a positive attitude and the ability to undergo all her hardships. The study discovered that Ngurthansangi is a pure maiden throughout the novel, pure in the sense of her heart because she strives to maintain her purity even in the presence of her cherished boyfriend. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, she was forced to sacrifice her purity, which was extremely painful. Despite this, she is not seen as an immoral woman because all of her negative events are not her fault. She did not give up her innocent nature or her harmless temperament.

Silvarthangi is the main character in *Silvarthangi* and the narrative revolves around her account. She is stunningly attractive, amiable, and enthralling. Because of her parent's untimely demise, she is sympathetic. Her childhood has been painful ever since she was ignored and deserted. Silvarthangi faces numerous challenges throughout the story about her orphanhood and gender within the ambit of her village, and possibly, in creating Silvarthangi, Zikpuii-Pa has given us an unforgettable character in Mizo fiction. To put it another way, the narrative of *Silvarthangi* presents the protagonist, Silvarthangi, as a helpless young girl, who is the victim of injustice done by her aunty. Her paternal uncle, Lianchhunga, and aunty Lalthangpuii, look after her due to losing her parents at a very tender age. No doubt, she has been ill-treated like her stepdaughter by her aunty. The loss of her grandmother worsened her miserable condition. She has been looking forward to her freedom since living in her uncle's family became unpleasant. Subsequently, she marries Lalhnuna, a disguised havildar, to find freedom and happiness. However, she became irritated, though, when she discovered his genuine identity. In this way, Zikpuii-Pa successfully conveyed the issue of appearance vs. reality, which is a popular theme in literature. After frustration with her first marriage, Silvarthangi

hesitantly returned to her uncle's house as a widow with her three-month-old infant. As a result, she received only harsh and sarcastic responses to any of her subsequent movements. Consequently, she sets out to find her maternal aunt, who tragically passed away before Silvarthangi could reach her home. On the other hand, her cousins, cordially welcome her and she is able to live a comfortable existence. Finally, she accidentally meets her lover, *Babu* and marries him. Although she is the key character and has committed no wrongdoing, Silvarthangi suffers the most from the other characters. She shows anguish throughout the novel, which is noteworthy. In fact, she has been dealt blow after blow by life. The death of her parents, her aunt's mistreatment, the death of her beloved grandmother, humiliation and divorce from her scaming husband, Lalhnuna, and so on. However, no amount of misery or discrimination can force her to revolt or seek vengeance, revealing her morality. Her internal strength and integrity keep her from becoming harsh, which is a great quality.

Since Silvarthangi's character is immensely sympathetic, it reminds us of Thomas Hardy's tragic and pitiable character, Tess, in *Tess of the Durberville's*. Subsequently, there are other instances in *Silvarthangi* that elicit feelings of sympathy and pity in the reader's heart. Furthermore, Silvarthangi's persona represents the low position of orphans in Mizo society. Silvarthangi is, one of Zikpuii-Pa's sympathetic protagonists. She is as likable as a literary individual allocated in Mizo literature. Readers will understand her predicament and her acceptance of the unfortunate events that have occurred in her life. Again, like Thomas Hardy's Tess, she can be called the quintessential anti-heroine because she does not win any significant battles or influence political decisions. Instead, she lives in her own small world and tries to make the most of her assigned destiny. Silvarthangi's character is developed and she is depicted as a modest beauty throughout the story. Every young man in Saithah village is enamoured by her lovely appearance. Certainly, Silvarthangi's fate is heavily influenced by destiny. She is capable of bearing heavy burdens placed on her at a young age. She is also very passionate about her love for *Babu*. When she discovers Lalhnuna's deception, she decides that this would be his last deception. Like Thangi, *Babu* has a history of

misdeeds. To achieve freedom in her life, Silvarthangi seeks marriage as an alternative to the inevitable bondage in her uncle's family.

Hmingthansiami is another significant female character in Zikpuii-Pa fiction. She is considered the heroine of *Kraws Bulah Chuan*. She fell in love with Lalsawma and later married him. Initially, they led a cheerful married life and have been blessed with four children. Nonetheless, due to circumstances beyond their control, Lalsawma and his former sweetheart unintentionally meet each other and reawakened their relationship. Since both of them could not control their feelings and affection, they used to meet secretly. When Hmingthansiami discovered their secret affairs through Lalsawma's dairy, she is upset and angrily scolds her husband, and her marriage gradually deteriorates. Hmingthansiami could not trust Lalsawma any longer when he asked for her forgiveness and promised not to abandon her. Out of desperation, Lalsawma then started drinking liquor and consequently slapped her. Hmingthansiami rushed back to her house in despair feeling that she had no other choice. However, things could never be the same again. She became a '*nuthlawi*<sup>1</sup>' and *nuthlawi* have a low social status in Mizo society. They are generally despised by their own family, and even their parents are reluctant to show their appreciation for their *nuthlawi* daughters. They would rather not draw attention to their daughter in favour of their daughter-in-law. Moreover, the public scorned them and made vulgar comments about them. Despite being very close to her parents, Hmingthansiami received no favours from them because her brother married an old schoolmate and had children. Instead of Hmingthansiami, her sister-in-law occupies a prominent place in their family. As a result, she became hopeless within the family. Meanwhile, she pined for her previous home, where she received her husband's tender care. As time passed, they are reunited at the end of the story, and forgiveness occurs as a result of the demise of their child, Lalduhkimi. Thus, Hmingthansiami represents a Mizo woman who can feel and suffer just like any other woman. For instance, the jealousy she feels when her husband has an affair is natural because jealousy exists between husband and wife. Likewise, her condition of being divorced exemplifies the plight of the *nuthlawi* in Mizo society. Her reunion with her husband also demonstrates that forgiveness always leads to reconciliation in human nature. In fact,

Hmingthansiami cannot be blamed for being a jealous and impolite woman. Her unpleasant experience compelled her to act impolitely.

Thanchhingi is another significant female character in *KrawsBulahChuan*. Without a doubt, she is the cause of conflict in the story. She could be considered Hmingthansiami's antagonist. In Lalsawma's opinion, she is exceptionally beautiful, charming, and fascinating. On the other hand, her attractive appearance has become her downfall, as she has drawn a large number of suitors. Although she is profoundly infatuated with Lalsawma, her parents prevented her from marrying him. Her feelings for Lalsawma are genuine, and she intended to stick by her side. Thanchhingi is a maiden who is preoccupied with romantic love, as evidenced by her actions in the account. Due to her deep love for Lalsawma, she demonstrates her bravery as a maiden by expressing her opposition to Lalzarliana's proposal. She is a straightforward person. Meanwhile, she is compelled to marry Subedar Lalzarliana, who is not her first choice. As stated in the previous chapter, money matters a lot in Mizo society due to colonialism, which resulted in high regard for the so-called "Sipai" (a soldier). Unfortunately, Thanchhingi's husband died not long after they married, leaving her a destitute widow. The widow has a low status in Mizo society, as depicted earlier in the accounts of Silvarthangi and Hmingthansiami. Apparently, Zikpuii-Pa has created Thanchhingi as a significant character in the plot throughout the narrative. To put it another way, the majority of the incident revolves around her relationship with Lalsawma.

Notably, Zikpuii-Pa's rhetoric can be seen in his description of Thanchhingi's appearance: "*Lalsawma tan chuan Thanchhingi chu nuthlawi ai chuan a nula zawk a, nula aiin a tleirawl zawk a, tleirawl ai chuan a tuai no zawk a, a bik taka mi danglam, sawi thiam theih loh mi u a ni*" Thanchhingi is more beautiful than an ordinary damsel in Lalsawma's eyes, looking younger than a woman and softer than a teenager, a phenomenal, incomprehensible human being (My Trans.,180).

In *Kraws Bulah Chuan*, circumstances are controlled by destiny. Like Hardy's Eustacia in "The Return of the Native", Thanchhingi bears little



responsibility for the devastation she has caused all around her. She is a helpless victim and a device of a pressured destiny over which she has no control. In fact, even after becoming a widow, she remains in love with Lalsawma. She is unable to control her emotions and feelings every time she meets him. Some may accuse Thanchhingi of being an immoral woman for interfering in Lalsawma and Hmingthansiami's marriage. However, in reality, she is not the only one who engaged in the extramarital affair. It was in fact Lalsawma who took the initiative in their affairs. But, as a widow, she is constantly the one accused for having a relationship with a married man. Men, on the other hand, are not blamed in such a way. In this way, gender discrimination is depicted through Lalsawma and Thanchhingi's affairs.

Next, the heroine, Laltinchhingi, does not appear physically in *Hostel Awmtu*, but the author introduces her to the reader. According to Liankhuma's narration, it is obvious that Laltinchhingi is a lovely woman with an attractive appearance. In the past, she was in love with the hostel sentinel. However, there was someone else who adored her dearly too. As a result, they are jealous of the hostel sentinel and forbid him from marrying such a lovely maiden. Consequently, to put an end to their affairs, the hostel sentinel was stabbed and put to death. According to the hostel chowkidar, the murderers threw Laltinchhingi's sweetheart into the deep well. Despite being mentioned in only a few sentences, her physical beauty became the motive for the hostel sentinel's tragedy.

In a nutshell, female characters in Zikpuii-Pa's fiction are typically depicted as going on a journey of life, from innocence to experience. The female characters, Ngurthansangi, Thanchhingi and Silvarthangi differ, but share many similarities. To begin with, all of them have physical beauty and a captivating appearance. As a result, they have numerous suitors and lovers. Secondly, except for Laltinchhingi, their beauty and glamour have become constant source of pain and burden. Consequently, they are unable to marry the person of their choice in their first marriage. Their first marriage generally ends in divorce. These female characters have diverse experiences and encounters in their lives. For instance, Ngurthansangi

was innocent and chaste. But, later in the narrative, she becomes pitiful because Captain Ranade took away her chastity during *Rambuai*, which deeply affects her psychology. In fact, due to their frailty and vulnerability, women in various societies are victims of male hegemony, particularly during war and insurgency. Ngurthansangi has no choice but to follow Captain Ranade, who later sells her to the brothel. However, Chhuanvawra's genuine love and determination rescued her from the bonds and slavery of such an indecent occupation. Due to her dark involvement in the world of prostitution, she nearly forgot the honour of God. When her beloved sweetheart Chhuanvawra's attempted to seduce her in the pre-*Rambuai* period, her God-fearing nature made her resist even the man she loved, Chhuanvawra. Ngurthansangi's character is ironic in that one of Zopui village's gracious and pious Mizo young girls has almost forgotten God. Given her previous behaviour, it is surprising that she has completely changed her personality. In this regard, it can be observed that *Rambuai* brings moral decay. Meanwhile, she was fortunate to have a genuine lover who is respectable, dependable, and responsible. As a result, she was able to reclaim her life and enjoy a happy married life.

#### 4.3 The Portrayal of the Father:

In the majority of Zikpuii-Pa's fiction, males are the dominant forces within the home. As Mizo society has been patriarchal since time immemorial, men have complete authority over their domains, whereas women are expected to be quiet and docile. It may not be wrong to mention that Zikpuii-Pa is a well-known novelist who places a high value on family. His fiction reveals this fact. As stated earlier, the father is the head of the family and dominates the whole family in Mizo society. Fathers in Zikpuii-Pa's fiction are recognised as one another, and they share many things in common.

Fathers such as Chhuanvawra's father, Dr. Selthuama, Ralkapzauva's father, Dorumi Pa, and Lalsawma's father, Pastor Tlangkhuma, are dynamic and round characters who can adapt themselves within the social milieu. Significantly, they represent the stereotypical Mizo father who is domineering over his family members.

