

**THE POLITICS OF LIQUOR IN MIZORAM: A STUDY OF THE STATE
AND CIVIL SOCIETY INTERVENTIONS**

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LAL LAWMZUALI

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**THE POLITICS OF LIQUOR IN MIZORAM: A STUDY OF THE
STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY INTERVENTIONS**

BY

LAL LAWMZUALI

Department of Political Science, Mizoram University

Name of Supervisor: Prof. K.V. Reddy

Submitted

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy in Political Science, Mizoram University, Aizawl



MIZORAM UNIVERSITY
AIZAWL: MIZORAM
www.mzu.edu.in

Post Box No. 190
Gram : MZU
Phone : (0389) 2331610 /
2331609
Mobile: 09436769468
Email:kvidyasagarr@gmail.com

Department of Political Science

Dated 11th April, 2022

Prof. K.V. Reddy, Head & Supervisor

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify the thesis entitled, “THE POLITICS OF LIQUOR IN MIZORAM: A STUDY OF THE STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY INTERVENTIONS”, submitted by LAL LAWMZUALI for the award of the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY, is a research work, done under my supervision and guidance. The thesis, submitted by her has not formed the basis of the award to the scholar for any degree or any other similar title and it has not yet been submitted as a dissertation or thesis in any university. I also certify that the thesis represents objective study and independent work of the scholar.

(PROF. K.V. REDDY)

Supervisor

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ABBREVIATIONS

1. All India Congress Committee (AICC)
2. All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS)
3. Assam Rifles (AR)
4. Autonomous District Councils (ADC)
5. Border Road Task Force (BRTF)
6. Central Young Mizo Association (CYMA)
7. Chronic Liver Disease (CLD)
8. Civil Hospital Aizawl (CHA)
9. Demand Reduction Service (DRS)
10. Eastern India Tribal Union (EITU)
11. Goods and Service Tax (GST)
12. Gross Domestic Product (GDP)
13. Health Management Information System (HMIS)
14. Human Rights Committee (HRC)
15. Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL)
16. Indian Penal Code (IPC)
17. Integrated Rehabilitation Centre (IRCAs)
18. Joint Action Committee (JAC)
19. Khawltlang Nun Siamtha Pawl (KNSP)
20. Liquor Leakage (LL)
21. Liquor Revenue (LR)
22. Lushai Students Association (LSA)
23. Maraland Democratic Front (MDF)
24. Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJ&E)
25. Mizo Academy of Letters (MLA)
26. Mizo College Teachers Association (MCTA)
27. Mizo Cultural Society (MCS)

28. Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP)
29. Mizo Journalist Association (MJA)
30. Mizo Kohhran Hruaitute Committee (MKHC)
31. Mizo National Famine Front (MNFF)
32. Mizo National Front (MNF)
33. Mizo People's Conference (PC)
34. Mizo Union (MU)
35. Mizo Upa Pawl (MUP)
36. Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP)
37. Mizoram Excise Act (MEA)
38. Mizoram Janata Dal (MJD)
39. Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition & Control) Act 2014 (MLPC Act 2014)
40. Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act 1995 (MLTP Act 1995)
41. Mizoram People Forum (MPF)
42. Mizoram People's Conference (PC)
43. Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC)
44. Mizoram Presbyterian Church (MPC)
45. Mizoram Social Defence & Rehabilitation Board (MSD&RB)
46. Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (ND & PS Act)
47. National Centre Disease Informatics and Research (NCDIR)
48. National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre (NDDTC)
49. National Institute of Social Defence (NISD)
50. Pawi-Lakher Tribal Union (PLTU)
51. People's Conference Party (PC)
52. People's Representation for Identity & Status of Mizoram (PRISM)
53. Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC)
54. Proof Litre (PL)
55. Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (PCOSO)
56. State AIDS Prevention and Control Societies (SACS)