In other words, they are the decision-makers within the family and are deeply concerned about the careers of their sons. In comparison to their contemporaries, all of them are far-sighted and astute. One thing they all have in common is that they have once been associated with non-Mizos. For instance, Chhuanvawra's father is a medical doctor with a decent reputation, who served as a medical surgeon in NEFA during World War II. Similarly, Ralkapzauva's father, too, had served in the Second World War. On the other hand, Lalsawma's father, Pastor Tlangkhuma, is a religious priest who is heavily influenced by Christianity. To put it another way, their association with westerners has given them all a broader perspective. Both Chhuanvawra and Ralkapzauva's fathers aspire to have their sons educated so that they can achieve a respectable status. Meanwhile, Lalsawma's father wishes for his son to use his medical degree to serve God. Except for Silvarthangi, the protagonists of *Zikpuii-Pa*, such as Chhuanvawra, Ralkapzauva, Lalsawma, and the hostel sentinels, are all educated, intelligent, young, and energetic. Notably, all of the fathers adore their sons and are deeply committed to their well-being. Despite coming from diverse social and family backgrounds, it is clear that they share the same traits, which is the deep concern they had for their sons.

Turning our attention to Dr. Selthuama, who is the protagonist, Chhuanvawra's father in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*. He has a great and respectable family. He is the father of two sons and three daughters. Each of them is self-sufficient and dependable in their own way. Dr. Selthuama may be considered a successful Mizo father. To put it another way, he did not have any black sheep among his children. For this reason, his family represents a decent Mizo family. His unwavering love for his village, Zopui, and his inherent fondness for Mizo culture are the most endearing aspects of his personality. For this reason, Dr. Selthuama epitomises the typical Mizo man who upholds traditional values despite his success. Needless to say, he is a medical doctor who is honoured everywhere. If he wishes to leave Mizoram and live a more advanced life, he has the means to do so. He does not, however, wish to abandon Mizo culture and tradition; instead, he wishes to live humbly in his own Zopui village and continue cultivation. Despite the fact that many of his Mizo fellows mocked him for his rare decision, he was unconcerned about

such negative remarks, which demonstrates his moral integrity and strong principles. Furthermore, he maintains a humble demeanour throughout the story. In fact, his two sons, Chhuanvawra and Chhuankima, hold respectable positions, and both of his daughters are married to educated people of decent status. He never talked haughtily or detested anyone, which exposes his high ethical quality.

Secondly, Ralkapzauva's father is another father figure in Zikpuii-Pa's fiction, next to Dr.Selthuama. Although his name is not mentioned in *C.C. Coy No. 27*, but he was known as "Vanrumi Pa" (Vanrumi's father), which is the Mizo way of addressing a married man. Since such epithets have been created with their first-born toddler, Vanrumi is supposed to be the first-born child of Ralkapzauva's parents. Zikpuii-Pa deserves appreciation for his creation of characters like Ralkapzauva's father. No doubt, he indicates the typical Mizo man who is very brave, confident, social, and has a great sense of humour. Furthermore, what is most striking about his character is that he possessed the gift of the gab, which impressed his fellow villagers, including their chief. Every Sunday after Church, men come to his house to pay attention to his interesting and witty chats about his experiences in World War II, the grandeur of the British Empire, that the Mizos referred to as "*Kumpinu*". Besides, his wartime experience gave him a farsighted vision that will be beneficial to his beloved son, Ralkapzauva. Undeniably, he stands out from his fellow villagers, who aspires to his son becoming a respectable person in the future. His dedication to his son is one of his most notable features. He travels with his son Ralkapzauva to see Aizawl, which serves as the headquarters of the British administration. As a matter of fact, no other father could ever do such a thing. Remarkably, during their meeting with the colonial ruler, Ralkapzauva is impressed by his father's confident manner. In this way, it could be argued that Ralkapzauva's father's confidence echoes the author's confidence among foreigners. Obviously, the story has some autobiographical elements to some extent. Later in the story, his deep concern for his son's career is revealed when he is willing to sell his most treasured possession, "*Tukuli Mal*", which he obtained as a result of his participation in the war. This validates that Vanrumi Pa is aware that education and morality are the two most valuable possessions a person can have in his lifetime. Thus, Ralkapzauva's father is

portrayed as an archetypical Mizo father; despite being uneducated and unsophisticated, his high mentality made him the father of one of the successful Mizo gentlemen of his time.

In *Kraws Bulah Chuan*, there are two sorts of fathers, which include Lalsawma's father, Pastor Tlangkhuma, and Thanchhingi's father, Taivela. In reality, they are the reverse. Like Ralkapzauva's father, Pastor Tlangkhuma is portrayed as one of the remarkable fathers in Mizo fiction. No doubt, he is the epitome of morality and Christianity in Mizo society. Obviously, a religious person, especially a clergyman or a Church elder, is expected to keep up morality and integrity in everyday life. Nonetheless, not all religious leaders are the same, and there may be a few individuals who fail to maintain such integrity. Meanwhile, Zikpuii-Pa portrays Pastor Tlangkhuma as a dedicated pastor who maintains morality and integrity in the narrative. He has a strong commitment to serving God and strives to impress his family in this regard. Accordingly, he strongly advises his only son, Lalsawma, to serve God through healing. Therefore, he needs to study medicine. Despite Lalsawma's preference, his father persuaded him to abandon it. Thus, Lalsawma follows his father's advice and studied medicine. Since his father's normal income could not cover all of his expenses, he later borrowed money from his friends. Due to his obedience, he later became prosperous and became the most eligible bachelor during his time, and every parent was cheering for him. This indicates the fruitfulness of obedience. Later in the story, when Pastor Tlangkhuma learned of Lalsawma's extramarital affairs with Thanchhingi, he does his fatherly duty admirably. While some parents attempt to hide the sins of their children, Lalsawma's father, Pastor Tlangkhuma, as a minister, did not tolerate such an illicit affair. Consequently, he daringly scolded his son for his misconduct. Finally, Lalsawma repented his misbehavior toward his wife and children, and forgiveness instantly occurred.

Meanwhile, despite being a religious priest, he is a flawed human being. When he learned of Lalsawma's secret meeting with Thanchhingi, Subedar Lalzarliana's wife-to-be, he never maintains his morality as a minister and always

expresses his dislike for Thanchhingi's father, Taivela. He claimed that Taivela appeared to be a good person on the outside, but inwardly, he is bitter and envious of his neighbours. His expressions show that everyone is faultless. However, Lalsawma's father demonstrated himself to be a committed minister, having honesty and ethical qualities, who consistently directed his family to follow the right path. Despite the fact that he ran over numerous temptations in family matters like normal individuals, he never changed his attitude and never lost his confidence in God, which is commendable. As a loving father and a spiritual leader, his advice towards his son is noteworthy.

While Lalsawma's father, Pastor Tlangkhuma, represents morality, Thanchhingi's father, Taivela, signifies immorality in Mizo society. Taivela is selfish, snobbish, impolite, opportunistic, arrogant, and greedy. His abusive remarks about Lalsawma's father, Pastor Tlangkhuma, disclose this reality: "*A pa lah kumkhuaa ka hriat than mi chapo, hmui a thlum, rilru kha, Pastor induh anih saw*" which implies that he has known Lalsawma's father for a long time, who is conceited, sweet in articulation, bitter in heart, he is such an arrogant Minister (My Trans., 150). He utters these derogatory words about Pastor Tlangkhuma, which reveal his indecent nature. In fact, his behaviour and mentality confirm that he is shallow, lacking in morality and reasoning. As a matter of fact, Taivela has no principles as a father. His materialistic mind compelled his daughter to marry a person who belonged to a well-to-do family. Although he assumes a minor role, it is clear from his account that he is not bothered with his future son-in-law's behaviour and mentality; he is more concerned and worried about their outward appearance and financial position. From the preceding discussion, it is clear that both Ralkapzauva and Lalsawma's fathers have far-sighted visions for their beloved sons, and they are courageous enough to borrow the necessary funds for their son's education. In other words, both the fathers take a risk for the success of their son, which reveals Zikpuii-Pa's high mentality. Simultaneously, it discloses the accountability and reliability of their children as well.

In *Silvarthangi*, Lianchhunga's character is akin to a villain than a father figure. Biologically, he is Silvarthangi's paternal uncle. Due to the untimely demise of his brother, Liankung, he had become responsible for his niece. As an uncle, he has fulfilled his duties to some extent. However, he is neither helpful nor supportive of his sympathetic orphan niece, because he dared not oppose his evil-minded wife, Lalthangpuii. Surprisingly, Lianchhunga's personality is a contrast to that of the typical Mizo men in his family. As previously stated, typical Mizo men were arrogant and domineering in their own families. Everyone in the family acted in accordance with his wishes. Nobody dared to oppose his orders. Considering this, it is reasonable to assume that Lianchhunga sympathises with such an orphaned niece and acts as a comforter and protector. He, ironically, said nothing to support his niece. Despite knowing his wife's wickedness, he never scolded her to defend Thangi. On the contrary, he always agreed with his wife when she criticised Thangi. In Mizo society, such a cowardly man is known as "*Thaibawih*" (a hen-pecked man) and is despised by his male counterparts. At the point when *Babu* proposes Silvarthangi, both Lianchhunga and Lalthangpuii show up as well-wishers for Silvarthangi. They acted as if she were their adored daughter. However, *Babu* recognises their real intentions towards her and thus disregards their suggestions on marriage-related matters. In this way, it is true that one cannot conceal one's real nature. Their heinous behaviour toward Silvarthangi has been noticed by others.

In light of the above discussions, it is true that Zikpuii-Pa expertly crafted the various aspects of the character's qualities. One can find some similar and dissimilar aspects in Zikpuii-Pa's fiction. Firstly, his fictions comprise a circle of family, which includes fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, and different spouses and children. Secondly, Zikpuii-Pa's fiction concerns individual crises, antagonised relationships, and social evils. Thirdly, the protagonists, their thoughts, activities, and actions change over time in Zikpuii-Pa's fiction. Fourthly, all his fictional works have been associated with morality, which reveals Zikpuii-Pa's consistency as a writer.

#### 4.4 The Portrayal of Minor Characters:

Among the minor characters, Thanpuii in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* is really worth mentioning. She is Chhuanvawra's younger sister. She is a person who is very

affectionate and sweet-natured. Her genuine affection for her sibling, Chhuanvawra, is admirable, and she is the epitome of a typical Mizo maiden who has served the family well. She is candid, cheerful, vibrant, entertaining, and a kind young lady. Hence, even Prof. Remsiana perceives that she is a lady blessed with a good sense of humour, sensibility, support and dependability, which distinguishes her from the majority of young females that he knows. Her poise particularly dazzled him. To put it somewhat differently, Thanpuii is an archetype of a woman's character, displaying the most desirable characteristics. Despite being a minor character, she acts as a link between the other characters. As a loving and cheerful lady, she makes an even bigger impression on another character with a fantastic verbal exchange. Though she does not contribute much throughout the story, she shows the best attributes of a female character. In fact, she is a young lady with a compassionate heart, a helpful sister, and a dependable daughter for her elderly parents. In other words, she is a positive role model who is always willing to assist her family. Though she does not contribute a great deal at some points in the tale, she shows the nice traits of a lady. Her good manners paid the price, and she eventually married Prof. Remsiana, a fine and educated gentleman. Through the character of Thanpuii, Zikpuii-Pa demonstrated how important it is for a young woman to maintain morality and etiquette with others to find a respectable spouse.

Next to Thanpuii, Tlanthangi in *Silvarthangi* is another secondary character in Zikpuii-Pa's fiction. Despite being a minor character, she is extremely important to the protagonist, Silvarthangi. She acts as Silvarthangi's confidante, and trustworthy companion, much like Horatio in Shakespeare's "Hamlet". Most likely, she is the lone individual who comprehends Silvarthangi's true nature in the entire Saithah village. She serves as a comforter to her cherished friend Silvarthangi in times of trouble. Chief Dolura is another minor character worth mentioning in *C.C. Coy No. 27*. He represents the traditional Mizo chief, who is oppressive, straightforward, genuine, and has an enormous voice. His inspirational statements towards Ralkapzauva are remarkable. Despite leading a humble life, he has served as an inspiration to Ralkapzauva's career. His motivation and sense of humour make the story interesting.



Besides, Pastor Lianzuala deserves attention. He is the only character in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* who contributes to some semblance of peace and stability. Despite being a minor character, he plays an important role because he is the one who brings the hero and heroine back together. In times of crisis, he is like a steadfast tower that cannot be shaken. In this way, he is rightly viewed as the quintessence of Christian morality, as he maintains stability and tranquillity in every circumstance. From a gender perspective, Ngurthansangi's mother appears to be modelled on the traditional Mizo wife. Her world is limited to the domestic sphere. She is devoted to her husband, and it is assumed that her most outstanding characteristic is patience. Being a traditional spouse, she is expected to live in the shadow of her husband. She is not the event's shaper, but rather an assistant to her male partner. She is a dissatisfied mother because her daughter was a rape victim during *Rambuai*. In a nutshell, Ngurthansangi's mother does not have her own world. She is the stereotypical traditional woman who is always sacrificing herself for others.

Undoubtedly, Bahadur is the second most significant character in *C.C. Coy No. 27*, next to the protagonist, Ralkapzauva. His occupation is *Kuli*, who used to transport the belongings of travellers. To some extent, his role is unique in that he is one of the few characters in Mizo fiction who belongs to a non-Mizo clan. Humility is the keynote of his character. He is innocent and has been abstaining from all types of hypocrisy and tricks. In the contemporary era, the majority of the people have worked hard to become wealthy and achieve respectable careers. Bahadur, on the other hand, never seeks such worldly pleasures and certainly does not seek more money. He is always humble, selfless, diligent, and helpful. Despite his humble profession, he maintains professional ethics and morality, which is admirable. He regards his customer as a demi-God and respects him so. He does his job honestly and without complaint, which is valued by Ralkapzauva. Needless to say, he has been an integral part of Ralkapzauva's success. Without sharing and spending time collectively, they were profoundly attached. Bahadur's affection for Ralkapzauva, therefore, illustrates selflessness, which in Mizo society is synonymous with Mizo *Tlawmngaihna* (altruism), still honoured even in the present day.

Apart from the major characters, Thanglawra and Chowdhury play a significant role to some extent as they represent goodness and humanity in *C. C. Coy No. 27*. Thanglawra is a class VIII Mizo student, hailing from Lunglei, Mizoram. Unlike Ralkapzauva's senior Mizo hostellers, he cares about him and has been kind to him. For instance, while the rest of the Mizo hostellers looked down on Ralkapzauva and refused to speak to him, Thanglawra showed his sympathy by giving five pieces of sweets to Ralkapzauva, which meant a lot to him because he was in a critical situation at the moment. Ralkapzauva himself expresses, "*Mi zawng zawng in min haw lo ani tih ka han hriat chuan ka awm a nuam ta sawng sawng a*" implying that it is a huge relief to recognise that not everyone hates him (My Trans., 46). Subsequently, Thanglawra then assisted him by washing clothes, which is actually a form of punishment imposed by his senior hostellers. Despite his brief appearance, Thanglawra serves as a protector and well-wisher for Ralkapzauva, much like Bahadur, in times of trouble. To put it another way, Thanglawra is the only Mizo individual hosteller who is concerned about Ralkapzauva. Furthermore, Chowdhury is another good character representative who has been kind to Ralkapzauva despite his humble origins. He is Ralkapzauva's classmate and comes from a wealthy Bengali family. He is not only brilliant and well-educated, but he also exemplifies great conduct. Chowdhury is the class topper and thus ranks higher in the class than Ralkapzauva. Ralkapzauva ranks second in terms of academics and learning. Despite his wealth and brilliance, he is neither arrogant nor jealous of his classmates, particularly Ralkapzauva, revealing his integrity and humanity. Furthermore, his family has been gracious to Ralkapzauva, inviting him to visit their home at no cost. Chowdhury's generous invitation means a lot to Ralkapzauva because the immoral hostellers envy him and no longer dare bully and torture him. In a nutshell, despite being a minor character, Chowdhury demonstrates that even someone who belongs to a well-to-do family can keep up morality and humanity.

Among Zikpuii-Pa's fiction, *Hostel Awmtu* has a social significance. Liankhuma is the narrator in *Hostel Awmtu*. Through his narration, the readers are convinced of the evil of jealousy and envy. It is clear from his narration that Liankhuma is a man of integrity and compassion. He embodies humanity, as he is

always willing to help his fellow humans. His compassionate attitude can be visible in his motion towards the mysterious man who was stabbed by someone else. His empathetic nature is also noteworthy. He pays attention to what the guy says. Briefly speaking, he is a patient listener. In the narrative, Liankhuma was hurt and frustrated when he learned about the man who was murdered by his friends out of jealousy. At the end of the plot, he curses the evil-doers for ending the life of a wonderful young man with a bright future, even after a hundred years have passed. Despite being a mere narrator, Liankhuma signifies goodness and morality in human beings.

#### 4.5 The Portrayal of Villain Characters:

Significantly, the characters in Zikpuii-Pa's fiction are not very crowded. Furthermore, it is obvious that, in contrast to other novelists, Zikpuii-Pa did not consider creating villains. As a result, he did not create villains in all of his fiction. In literature, the villain is referred to as an antagonist or a rival of the protagonist. He or she generally represents an evil character in a story, whether historical or fictional. Some characters in Zikpuii-Pa's fiction play the role of villains. At the same time, the villain in one fiction is not the same as the villain in another fiction. For example, Captain Ranade is portrayed as a villain in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*. His wicked and immoral activities make the two major characters, Ngurthansangi and Chhuanvawra, suffer. Zikpuii-Pa's portrayal of Captain Ranade exposes the hypocrisy of Indian Army personnel during *Rambuai*. During *Rambuai*, he falsely manipulates his power to control the helpless Mizo women, particularly Ngurthansangi. It is heartbreaking that he not only raped Ngurthansangi, but also acted violently against her father. Furthermore, he has been linked to one of the most heinous crimes even in the contemporary era, known as "human trafficking". He pretended to ask for Ngurthansangi's hand in marriage but had no real intentions of marrying her. He had already married another woman in his hometown, and Ngurthansangi was kidnapped solely for the purpose of making money at a brothel in Chandigarh. As a result of Captain Ranade's duplicity and evil character, Ngurthansangi became one of the pathetic female characters in Mizo fiction. The trouble she has gone through is beyond expectations. However, due to the sincere

commitment, true love, and strong willpower of Chhuanvawra, Ngurthansangi was released from her gloomy world and married the person of her preference, Chhuanvawra. Although the character of Captain Ranade is unpleasant and detestable, he serves a purpose in the plot. His heinous actions reveal Chhuanvawra's genuine affection for Ngurthansangi. Furthermore, his character teaches a moral lesson: an evil-minded person has no peace of mind or happiness in their life. Therefore, his character demonstrates that the wage of sin is death.

Remarkably, it may be considered that there are two villains in *Silvarthangi*, namely Lalthangpuii and Lalhnuna. Zikpuii-Pa portrayed these two characters as arrogant, selfish, and unfaithful. Lalthangpuii is the wife of Lianchhunga, the paternal uncle of Silvarthangi. She is a cruel and boastful woman. She mistreats Silvarthangi and treats her as if she were an employed domestic maid. Lalthangpuii constantly uses abusive language towards Silvarthangi in her household. She has been torturing Thangi mentally. The personality of Lalthangpuii echoes the depraved stepmother in Mizo folktales and conventional fiction like *Mauruangi*. Similarly, Lalhnuna is another villain in *Silvarthangi*. He is a wicked person who causes harm to the innocent character, Silvarthangi. He serves both as a villain and a foil to Overseer *Babu*. In some ways, he embodies the evil nature of humans. To be more precise, Lalhnuna's character exemplifies the hypocrisy and evil nature of a few young men in Mizo society. One of the most important issues in any society is the conflict between appearance and reality. At times, appearance can be deceiving as the real nature of some individuals differs from their appearance. Outwardly, some people may appear trustworthy and impressive, but, inwardly, they live a shallow life. Through the character of Lalhnuna, Zikpuii-Pa depicts that those with loose morality, and evil-minded have to be punished. At the same time, the character of Lalhnuna exposes the theme of appearance and reality. Meanwhile, the *Babu*, has been portrayed as a good character representative. Love, at first sight, happens between *Babu* and Silvarthangi. In contrast with the shallow nature of Lalhnuna, *Babu* is portrayed as a respectable government official, a charming character with a generous mind.

Despite the fact that *Babu* was unlucky in his first marriage, his true love for Silvarthangi can be perceived. He is a man of integrity, but his personality is flat and static. His character reveals that he is unworried about greediness or social position when looking for a soul mate. In this regard, despite knowing all her misfortunes and helplessness, he bravely expressed his deep love for Silvarthangi. He is, indeed, such a humble soul who tries to rescue Silvarthangi from the evil hegemony of her aunty. In the end, his dream came true, and he happily married his beloved sweetheart, Silvarthangi.

In contrast to other works of fiction by Zikpuii-Pa, the villain in *C. C. Coy No. 27* may be considered to be more than just one person, the seniors in the hostel. Notably, Zikpuii-Pa boldly exposes the immorality and merciless nature of Saichhunga and his friends in Shillong. Since higher education institutions were not yet established in Mizoram, most educated Mizo young people pursued their education in the neighbouring areas, such as Shillong, Guwahati, and so on. Shillong has been the centre of education for the North-East folks.

Needless to mention, when the Mizos meet outside Mizoram, they immediately come together and form a community. On the contrary, Ralkapzauva's senior Mizo fellows, Saichhunga and his friends are rather wicked and arrogant towards their Mizo friend. Instead of supporting and being concerned about their junior, Ralkapzauva, they prefer to bully and torture him, which is ironic. In fact, the conceited and despicable nature of such depraved characters dishonour the Mizo people in general and Mizo students in particular. Simultaneously, every society is comprised of good and bad people. From this perspective, the behaviour of the Mizo young men exposes that even in Mizo society, there are wicked characters who neither facilitate their juniors nor care about their well-being. Meanwhile, their arrogant nature further reveals the bad consequences of ragging. As stated in the previous chapter, ragging is still a prevalent problem in the Indian social scenario, even in the contemporary era. In the hostel, it is surprising that Ralkapzauva has been harassed, threatened, and mistreated not by the non-Mizo hostellers but by his fellow Mizo young men, which is painful as well as shameful. He anticipated that his senior Mizo fellows will be friendly, supportive, and dependable, because he is a newcomer who has come all the way from the far east, the remotest area in Mizoram.

Furthermore, it seems that even if his non-Mizo fellows bullied him, his senior peers were supposed to be his protectors and comforters. However, instead of protecting him, they were worse than the non-Mizo hostellers. Besides, when they mistreat Ralkapzauva, it is ironic that a non-Mizo *Kuli* named, Bahadur always helped and consoled him. In this way, Zikpuii-Pa may thus be regarded as a daring writer as well as a good satirist who bravely exposes the evil nature of Mizo youth to the readers. This further discloses his impartiality and objectivity as a writer.