57. State Level Coordinating Agency (SLCA)
58. State Own Resources (SOR)
59. Supply Reduction Service (SRS)
60. Synod Committee (SC)
61. Synod Executive Committee (SEC)
62. The Regional Resource and Training Centre (RRTC)
63. Union Territory (UT)
64. Union Territory (UT)
65. United Pentecostal Church (UPC)
66. Upper Gastro Intestinal (UGI) Bleeding
67. Value added Tax (VAT)
68. Village Councils (VC)
69. Women Anti-Drug Association (WADA)
70. Young Lushai Organization (YLA)
71. Young Mizo Association (YMA)
72. Zoram Drivers Union (ZDU)
73. Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP)
74. Zoram People's Movement (ZPM)
75. Zoram Taxi Owners Association (ZTOA)

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DECLARATION

MIZORAM UNIVERSITY

APRIL/2022

I, LAL LAWMZUALI, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis is the record of the 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 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 Political Science, School of Social Sciences

(LAL LAWMZUALI)

Candidate

(Dr. LALLIANCHHUNGA)

Head Incharge

(Prof. K.V. REDDY)

Supervisor

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter familiarizes one to the critical direction the research embarks on. It traces the historiography of indigenous society to find a greater meaning to the power play of power arbiters in the Mizo society. It helps to understand the changing attitudes of state and civil society on the controversial issue of liquor.

The subject of liquor has been debated for a very long time at various levels, be it a scholarly debate or on a media platform. Identified as a factor that causes various medical illnesses, social crimes and deaths, owing to these factors and more it has often sparked vehement debates across societies as it also questions one's morality. The relationship between the government and civil society has always been uneasy with reference to the 'drink question'. Political parties themselves have different conceptions regarding the question at hand. Comprising an important agenda of political regimes to influence voters, it has come to occupy a very important issue in electoral politics of our times. This research highlights the socio-political debate on liquor in the Mizo context.

Political regimes tend to politicise liquor as a response to the unyielding lobby of civil society for prohibition with the aim of winning suffrage. Politics of liquor focuses on how "liquor problem" is defined and framed by policy actors, on how it has been used as a tool for political purpose by various regimes in winning peoples suffrage. It studies the tension of managing the idealism of temperance advocates and the response of policy actors.

While many believe that the prohibition is an infringement of one's personal liberty, to quote Chetan Bhagat on his comment on Gujarat's dry law, "I do not endorse drinking. Neither do I consume much alcohol. I do however endorse freedom, change and modernity".¹ Many have endorsed prohibition condemning its consumption in sole consideration of the harm factors – liquor as the cause of moral degeneration, the cause of social evils such as brawling, domestic violence, the cause

¹ Bhagat, Chetan., (2017, April 9). Saying cheers in Gujarat. *Times of India*. Retrieved from <http://blogs.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/The-underage-optimist/saying-cheers-in-gujarat/>

of poverty and many more. While others, criticize the limitation put on one's personal liberty as they would like to have the option to freely choose for themselves 'to drink or not to drink'.

The local name for Liquor in Mizo language is *Zu*². The Mizo word *zu* is inclusive of all foreign brands of liquor such as brandy, whiskey, gin, vodka, rum and alcoholic beverages like beer, wine and locally brewed Tinzu, Rakzu, Zufang, and Zupui. It is believed that Mizos used *zu* as early as AD 800 to AD 950. In the colonial times, the issue revolved around locally brewed alcoholic beverages while in modern times, the issue has shifted to foreign made liquors.

Excessive liquor consumption comes with a lot of related illnesses and fatalities thus claiming many lives. Despite such knowledge people continue to find comfort in its consumption and has resulted in the failure of prohibition in many Indian states. Mizoram is no exception, failure of the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition (MLTP) Act 1995 passed by the Congress party led to its repeal in 2014³ by the same ministry despite opposition from civil society, the church⁴ in particular. M. Lalmanzuala writes, "The very reason that liquor total prohibition existed in our society is because of the request of the Church. The request of the Church was respected by the Government, thus the law came into being".⁵ The liquor issue had the church openly stand in opposition to the Government for almost a decade, the Presbyterian Church had petitioned for prohibition since the passing of the Synod Gen. 19 in 1985.⁶ (The Synod being the highest decision making body of the Presbyterian Church).