#### 4.6 Portrayal of Love in Zikpuii-Pa's Fiction:

As love is the predominant theme in literature, the issue of marriage also plays a significant theme. Pretense of love or marriage without love, on the other hand, has persisted throughout history. There are numerous factors that contribute to marriage failure. Money-oriented parents typically force their daughters or sons to marry a person who possesses such wealth. Furthermore, physical attractiveness or appearance can be enticing at times. For Zikpuii-Pa, as for Hardy, love is the entire existence of a woman. Even when they are at fault, Zikpuii-Pa faithfully represents them. Remarkably, the most striking aspect of *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* is that it narrates a love story that is affectionate and incredible because of the intensity of passion, that the lovers, Chhuanvawra and Ngurthansangi's experience. Through his characters, Zikpuii-Pa's fiction depicted various types of love, including romantic love, parental love, friendship love, and sibling love. Among these, the complicated love-affair between Chhuanvawra and Ngurthansangi pervades the entire narrative.

Moreover, the various pairs of young lovers who depict heartfelt love are Chhuanvawra and Ngurthansangi in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, Lalsawma, and Thanchhingi, Lalsawma and Hmingthansiami, the triangular love affairs in *Kraws Bulah Chuan*, Babu and Silvarthangi, Lalhnuna and Silvarthangi, in *Silvarthangi* respectively. Aside from these, the chief's son, Mangluaia, has fallen in love with Silvarthangi. However, it is clear from his actions toward Silvarthangi that his love was solely based on physical attraction, which was followed by lust. Although Hostel Sentinel and his beautiful sweetheart, Laltinchhingi, in *Hostel Awmtu* portrayed romantic love, the same causes physical and psychological suffering. In the case of hostel sentinel, it even led to murder.

The concept of sibling love can be visible in Thanpuii, Ngurthanhrangi, and so forth. The significance of Thanpuii for Chhuanvawra has previously been emphasised. It is revealed through the character of Thanpuii how far a sister in the Mizo family has been a blessing for her brother, especially in difficult times. For instance, when Chhuanvawra returns to Shillong, he becomes desperate and in anguish. Around that time, Thanpuii attempted to cheer him by utilizing her sense of humour. Filled with sympathy, she cannot endure the gloomy circumstances surrounding her beloved brother, Chhuanvawra, which reveal her deep love for him. Similarly, Ngurthanhrangi also proves herself to be a beloved sister to Ngurthansangi. She comprehends the relationships between Ngurthansangi and Chhuanvawra. Apparently, Ngurthanhrangi treats Ngurthansangi like a daughter, despite the fact that she is her younger sister. When Chhuanvawra comes to see Ngurthansangi after *Rambuai*, Ngurthanhrangi understands Chhuanvawra's feelings and informs him about what happened to her dear sister. For this reason, Chhuanvawra is also fond of her because of her compassionate manner. Thus, the characters of Thanpuii and Ngurthanhrangi represent sibling love in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*. In other words, among minor characters, Thanpuii and Ngurthanhrangi represent morality and goodness in human beings, who consistently care about the welfare of their families and the individuals around them.

#### 4.7 Difference between Male and Female Characters:

The distinction between male and female characters can be seen in works of fiction. Subsequently, it is evident that female characters in Zikpuii-Pa's fiction do not appear to be as authoritative and dominant as male characters, but they are directly perceptible. He unveils the insightful ability of male psychology by drawing his male characters in all their diversities and complications. Chhuanvawra's character has enormous literary significance, particularly within the domain of Mizo fiction. Aside from this, he is a vital figure in the setting of the novel, *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*. One of the most prominent themes in literature has been the quest for freedom and identity. To some extent, Zikpuii-Pa follows such themes. As a man with diverse experiences, he appears to be acutely aware of women status in Mizo society and their second place in the male-female relationship. In general,

Zikpuii-Pa's female characters lead lives of desperation, and the majority of his heroines triumph over the obstacles they confront.

Considering the Indian context, gender dissimilarities can be observed from the moment a child is born. While a male child is welcomed into society, a female child is unwanted. Moreover, the male child is nurtured with accurate food, expensive toys, and provided with all opportunities with regard to schooling, attire, and so forth. Furthermore, a boy is unquestionably more comfortable and idle in the family, whereas a girl is constantly preoccupied with household chores. A female child is regarded as inferior, weak, and fragile, and is thus treated as a secondary being. In a few societies, including Mizo society, parents disregard the education of their female children and do not recognize the need for such training. Like in Indian society, a male child has been provided with all of the positive qualities such as education, achievement, and respect in post-colonial era Mizo society. Zikpuii-Pa's fiction authenticates these realities. Consequently, if one reads Zikpuii-Pa's fiction thoroughly, he may easily apprehend his protagonists, such as Chhuanvawra, Ralkapzauva, and Lalsawma who have the advantage of being a male child in a Mizo family. They have been portrayed as the typical Mizo young men endowed with such great qualities. Furthermore, the author depicted them as brilliant, ambitious, and confident, which were lacking in female characters. While a young man pursues higher education and is sent outside of Mizoram, female characters do not participate in such learning and academic pursuits.

Unlike male characters, female characters are assigned to stay at home and assist their parents with any household chores. Needless to say, female characters have no opportunity to enjoy their lives. They were dominated by men from childhood to motherhood. As a result, many young women search for happiness through marriage. For instance, Silvarthangi is eager to marry Lalhnuna, to escape her miserable life, but it proves futile. No doubt, her view of marriage is one of liberty. With this in mind, she marries Lalhnuna, but soon becomes dissatisfied since marriage neither brings her craving for freedom nor satisfaction. When she is confronted with the reality of marriage, her fantasies are shattered. Likewise, for



Ngurthansangi in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, her desires for affection and freedom are not fulfilled. Marriage, in short, proves to be a failure for her. Furthermore, in *Kraws Bulah Chuan*, Hmingthansangi is frustrated when she discovers her husband's extramarital affairs with Thanchhingi, his former sweetheart. For the most part, disappointment in marriage causes misery and disgrace too. In fact, becoming a mother is both a dream and a blessing for every woman. However, if the relationship with the father of their cherished children is unsuccessful, it turns into a curse for them. In Mizo society, kids are generally taken care of by their mothers if the parents are separated. In general, it was not men, but women who had to confront such a problematical task on their own. On the other hand, men feel liberated after a divorce and are free to find someone else. This is reflected in *KrawsBulahChuan*.

As referenced above, it is irrefutable that men alone were given schooling and pursued careers in Zikpuii-Pa's fiction. Even a devoted priest like Pastor Tlangkhuma is not an exception in this regard. While he persuades his cherished son to pursue a career as a medical doctor, the author did not mention the education of his daughter. Thus, it is evident from the above discussion that Ralkapzauva's father, 'Vanrumi Pa' also has a deep concern about the achievement of his beloved son. As a result, he forfeits every one of his assets, including his valuable *Tukuli Mal*, which he got from France. Besides, he often accompanies Ralkapzauva during his studies. On the contrary, he does not care about the education and achievement of his daughters. Thus, it can be assumed that from the above discussion, Ralkapzauva's father, 'Vanrumi Pa's mentality has been occupied with the achievement of his beloved son only. Finally, *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* is an intriguing description of Chhuanvawra's relationship with Ngurthansangi, his scholarly foundation, and his prosperity. Although the family has three daughters, Chhuanvawra's character is dominant. Except for Ngurthansangi, the rest of the female characters are viewed as minor characters. No doubt, female individuals in the family are merely supporters of Chhuanvawra, including his mother. Although female characters play a minor role in the narrative, it is an undeniable fact that women were the backbone of the family in Mizo society, as portrayed by Chhuanvawra's family. They serve as cooks, cleaners, comforters, humourists, doctors, messengers, peacemakers, and, above all, supporters

of all family members. In short, women in a typical Mizo family are consistently valuable, and they have been the gem of the family. As far as their patriarchal hegemony and mentality are concerned, most Mizo writers depict their female characters as secondary and minor characters. Despite the fact that Zikpuii-Pa understands the worth of women in Mizo society, he actually makes them secondary beings, which reveals the dominance of patriarchy in Mizo society.

The roles of men and women in literature, as in human nature, are diametrically opposed. The binary role of men and women has long been accepted. It is a universal truth that men and women are not the same in terms of appearance, mentality, and behaviour. In English literature, Shakespeare has been praised for his skill in character creation. Similarly, Zikpuii-Pa deserves to be praised for his memorable characters. Women in Zikpuii-Pa's fiction are remarkably submissive, loyal, and faithful to their family members. Except for the villainous role of Lalthangpuii in *Silvarthangi*, they neither have rebellious minds nor act violently. Even the minor female characters support the main characters and expose human relationships.

Since Mizo society is patriarchal, the man is the head of the family and rules over his own family. Women have no say in the family. Directly from birth, gender inequality is visible in the public arena. When a male child is born, they say, '*Rallu la tur*,' which implies that the male child should take the enemy's head. On the other hand, when a female child is born, they say, '*Se man tur*', which suggests females should be sold. Furthermore, in a traditional Mizo family, a female child is responsible for all household chores, including caring for her younger siblings. A female child is incessantly busy, whereas a male child of the same age is sitting idle, playing with his friends, and wandering around. Surprisingly, despite performing all household chores and responsibilities, women's work goes unrecorded, and men simply take it for granted, which is painful for them. When it comes to women's subjugation, there are numerous sayings in Mizo society. For instance, the expression '*Hmeichhia leh Chakaiin sakhua an nei lo*' implies that ladies and crabs have no religion of their own, they have to comply with the religion of their husbands.

Moreover, ‘*Hmeichhe thu thu ni suh, Chakai sa sa nisuh*’ indicates that, just as crab meat is not considered meat, so are the expressions of women.

Meanwhile, Zikpuii-Pa’s fiction reveals the significance of women in Mizo families. Ngurthansangi has been supportive and obedient to her parents in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*. The same is true for Thanpuii, who has proven to be beneficial to her family. She assists her parents in any way she can, especially after her older sisters get married. During the troubled period in Mizoram referred to as *Rambuai*, Ngurthansangi endures male domination silently. She goes through her marriage with Captain Ranade, against her preference. Zikpuii-Pa has emphasised the pitiful condition of orphans in Mizo society, which is reflected in Silvarthangi’s character. Significantly, Zikpuii-Pa depicts social shades of malice in his works, his fiction could be classified as a social novel. An in-depth analysis of Zikpuii-Pa’s characters reveals that the victims of domestic violence are normally female characters, as seen in *Silvarthangi*, and *Kraws Bulah Chuan*. In the case of Ngurthansangi, despite her purity and noble character, she is defrauded and persecuted. Women are not treated at par with the male characters by the majority of the Mizo fiction writers, including of Zikpuii-Pa. Subsequently, most female characters discover that marriage and affairs are agonising and tormenting.

Juneja argues, “The novelist is a recorder of the history of his people. His characters therefore live through an ordered sequence of time. They have motives and their conduct has consequences for the entire community which they represent” (123). In light of this perception, it can be assumed that the female characters in *Kraws Bulah Chuan* are representations of women in Mizo families and Mizo society. There are two distinct ladies, like Thanchhingi and Hmingthansiami. Zikpuii-Pa exposes the similarity and dissimilarities between the two maidens. The two of them have appealing appearances and both fall in love with the protagonist, Lalsawma, but Thanchhingi did not marry Lalsawma, while Hmingthansiami did marry. The two female characters bear a striking resemblance in that they both play the secondary role of women in the Mizo family. They have no privileges of their own, especially when it comes to a life partner. They were heavily influenced by

their parents before marriage and by their spouses after marriage. In *Kraws Bulah Chuan*, Lalsawma and Thanchhingi are childhood friends who later fall in love with each other. The low status of the widow in Mizo society has been portrayed through the personalities of both Thanchhingi and Hmingthansiami. However, due to the dominant role played by Thanchhingi's parents in their affairs, Lalsawma and Thanchhingi need to be separated. Thanchhingi is forced to conform to her parents' choice and marry Zarlina, whom she did not love. Tragically, her better half passed away during the Kashmir war. As a result, she lived an unhappy life and later sent her child to an orphanage. Thanchhingi became a widow not because she desired it, but because of her misfortune. In Mizo society, a widow is considered inferior and not given much respect or status. They are often the subject of subversive jokes and impolite and disrespectful teasing. But they have to bear this in silence and accept whatever joke or teasing is hurled at them. In light of the character of Thanchhingi, it is evident that her womanhood, widowhood, and patriarchal hegemony over women have all contributed to her misfortunes.

Hmingthansiami is not an exception. She returned to her parental home after being separated from her disloyal spouse, Lalsawma. Nonetheless, life could never be the same again for her as a widow. Since her father was no more, her brother ruled the family. Despite the fact that she had been adored and pampered in her maiden life, she was ignored after becoming a widow. Her agonising condition has been described as follows: "*Pastor fanu ni si, chutia makchhiat tawk a mahni nu leh pa in lama a han hawng leh, miten hmusit en a an lo en chu na a ti leh zual a*" (190). This description implies that, despite being the daughter of a religious priest, she is not freed from social condemnation following her husband's expulsion. In her own home, she became shallow. She was very dejected when she came to the realisation that society looked down on her. A Mizo lady is consistently beneficial and dependable for her family. Their status, however, drastically changes after they become a divorcee. She no longer has any possessions or voice in her own family.

It can now be safely concluded from the preceding discussion that the father rules the family and makes the major decisions in Mizo society, which is reflected by

Zikpuii-Pa's characters. Although mothers sympathise and understand their daughters' feelings and emotions, fathers are unconcerned about them. Mothers are always caring, emotional, and compassionate. For instance, when Thanchhingi became frustrated and sad due to her father's decision regarding her marriage, she found consolation and relief in her mother. The same is true for Lalsawma, who received understanding and comfort from his mother's tender care. Moreover, in the case of Silvarthangi, the grandma is a nurturing figure and goes about as a comforter and protector for Silvarthangi before her death. Not only widows but divorcees and *nuthlawi* in general, women in Mizo society are treated as inferior and do not have the right to express or voice themselves or make major decisions. Men in the Mizo family have been domineering since time immemorial. With respect to the marriage proposition, men make all the decisions. Accordingly, Rathor remarks, "Gentleness, preservation, nurturance, sensitivity, supportiveness, humility and unselfishness are categorised as 'feminine' psychological traits" (36). Given this remark, women in Mizo society are, for the most part, compliant, humble, and generous, and they do not try to go against their domineering spouses. Women, particularly when it came to the marriage issue, did not dare defend their beloved daughters, and all they could do was console them. The common traits of Zikpuii-Pa's women disclose this reality. Through his diverse characters, Zikpuii-Pa depicted the Mizo tradition and culture, the role of men and women in the family, the role of children in the family, and so on.

Without a doubt, Zikpuii-Pa drew his characters from ordinary Mizo individuals and depicted how they were shaped by historical events. His fiction intertwines various individual struggles with historical events, and the social situation emerges as a result of their complex interaction. A close examination of Zikpuii-Pa's fiction reveals that his male protagonists are all young and well-educated. They have a strong power of confidence, patience, and hope. Except for Lalsawma, they do not lose their temper in the face of adversity. They represent the new Mizo elite, who are brilliant, intelligent, and self-assured in the pursuit of their careers.

In a nutshell, Zikpuii-Pa may be credited as a remarkable writer for his ability to create convincing and believable characters. His characters are substantial, logical, and excellent. Remarkably, all the major and minor have equal importance. Each character has his or her own identity. It may be pointed out that in some of the writings, the discourse implied by the speeches of the characters was inappropriate for their age and social status. However, Zikpuii-Pa's characters are convincing in their own way. They are a representation of reality. Consequently, they speak and act according to their age and social status. For instance, in *C.C. Coy No. 27*, the village chief, Dolura, consistently portrays his social status through his commands over his villagers along with his noisy voice. In short, the chief acts and speaks appropriately as a chief. The same is true for women, who play secondary roles in the family. His interesting and convincing dialogue reveals Zikpuii-Pa's distinctive quality as a writer. Furthermore, an analysis of Zikpuii-Pa's characters reveals that his fiction contains a variety of characters who respond in a variety of ways to the socio-political and historical events of his time. Zikpuii-Pa is successful in making his characters come alive and feel genuine in his fiction. One obvious thing is that he is more concerned with men than women. As a matter of fact, Zikpuii-Pa has chosen men as his protagonists, except in *Silvarthangi*. Consequently, all his male characters are more substantial and striking than his female characters, which is supposed to be his uniqueness with regard to characterisation.

Remarkably, characters in Zikpuii-Pa's fiction represent either good or bad. When perusing Zikpuii-Pa's fiction, one understands that the significant topics are morality, love, suffering, and the distinction between genders in Mizo society. It is essential for a woman to marry, preferably to an affluent man, because men are seen as the breadwinners for their families. In this manner, to become affluent and respectable in public, parents disregard their ethical qualities and constrict their daughters to marry a man who has heaps of cash. However, without affection and understanding between two people, it is easy to separate or antagonise each other. In light of the above discussion, it is true that Zikpuii-Pa's fiction depicts human character and the perception of good and evil in a more complex and sophisticated manner. His characters can be broadly divided into two kinds, the moral and the

immoral ones. Zikpuii-Pa exposes the prevalence of good over evil in his fiction by depicting gender dynamics through his characters. To conclude, the characters of Zikpuii-Pa are subjected to poetic justice; the evil are punished and the good rewarded after a long and tiring struggle against the many hardships they face. The evil may seem to prevail at first but they eventually succumb to the prize they have to pay for their immoral ways.

End Notes

- <sup>1</sup> The term “*Nuthlawi*” alludes to a young woman who is either separated or a widow. In Mizo society, the situation with *nuthlawi* is miserable as they are, for the most part, peered at by the general public. When they dress well, they get sarcastic remarks and are viewed as a woman who have loose behaviour and are looking for a new husband.



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## CONCLUSION

In the realm of fiction, the term “morality” plays a significant role. What is considered as right and wrong has an impact on society, community, religious life, and family life. More or less, the world is on the lookout for morality. Zikpuii-Pa’s fiction depicts a comprehensive understanding of Mizo socio-religious and political life. In short, Zikpuii-Pa’s fiction is replete with references to goodness. Goodness implies both the external and internal senses. Significantly, morality is a central concern in Zikpuii-Pa’s fictional works. Consequently, the work undertaken provides a thorough examination of the five works of Zikpuii-Pa’s fiction based on morality, such as *Silvarthangi*, *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, *C.C. Coy No. 27*, *Kraws Bulah Chuan*, and *Hostel Awmtu*. Consequently, the research evaluates, interprets, and assesses the fiction selected for the study. Therefore, based primarily on the research findings and evaluation of the previous chapters, the following research conclusions are worth mentioning:

To begin with, the research concludes that Zikpuii-Pa has situated morality in his fictional works in an appropriate manner. Accordingly, *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, *C.C. Coy No. 27*, *Silvarthangi*, *Kraws Bulah Chuan*, and *Hostel Awmtu* are fine specimens of morality in their varied manifestations. However, the morality depicted in one work of fiction is not the same as the morality depicted in another. Subsequently, individual behaviour, family life, work environment, social and religious values have all had an impact on morality.

Secondly, the study ascertains that the period of disturbance in Mizoram known as, *Rambuai* and British colonial rule in Mizoram are undeniably the two major outside powers that have changed Mizo individual, social, religious, and cultural life, thus affecting Mizo morality. Besides, Zikpuii-Pa demonstrates that jealousy is one of the major evils that pervades almost every human being. For this reason, jealousy has been a major theme in the nuances of literature. If jealousy is not embedded in their lives, everyone can live a comfortable and peaceful life.

Besides, the study also discloses that although Zikpuii-Pa gives moral advice to his readers, his morality is not candidly addressed in his fiction. In short, his

fiction is not as didactic as *Aesop's Fables*. Notably, when it comes to Christianity, the majority of post-Christian fiction writers deliberately give moral direction to their perusers. For this reason, they observed morality solely from the perspective of religion, especially Christianity. This demonstrates the enormous influence of Christianity in Mizo society, which shows the impact of colonialism. In contrast to his contemporaries, Zikpuii-Pa did not view morality solely from a Christian perspective. He observed events and human instincts from an alternate viewpoint, which lends authenticity to his fiction.

Moreover, according to the present research, Zikpuii-Pa's character can be divided into two types: those who uphold morality in their lives and those who do not. To put it another way, Zikpuii-Pa's character can be divided into two types: moral and immoral characters. Characters like Chhuanvawra, Ralkapzauva, Bahadur, and Pastor Lianzuala represent morality, whereas characters like Captain Ranade, Lalthangpuii, Lalhnuna, and others represent immorality. Besides, the research demonstrates that immoral characters, such as Lalhnuna and Captain Ranade, cannot be great partners to their wives or reliable fathers to their kids.

Following an examination into *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, the research discloses that *Rambuai* altered Mizo morality and only a few managed to maintain a sense of morality and humanity in their lives. For instance, Pastor Lianzuala serves as a steadfast tower for his terrified and perplexed people during *Rambuai*. To put it another way, when everyone else is miserable and gloomy, he exhibits no indications of tension or dread, which is admirable. He is an epitome of piety and humility, and such humility is one of the essential virtues that *The Bible* preaches to Christians. In this way, he is rightly viewed as the quintessence of Christian morality, as he maintains stability and tranquillity in every circumstance.

Furthermore, the study discovers that religious morality is subject to change depending on the situation and historical background. The account of Pi Kungliani in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* exposes this reality. One of the assault casualties of *Rambuai*, Pi Kungliani retains a sense of guilt, an absence of confidence, shame, and internal unrest. She then committed suicide out of desperation. Self-destruction is

regarded as veritable bad behavior in the context of Christian morality. As a result, even religious leaders were perplexed as to whether or not the Christian funeral ought to be observed. Despite knowing her precarious situation, Pastor Lianzuala bravely volunteered to carry out his responsibilities in such a critical situation. Rather than blaming Pi Kungliani's actions, everyone understood and sympathised with her predicament. This demonstrates that, although her actions were against Christian morality, the public sympathized with the inhumanity she encountered.

Moreover, the research discloses that historical context and life circumstances influence an individual's morality. For instance, individual morality in pre-colonial Mizo society differs from individual morality in post-colonial Mizo society. Subsequently, the study reveals that *Rambuai* causes moral degeneration in an individual. In the pre-*Rambuai* era, Ngurthansangi, the heroine of Nunna Kawngthum Puiah, was portrayed as a pure and innocent maiden. However, as a result of *Rambuai*, Captain Ranade took away her chastity and she was forced to follow him, who later sold her to a brothel, which affected her morality. She had nearly failed to remember God when Chhuanvawra set her free from such an unpleasant business. Before *Rambuai*, when Chhuanvawra tried to seduce her, her God-fearing nature, as well as her morality, caused her to resist even her beloved sweetheart. Ironically, a gracious and pious Mizo young maiden had almost forgotten God. Obviously, she could not keep up with her morality because of her gloomy bond with the territory of prostitution. There is no question that *Rambuai* brings about moral disintegration. Moreover, the study has also confirmed that Mizo society suffers from a lack of justice during *Rambuai*. In the eyes of the Indian army, the MNF volunteers or those individuals associated with the MNF were deemed to be morally wrong. Identity is significant in the context of *Rambuai*. It makes no difference whether an individual behaves well or not, everybody is judged in light of their identity rather than their conduct during the time of *Rambuai*.

The study also reveals that pre-*Rambuai* and pre-colonial Mizo morality, guided by communitarian Mizo culture, has been gradually changed by individualism. As a result of colonial rule, the Mizos imitated the white Europeans regardless of their status, appearance, or behaviour. Remarkably, the Mizos have a

cooperative culture in conventional society. For this reason, everything has been done collectively. However, as a result of colonialism and *Rambuai*, the communitarian and sharing subculture of the Mizo has gradually been replaced by western individualism, which prompts moral decay in Mizo society. For instance, in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, Chhuanvawra desires to be a respectable person and subsequently gets down to Shillong for further studies. Similarly, in *C.C. Coy No. 27*, Ralkapzauva is determined to become a *sap*. Unlike his peers, he has adopted a western style of learning. Moreover, in *Kraws Bulah Chuan*, the protagonist, Lalsawma, seeks higher studies to become a medical doctor. For this reason, they are unconcerned about others. Evidently, the study has found that colonialism fosters egocentricity and individualism in Mizo society.

Furthermore, the research concludes Zikpuii-Pa's fiction demonstrates that morality and integrity do not rely solely on status and rank, but rather on the distinctive individual. To put it somewhat differently, it is unwise to judge a person based on their outward appearance and status. Along these lines, it is apparent that outward appearance can be deceiving. Apart from these, the study also discloses that the majority of Mizos lack morality toward Christian missionaries' as they regard them as superior beings or demi-divine beings. In other words, the Mizo people failed to recognize the flaws of white people because they overestimated them. In *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, the train debate between Chhuanvawra and the Major reveals the missionaries' prestigious position, who were referred to as the "torch-bearers of Christianity" by the Mizos. In a train debate on issues related to *Rambuai*, the Major sneered, "Did the missionary teach you that?" Chhuanvawra confidently responds, "Of course, they have taught everything great". This affirms that the Mizos believed the missionaries to be impeccable individuals who were omniscient and possessed all good things. Therefore, it is clear from Chhuanvawra's expression that the Mizos viewed the Christian missionaries from a colonial perspective.

Notably, the study reveals that in human nature, there are no such things as completely good or completely bad characters. Because no one is perfect, each of the characters bears a distinct burden and possesses moral qualities that the others lack. For instance, in *C.C. Coy No. 27*, the protagonist, Ralkapzauva, has a flaw: his

excessive admiration for the English. As a result, he disregards his morals at times and attempts to abandon his educational journey. Nonetheless, he chooses to keep going. After overcoming numerous obstacles, he finally got what he wanted. Similarly, despite being the son of a religious priest, Lalsawma has an imperfection in his life: his relentless love and attachment for his previous darling, Thanchhingi. At the start of the narrative, he is an illustration of an ethically decent, pious, and unpolluted individual. However, as a result of his extramarital affairs with Thanchhingi, a moral character has been deemed immoral. Furthermore, Chhuanvawra's flaw is his unwavering devotion to Ngunthansangi. In his pursuit of her, he sometimes disregards his morals. A close examination of Zikpuii-Pa's character reveals his understanding of human instincts and dilemmas.

Significantly, pre-*Rambuai* Mizo morality was shaped by generosity, loving one's neighbour, bravery, humility, honesty, compassion, equality, and so on, all of which are encapsulated in a single Mizo word known as *Tlawmngaihna*<sup>1</sup>. Obviously, the majority of the characters in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* address people who are morally acceptable in pre-*Rambuai* society. However, as a result of being victimized during *Rambuai*, such morality has dwindled. Selfishness, dishonesty, rape, suicide, and other immoral behaviours were now prevalent in the public arena. As revealed by the protagonist, Chhuanvawra, a selfless Mizo gentleman, has turned into an egocentric gentleman. Furthermore, *Rambuai* has turned a brave and confident young man into a coward and insecure young man.

The study also concludes that *Rambuai* and colonial rule foster nepotism and discrimination within the Mizo community, which Mizo society is not accustomed to. No doubt, *Rambuai* brings favouritism to one's relatives through the character of Chhuanvawra in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, which is referred to as "nepotism", which remains a common issue even in the post-millennium era. It is worth noting the Mizo proverb, "Those who share will live, those who grab will die" (*Sem sem dam dam, eibil thi thi*) which served as the Mizo moral code in pre-colonial and pre-*Rambuai* Mizo history. When Chhuanvawra was arrested by the Indian army on his way to Zopui and imprisoned for three months with other Mizo young men, by virtue of his father's prestigious status and his elder brother Chhuankima's prestigious designation, he was released from prison alone. The unfortunate thing was that his

Mizo friends were common people who had not yet been released because they did not have any immediate relatives to help them like Chhuanvawra. Apparently, *Rambuai* created a significant disparity in Mizo society between the rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated. However, based on the aforementioned incident, it can be assumed that the Mizo culture of sharing and self-sacrifice to others has been abandoned in times of adversity. In terms of Mizo morality, Chhuanvawra should reject the proposal to release him from jail. Although he was worried about his friends in prison, he did not turn down the offer of release. Surprisingly, gone are the days when the Mizo public considered one another, which is portrayed through Chhuanvawra's character.

After careful observation of the characters, this study reveals that Zikpuii-Pa significantly stressed inward goodness, and that his morality is not entirely settled by the superficial presentation. The good characters in Zikpuii-Pa's fiction are distinguished by their concern for others. In *Nunna Kawngthum Puiah*, Ngurthansangi's determination to maintain her purity, and her graceful heart in the face of *Rambuai* captivates readers. Despite the fact that she must surrender her body to Captain Ranade during *Rambuai*, she remains the purest of the pure for Chhuanvawra, who recognises her true essence. In a similar vein, despite becoming a widow, Zikpuii-Pa portrays Thanchhingi as more appealing to Lalsawma than a normal maiden, as he comprehends her predicament. These instances ascertain Zikpuii-Pa's true conception of morality.

Furthermore, the study concludes that colonialism exposes the immorality of some Mizo youth, particularly those living outside of Mizoram. Ralkapzauva, the protagonist in *C.C. Coy No. 27*, has become the victim of ragging in Earle Hostel, Shillong, which is unheard of in pre-colonial Mizo society. Evidently, after being colonised, Mizo young people became acquainted with the hostel environment, and ragging is one of the common issues in hostel life that has persisted even in the modern social scenario. As Christians, it is expected that Mizos should be helpful, cordial, and kind to others, especially their fellow Mizos. Apart from being a Christian state, Saichhunga, and his friends, given pre-colonial Mizo social morality, should uphold such morality for their juniors. On the contrary, they prefer to treat

Ralkapzauva, their Mizo fellows, immorally and wickedly. This demonstrates that whether they are Christian or not, there is no such thing as a perfect society free of immorality. Every society contains both moral and immoral individuals. Subsequently, an individual should not be judged based on their religion or society.

Besides, the study reveals that excessive jealousy caused by suspicion is both painful and harmful through an analysis of *Hostel Awmtu*. When a person is consumed by excessive jealousy, he is unable to maintain his morality, resulting in tragedy. In the case of *Hostel Awmtu*, jealousy is undoubtedly the primary cause of the hostel sentinel's tragic death. Accordingly, Zikpuii-Pa shows that jealousy is one of the major evils that pervade every human being. If jealousy is not embedded in their lives, everyone can live a comfortable and peaceful life. Meanwhile, the juxtaposition of love and jealousy in this narrative depicts the real factors of human life through this narrative. Furthermore, Zikpuii-Pa's fiction demonstrates that a bad act cannot be hidden. When someone does something wrong, he is bound to feel guilty, highlighting the importance of morality in human beings. As Captain Ranade demonstrates in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, there is no peace of mind for an immoral person.

One of the research findings is that, apart from religious morality, forgiveness generally prompts reconciliation and unity, which is portrayed in *Kraws Bulah Chuan*. The three-sided love between the protagonist, Lalsawma, and the two major female characters, Hmingthansiami and Thanchhingi, reflected one of the social issues in Mizo society. Extramarital affairs have been associated with infidelity, which is considered wrong by Christian morality. Surprisingly, Zikpuii-Pa depicts marital infidelity through the protagonist, Lalsawma, the son of a Christian minister. In this regard, many readers may be deliberating whether it is appropriate for a pastor's son to restore his feelings for his former sweetheart. However, considering the account of Lalsawma's secret love affair with Thanchhingi, the study discloses that no one is blameless, and nobody is exempted from immorality. Even the son of a pastor and an educated gentleman is unable to control his feelings when challenged with circumstances, thus revealing human instincts. From a social and religious standpoint, Lalsawma became involved in immoral activities such as adulterous



relationships, liquor consumption, and harmful domestic behaviour. After learning of her husband's secret relationship with Thanchhingi, his wife, Hmingthansiami, became enraged and jealous. Her jealousy then causes strife in the family. Certainly, all of these evils contribute to family disintegration, which must be eradicated from society. However, Christian conviction holds that an individual can obtain absolution if he sincerely apologises for his wrongdoing, as demonstrated by Lalsawma. The significant themes, such as sin, repentance, and forgiveness, reveal Zikpuii-Pa's religious morality. Therefore, following an examination and evaluation, the research concludes that *Kraws Bulah Chuan* is a fine specimen of Christian morality and perception. No matter how sinful a person was in the past, he will be pardoned as long as he repents.

Aside from religious morality, research has found that individual morality plays a significant role in shaping an individual's profession and achievements. This is still relevant in contemporary Mizo society. Even if a person is born into a wealthy family with respectable social standing, he will not be successful unless he has the moral courage and determination to choose the right path. This is portrayed through Zikpuii-Pa's protagonists. At the same time, the research discloses the significance of good parents and family in Mizo society. Subsequently, the parent-child relationship is central to Zikpuii-Pa's fictional works. Parents have high expectations for their children, but when those expectations are broken on the harsh surface of life, they become sad, as depicted in *Hostel Awmtu*. To some extent, the success of Zikpuii-Pa's protagonists can be attributed to their respective fathers. Individual morality is obviously important and it is one of the key factors in their achievement. At the same time, it is controversial that unless they have good parents, they will not become what they are. For example, in the narrative of *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, Chhuanvawra had a respectable father and a highly educated elder sibling, Chhuankima, who has a broad career outlook. On account of his father's insight and experience, as well as his sophisticated brother, he could seek advanced education outside of Mizoram. Similarly, in *C.C. Coy No.27*, Ralkapzauva had a shrewd and farsighted father, who is concerned about his academic progress. Apparently, Ralkapzauva's father embodied the ideal Mizo father, who focuses on his kids as the main individuals in his daily existence.

Therefore, he dealt with his son everywhere he went. As a selfless father, he was willing to forfeit even his prized possession, *Tukuli Mal*<sup>2</sup>, which he acquired from France, for Ralkapzauva's education. Despite being a simple village boy, Ralkapzauva could finally achieve a high position because of his father's constant support and commitment to him. In other words, his unwavering devotion to his son was the cause of his son's success. Like the two protagonists, Lalsawma's parents, particularly, his father in *Kraws Bulah Chuan*, play a significant role in the life of Lalsawma. Initially, he decided to join the military, which was highly regarded at the time. Nonetheless, his father, Pastor Tlangkhuma, wished for him to focus on medicine and become a professional. This is primarily because, as a Pastor, he believed his son would pursue his healing ministry, which he considered to be a divine calling. As a result, Lalsawma obeyed his father and completed his medical training. Subsequently, Lalsawma was compassionate, caring, and supportive of those who needed his assistance. He is praised and appreciated by all for his commendable service, and everybody tried to keep in touch with him. All of this was possible because of his father's influence and his obedience. Given the preceding discussions, the study concludes that good parents can help their children make good decisions. If parents carry out their responsibilities properly, their children will succeed, and the community will benefit as well.

Furthermore, through the story of *Silvarthangi*, the research reveals the proverb, "Sorrow is wiser than pleasure", which appears to be Zikpuii-Pa's moral message. In this context, society has a large influence on an individual's life. Undeniably, the protagonist, *Silvarthangi*'s life is fraught with conflict and anguish. Honestly, orphans had a very low and unfavourable status in early Mizo society. Everyone looked down on them, including their relatives, who are unconcerned about their plight. Likewise, *Silvarthangi* is despised not only by her aunt but also by her little cousin, Rochuha. Except for her companion, Tlanthangi, she has no relatives who care for her. Since she has found no happiness in her family, all she can do is search for someone who cares about her. She becomes even more desperate when her relationship with Lalhnuna abruptly ends. With no other option, he returned to Saithah village in despair. One can assume that when he created *Silvarthangi*, Zikpuii-Pa had no sympathy for her because her sorrows and

misfortunes would continue until she married *Babu Sanglura*. Amid her grief, Silvarthangi discovers her true love, who never rejected her. The *Babu*, like Silvarthangi, had a bad past as a result of his first marriage, but as they say, ‘experience is the best teacher’, so the two of them have been awakened and are becoming more cautious in choosing their soul mate. Finally, they were both given the opportunity to marry the person they loved. Thus, it is true that Silvarthangi’s torment has filled in as a magnificent mirror wherein she can look at her genuine lover. The moment she planned to marry a decent individual, her uncle and aunt suddenly claimed to care for her. However, the *Babu* used his morality at the right time and did not permit to involve them in their marriage. Ultimately, Silvarthangi, an orphaned, sympathetic, and helpless maiden married an eligible man, named *Babu Sanglura*, who was idolized and cherished by many ladies at the time. Silvarthangi, who was onced a doomed lady, became the most blessed among her kin because she was strong enough to refuse to succumb to sorrow and exploitation. According to Silvarthangi’s account, it is evident that while physical beauty brings wealth and a decent spouse to the wealthy, it was the source of tragedy for a poor orphan like Silvarthangi. On the other hand, her firm and optimistic outlook eventually brought her happiness. As a result, the study has found that Silvarthangi’s prolonged grief was turned into a blessing in disguise.

Aside from these, a close analysis of Zikpuii-Pa’s fiction may lead to the conclusion that love knows no bounds. Genuine love transcends all boundaries, including those of family, time, and society. The *Babu Sanglura* defies all rumours about Silvarthangi’s past misfortunes. Similarly, Chhuanvawra’s genuine and unwavering love for Ngurthansangi motivated him to be more goal-oriented, obstinate, and inquisitive. Since he lost his dear love due to *Rambuai*, Chhuanvawra suffered physically and emotionally for five long years. In desperation, he wished to drop a bomb to destroy the entire Shillong metropolis at once. As a matter of fact, such a heinous plan is unsuitable for an educated and sober Mizo gentleman like him. At the same time, it reveals the moral decay of the Mizo people during *Rambuai*. However, Chhuanvawra’s liberation of Ngurthansangi from Captain Ranade’s bondage, followed by their happy marriage, demonstrates that genuine love is long-lasting and tolerant.

Notably, when *Rambuai* was at its peak, it was difficult for even a man of integrity to uphold his morality. For instance, Khawvelthanga, the former chief of Zopui, in normal circumstances, would never allow his beloved daughter to marry an immoral person, non-Mizo or non-Christian. However, circumstances compelled him to approve his daughter's marriage to Captain Ranade outside Mizoram. Therefore, it is evident that Khawvelthanga, a powerful chief with an arrogant and stubborn personality in the pre-*Rambuai* era, devolved into a coward and a liar in the *Rambuai* era. In terms of his prominent social status as well as his Christian morality, his decision is humiliating.

Conspicuously, Silvarthangi's decision to marry Lalhnuna illustrates a change in Mizo morality regarding the choice of a life partner. In the past, a brave warrior and a self-sufficient person were highly respected, and parents wished for their daughters to marry such a person. However, due to colonialism, parents preferred a person with a white-collar job, such as a soldier or a *subedar*, as reflected in *Silvarthangi* and *Kraws Bulah Chuan*. The majority of the young maidens desired to marry a *sepoy*, which is Mizo for a soldier, instead of marrying a trustworthy local young man. This is primarily because colonialism and imperialism instilled laziness in young Mizo women. The Mizos never imagined themselves idle in the past. However, as a result of their interactions with outsiders, their mindset has shifted. Taking this into consideration, colonialism had an impact on the Mizo occupation to some extent. The introduction of education by Christian missionaries had a significant impact on many Mizo parents. For this reason, they advised their children to study hard or else they would have to work long hours. Such advice and attitudes are unheard of in pre-colonial Mizo society. Despite her dislike for Lalhnuna, Silvarthangi decided to follow him in the hope of having an idle and comfortable life. Thanchhingi is in a similar situation. She married Havildar because her parents expected him to keep her comfortable. This reveals how Mizo morality has changed as a result of imperialism.

Apart from these, Zikpuii-Pa's fiction demonstrates how an extramarital affair can devastate a happy married life and eventually destroy the Mizo family. Disillusionment in marriage or an alienated relationship was uncommon in precolonial Mizo society, owing to the negative influence of Western culture. Unlike

in traditional Mizo society, World War II and the arrival of British colonial rule resulted in a cultural and lifestyle imitation of the West. Obviously, the love affair between Lalsawma and Thanchhingi in *Kraws Bulah Chuan* epitomizes the issue of extra-marital affairs, which is still prevalent in today's social situation. Marriage and its sanctity, as highlighted in *Kraws Bulah Chuan*, remain major themes in post-colonial Mizo fiction. Despite the fact that Lalsawma was well aware that he had no obligation to maintain contact with a widow. However, disregarding his morals and being obstinate about rumours, he acted on his desire, causing family disintegration and sorrow. After realizing his mistakes, he quickly reconnected with his wife, who was still in love with him. Readers will notice Zikpuii-Pa's deep insight into human instinct. At the same time, it appears that liberalism is one of the negative influence of British colonial rule. Some Mizo teenagers were unconcerned about interfering with and disrupting other families, and they were unconcerned about mere gossip. This reflected the degeneration of Mizo morality as a result of colonialism. As Zikpuii-Pa himself contends:

The Mizos are now under the influence of a new way of life. They could not remain as they had been. The first blessing was the absence of enemies or raiders against whom the Mizos had always to be vigilant. Peace and prosperity prevailed and the restless souls who raided or were raided settled down and adopted a peaceful life. But it has been rightly observed that every good system has a seed of its own destruction. As peace and prosperity came to the land under the foreigners' leadership, all the old values evolved under the leadership of old Mizo administration have been washed down the drain...Diligence, honesty, respect for the elders and above all the spirit of *Tlawmngaihna* have departed from the Mizo lives... In the absence of right leadership the high sense of Mizo morality has decayed and the whole society seems to be the victims of moral corruption brought in by the change of time... We are, therefore, not sure, where we stand. Our old society have gone, we are confronted with new situations...we have to make some new adjustment without sacrificing our faith, our culture, our language and dialects, history and our land, all of which we inherited from our forefathers... All that we need to make our

new life more rewarding is to revive our old values and add our new found faith of the former and, therefore, give fresh blood to our Mizo regional entity (103-104).

These arguments reflect Zikpuii-Pa's post-colonial outlook. He certainly preferred to resuscitate and restore the indigenous Mizo identity of the past.

Based on the research, it is evident that colonialism has fostered contempt for one's own culture, as exemplified by Ralkapzauva's character. Following Eurocentrism, the British colonizers believe they are superior, dominant, and exceptional to the Orientals (the eastern public). Consequently, they normally occupy the centre, pushing the Orientals to the margins. In light of this, Ralkapzauva belongs to the most remote village in the far east, which is why his people are always referred to as "senseless and ignorant". Accordingly, Eurocentric sentiments are portrayed in *C.C. Coy No. 27* through the character of Ralkapzauva. Taking this into consideration, the research discovers that Ralkapzauva's determination, diligence, and foresight were motivated by his deep admiration for the English. He aspires to be at least as good as them and to imitate their style. It may not be wrong to state that he has deserted Mizo culture in favor of white culture. Although Ralkapzauva upholds his morality throughout his educational journey, the sad part is his excessive admiration for white individuals. Indeed, this conception leads him to regard his fellow Mizos as inferior, simple, and uneducated. Obviously, he observed every English person is admirable and more superior than the Mizos, irrespective of their manner or status.

Apart from this, the fiction under study shows the clash between tradition and modernity, brought in by the colonial influence on Mizo society. In this regard, Zikpuii-Pa portrayed Chhuanvawra as the epitome of tradition and Chhuanlima as the epitome of modernity in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*. As recently expressed, the study, reveals various colonial and post-colonial effects on *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*. The protagonist, for instance, is portrayed as brilliant, polished, intelligent, determined, and confident. Before colonial rule, the Mizo were illiterate. They could not care less about their children's education or future. They lived a simple and contented life within the confines of their own village. Nonetheless, the arrival of

colonialism, followed by Christianity, new education system brought in modernization and materialization which changed their value system. Subsequently, while Chhuanvawra wishes to remain in Zopui village, Chhuankima opposes him and encouraged him to continue his lessons in Shillong, believing that Zopui will never develop due to its uncultured and primitive status. Notably, Chhuanvawra's love of tradition and social norms clashed with Chhuankima's love of modernity. At the same time, in light of Chhuanvawra's insight, capacity, and excellence among non-Mizos, he may address both tradition and modernity.

As a result of *Rambuai*, the research exposes that the peaceful Mizo society was transformed into a society of terror, causing untold suffering and pain to the people. Moreover, the plight of powerless Mizo civilians, as well as how the powerful Indian Army subjugated them, has been discovered. The protagonist, Chhuanvawra, is the centre of attraction, with the other characters revolving around him. The cheerful moments of Zopui abruptly converted into violence. Presumably, *Rambuai* in Mizoram upsets the presence of each of the characters in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*. Civilians are caught in the dilemma of whether to support the MNF or the Indian Army. In such a situation, the majority of the characters in this narrative were unable to maintain their individual and social morality. Certainly, *Rambuai* introduced many social ills into Mizo society, such as rape, suicide, retaliation, murder, robbery, cheating, infidelity, and so on, which Mizo society was unfamiliar with prior to *Rambuai*.

Besides, the research discloses that characters who were unable to adjust themselves were generally punished, either by their misbehaviour or by the misconduct of others. This is referred to as "poetic justice" in literature. They represent human weakness or immorality. Captain Ranade in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, Lalhnuna and Lalthangpuii in *Silvarthangi*, and the Mizo senior hostellers are prime examples in this regard. He reveals that the penalty for evil is death. Meanwhile, those characters who are frail, moral, and blameless, are mistreated by the villains. They arouse the readers' empathy. Ngurthansangi appears in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, Silvarthangi appears in *Silvarthangi*, the Hostel Sentinel appears in *Hostel Awmtu*, and Ralkapzauva appears in *C. C. Coy No. 27*, obviously figures in this sort. Moral decay, as depicted in some specific cases in

Zikpuii-Pa's fiction, is a common feature of today's social scenario. Meanwhile, morals such as respectability, dedication, and penance displayed by Bahadur, Pastor Lianzuala, and others are noteworthy in contemporary times.

Zikpuii-Pa's fiction reveals the conflict between good and evil, the ancient and the modern ways of life, exposing the effects of colonialism. Although a few positive changes are happening in the Lushai Hills (presently Mizoram) because of provincial effects, the Mizo people inherited mental, intellectual, and cultural dominance, which affected their morality. Colonized people typically despise their ancestral culture and traditions. However, they did not abandon the entire culture and tradition. Therefore, from a postcolonial standpoint, postcolonial Mizo culture is a blending of both English and Mizo culture, which has shaken the Mizos stable morality.

Based on the research, aside from the positive transformation of Mizoram brought about by colonialism, it is an undeniable fact that colonialism contributed to the moral decay of Mizo society. Colonialism and imperialism, illiteracy, a lack of awareness, an inferiority complex, and other factors, all contribute to this deterioration. Surprisingly, the research uncovers postcolonial elements in Zikpuii-Pa's masterpiece, *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, which is discussed in Chapter III. Generally, postcolonial writers were interested in nationalism and patriotism, and, as such, they wrote for the benefit of the entire nation. In this narrative, it is clear that Zikpuii-Pa's mind is filled with nationalism. He, like other post-colonial writers, appreciates Mizoram's natural beauty and encourages his Mizo friends to cherish and care for their possessions. Morality has, indeed, been linked to social values, individual behaviour, and religious values. Subsequently, family ancestry, individual manners, and work environment have all had an impact on morality.

Despite his success, Dr.Selthuama in *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* epitomizes the typical Mizo man who upholds individual morality and traditional values. Needless to say, he is a medical doctor who is revered everywhere. For this reason, he has the financial means to leave Mizoram and can live a more advanced life. However, he does not wish to abandon Mizo culture and tradition; rather, he wishes to live modestly in his own Zopui village and continue farming. In spite of his Mizo companions ridiculed him for his rare resolution, he remained indifferent, signifying



his moral honesty and solid standards. Furthermore, he maintains a humble demeanour throughout the story. Indeed, he has a good and respectable family. Both of his sons, Chhuanvawra and Chhuankima, hold prestigious positions, and both of his daughters are married to well-educated people of good social standing. Yet he remained humble and never spoke haughtily or despised anyone, which reveals his moral character.

Since time immemorial, the Mizos have had a deep respect for the elderly. To put it somewhat differently, respect for the elderly has been the morality of the young, which has been instilled within the family and at the social institution known as *Zawlbuk*<sup>3</sup>. Undeniably, the elderly have earned the right to be respected because they have faced more challenges than the younger generation. As a result, every Mizo village has a *Val Upa*<sup>4</sup>, who is either an older young man or a married man who can command the rest of the young fellows on major issues. Subsequently, the *Val Upa* has a huge and respected role in Mizo society. Even after the Christian era, some educated and intelligent individuals served as mentors and advisors to young people in their respective villages or localities. Taking this into consideration, Pu Zalawma is one such person who was respected by young people in Zopui village in the pre-*Rambuai* period. However, when *Rambuai* occurred in Mizoram, such moral qualities were ignored by Mizo young people. For instance, Pu Zalawma, High School Headmaster in Zopui, stated to Chhuanvawra in '*Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*', "...*tlangval ho chezia hi a dang riau mai a, an thiltih han zawh hian a tu amah hian min chhang tha duh mang tlat lo mai a, bang chhah tak dan a awm ang kan ni*" (48). This statement suggests that the fanatical young men's behaviour was not pleasant as a result of the *Rambuai* movement. He felt as if they were separated by a thick divider because no one responded well to him. Thus, it is evident that, at the culmination of *Rambuai*, Pu Zalawma, once a prominent and respected figure, had lost the interest of the youth and was even despised by them. This authenticates the moral decay of Mizo young people.

The study also discloses the value of self-esteem and self-respect, which can be obtained through moral courage. In other words, following a close examination of *C.C. Coy No. 27*, the study determines that Ralkapzauva epitomizes an individual

morality who shows moral fortitude and integrity and undergoes much agony because of contentions, however, he generally figured out how to conquer them. On one occasion, his seniors accused him of being a burglar. Because of his moral courage, he dared to mention the instigator's name. Ralkapzauva said sympathetically, "Since it was the last and most significant time in my entire life to make such a crucial decision about my destiny, whether it was good or bad, despite being afraid of Saichhunga, I am sure it was the ideal opportunity to disclose the truth", (My Trans., 30). This narration reveals Zikpuii-Pa's deep concern for morality. Meanwhile, it should be noted that, because he had a cosmopolitan outlook, he did not simply manage morality from a Christian perspective. The above statement authenticates that daring to speak the truth at the right time exposes an individual's genuine nature. A moral person dares to express what he believes is true, even if he is going to be punished. A corrupt or immoral person would not dare express the truth but would instead try to defend himself. Therefore, it is clear that honesty and courage are part of morality.

The portrayal of Bahadur, in *C. C. Coy No. 27* demonstrates how morality can be the guiding principle of an individual, regardless of appearance or societal position. At the same time, it determines that wealth does not lie in the possession of money, but rather in the essence of a particular person. To put it in another way, Bahadur's character may lead to the conclusion that morality is not dependent on money or social status. He has a strong sense of morality and the power of confidence and patience. To some extent, his role is unique in that he is one of the few non-Mizo characters in Mizo fiction. Throughout the narrative, the research has found that Bahadur never loses his morality under any circumstances. He silently assists and consoles Ralkapzauva when he becomes helpless. As a result of his unending assistance to Ralkapzauva, he is viewed as a defender, a dependable companion, and a shield for Ralkapzauva outside Mizoram. Besides, it is obvious that he goes about as a mentor for Ralkapzauva outside Mizoram. Bahadur's affection for Ralkapzauva, therefore, illustrates selflessness, which in Mizo society is synonymous with Mizo *Tlawmngaihna* (altruism), which is as yet revered in the contemporary social situation. If he so desired, he was in a position to take advantage of such a critical moment. However, he is not an opportunist who never takes

advantage of his own. His morality and humanity compelled him to assist those in need. In terms of his financial situation, Bahadur should be egocentric, corrupt, and greedy, but he never keeps in touch with such worldly manners. In a world where everyone is selfish and seeks wealth and material possessions, a humble individual like Bahadur has been preserving morality and humanity among his superiors. His affection for Ralkapzauva, therefore, illustrates selflessness, which in Mizo society is synonymous with Mizo *Tlawmngaihna* (altruism), which is as yet revered in the contemporary social situation. Besides, it demonstrates that genuine humanity and ethical qualities know no bounds. It could not care less about caste, class, societal position, or financial status. It automatically detects when someone requires assistance. At the same time, someone is remembered for his actions rather than his physical appearance or outward splendour. Taking this into account, the character of Bahadur epitomizes individual morality.

Significantly, the study has found that, due to the strong influence of colonialism, even the church elders fail to maintain their religious morality at times. For instance, when the protagonist, Ralkapzauva, returns to his native village after joining the army in *C.C. Coy No. 27*, the villagers compliment him. To express his gratitude for Ralkapzauva's accomplishment, the chief presented him with fermented liquor in the presence of the church elders. According to Christian morality, consuming alcohol is a sin and is strictly prohibited within the Christian community. In such a religious environment, it is astonishing that the church elders do not oppose or criticize their chief. This is mainly because they regard an army officer as a superior human being, and thus there is no prohibition on an officer like Ralkapzauva. In other words, the chief and the church elders regard such a '*sap*' as acceptable and could be excluded from such restrictions, which exposes the dominance of British colonial rule in Mizoram.

The thesis is divided into four chapters, but they are all linked together, with one chapter leading into the next. Despite the fact that Zikpuii-Pa and his contemporaries share some topics, his moral message to the readers appears to be as unintentional as those of other well-known writers. Finally, the research concludes that every work of fiction understudy brings out how morality is contained amid

complex plots, thus inspiring and encouraging the readers. His fiction reveals that he is a novelist with a deep insight into morality and human psychology, for his fictional works present a complex study of the human mind. He emphasized the significance of morality, determination, and diligence in life by referring to his strong-willed protagonists who struggled and faced adversity to succeed. Therefore, by looking into the possible parameters of morality, Zikpuii-Pa's characters come in all shapes and sizes, but the one thing that ties them together and unchains them independently is none other than their morality.

To conclude, Zikpuii-Pa's fiction conveys the morality of the Mizo people before the colonial period till the post-*Rambuai* period. Therefore, the recurring theme in Zikpuii-Pa's fiction can be summed up as "strong and steady wins the race", implying that a moral or good-hearted person who upholds integrity and perseverance in life is always successful, whereas immorality inevitably results in sorrow and grief.

## Glossary

<sup>1</sup> *Tlawmngaihna* denotes self-sacrifice, being unselfish, altruism a term for the Mizo code of ethics meaning selfless service to others. It also indicates to do whatever the occasion demands no matter how distasteful or inconvenient it may be to oneself or to one's own inclinations (*Dictionary of Lushai Language*)

<sup>2</sup> *Tukuli Mal*: An ordinary muzzle-loading gun used with a percussion cap.

<sup>3</sup> *Zawlbuk* refers to bachelor's dormitory in traditional Mizo society. It is a large house in a Lushai village where all the unmarried young men of the community sleep at night.

<sup>4</sup> *Val Upa* refers to a middle aged man in traditional Mizo Society who serves as a guide or a leader in various social activities.

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### Other Relevant Information

#### 1. Conferences/Seminars attended :

- i) Presented a paper titled, - '**Re-Reading *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah: From Postcolonial Perspective***' at the One Day National Seminar on 'Mizo Fiction: A Study of Mizo Fiction' (with special reference to UG & PG syllabus under MZU &ICFAI University, Mizoram) jointly organised by the Department of Mizo, Govt. Khawzawl College and Mizo Folklore Society (MFS), Gen Hqrs, Aizawl on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2020 at Synod Conference Centre, Aizawl, Mizoram.
- ii) Presented a paper titled, - '**Reflection of *Rambuai in Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah***' at A Five Day International Webinar on Twentieth Century Mizo Literature

(With Special reference to the Works of Writer of the Century and Poet of the Century) organized by Mizo Department in collaboration with Research and Consultancy Cell, Govt. Hrangbana College, Aizawl, during 15<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> March, 2021.

iii) Participated in the Short Term Course (Online) on '**Research and Publication Ethics**' organised by UGC Human Resource Development Centre, Mizoram University, held from 1<sup>st</sup> -7<sup>th</sup> October, 2021.

iv) Presented a paper titled - '**Biakliana, A Novelist cum Social Reformer: The Gem of Saitual**' at the Two Day International Seminar Commemorating the Birth Centenary of L. Biakliana, the First Mizo Novelist organized by the Department of Mizo, Mizoram University in collaboration with Govt. Saitual College, Mizo Academy of Letters, Saitual Literature Club and Art & Culture Dept., Govt. of Mizoram at Govt. Saitual College on 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> October 2018, Saitual, Mizoram.

## **2. Published work:**

i) – '**Remembering Writer of the Century, Zikpuii-Pa: His Role and Contribution towards Mizo Literature**' published in Mizo Studies Vol. VIII. No. 4, October – December, 2019, Pages: 426 - 441. UGC Journal No.47167. ISSN: 2319-6041.

ii) – '**Nationalism in Mizo Fiction: With Special Reference to *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah & C. C. Coy No. 27***' published in Mizo Studies Vol. X. No 3. July - September 2021, Pages: 624 - 640. ISSN:2319-6041. A Quarterly Refereed UGC CARE –List Journal.

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2. BOARD OF STUDIES : 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2019
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