² The local conception of *Zu* is inclusive of both locally brewed alcoholic beverages, other alcoholic beverages from outside and foreign brands of liquor. So, liquor and alcohol in Mizo context "*zu*" is inclusive of the two. Hence, making the usage of both liquor and alcohol interchangeable.

³ The regulated sale of liquor permitted by the Government under the Mizoram Excise Act, 1992 came to be totally prohibited through the initiation of the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition (MLTP) Act, 1995 by the Congress Ministry. The MLTP Act prohibited the selling and consumption of liquor, however, the law was subsequently repealed by the same ministry in 2014 by passing the Mizoram Liquor Prohibition and Control (MLPC) Act.

⁴ There are more than 50 denominational Churches in Mizoram and almost all the big denominations except the Roman Catholic Church support Liquor total prohibition. From Hnamte, Lalnundika. (2014). *Prohibition-A Socio-Economic Assessment in Gujarat and Mizoram*. New Delhi: Serials Publication. P. 96

⁵ Lalmanzuala, M. (2000). *Prohibition* Aizawl: Saphlenga, Zarkawt. P. 40

⁶ Resolution 19. (1985). *Excise Act leh he Act hmanga zu zuarte chungchang* Synod Bu 1985 (Mizoram Presbyterian Kohhran Synod Vawi 61 Na) p. 23

Civil society according to the CIVICUS Civil Society Index (CSI) is “The arena, outside of family, the state and the market where people associate to advance common interests”.⁷ Thomas Carothers had written “Civil society is also often equated with non-governmental organizations especially advocacy groups committed to public interest such as human rights, health, anti-corruption, women empowerment and so on. Nevertheless, civil society is a much bigger concept than just non-governmental organizations, covering all the associations and organizations that exist outside state including the traditionally called interest groups, religious organizations, political parties, sports club and informal community groups”.⁸ In the light of definitions provided and in consideration of the context under research, the identified civil society players representing various interests of the Mizo people, besides the Church are the Young Mizo Association (YMA), Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP), Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP), Joint Action Committee (JAC) and many others continue to push for prohibition. Despite the failure to truly prohibit the flow of liquor, they have tirelessly helped the government in the implementation of prohibition policy. The Hindustan Times writes, “To pave the way for the manufacture of wine, the stringent dry law in force since February 20, 1997 was relaxed by an amendment made in the Prohibition Act, April 2007, allowing up to 16 per cent of alcohol in it”.⁹ The manufacture, selling and consumption of Hnahlan grape wine was legalised much to the apprehension of the church that it would eventually lead to the end of MLTP Act. The Congress ministry in its second term in 2014 lifted the dry law through the Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition and Control) Act or the MLPC Act 2014 despite vehement protest from the church.

Zu had occupied central position in the age old traditional set-up. Important rituals to please evil spirits, festive celebrations like Chapchar Kut, Mim Kut, Pawl Kut, casual socialization and special occasions like Khuangchawi, Sechhun, Salulam,

⁷ Heinrich, Finn. Volkhart. (2004). *Assessing and Strengthening Civil Society Worldwide*. CIVICUS Civil Society Index Series Vol.2, Issue 1. Retrieved from

<http://www.civicus.org/view/media/CSIAssessingandStrengtheningCivilSocietyWorldwide.pdf>

⁸ Carothers, Thomas. (Winter 1999-2000). *Think Again: Civil Society*. Retrieved from

<http://www.osf.am/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Carothers-on-Civil-Society.pdf>

⁹ Wine to be produced in dry Mizoram. (2010, July 18). *Hindustan Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india/wine-to-be-produced-in-dry-mizoram/story-YzTr4L6YB3EZZ492kfQuzN.html>

Chawn of the ancestral Mizo involved the consumption of locally brewed alcoholic beverages. The highest honour bestowed for social ethics of the Mizo revolves around the practice of “Tlawmngaihna”, the award entailed drinking rice beer from Nopui (translated as the Big Cup). This honour is bestowed only to the kind, helpful and selfless. To receive such an honour was the dream of every young man. Such was the centrality of zu in their custom and tradition. The temperance of its consumption in rituals can be said to be admirable, whereas the temperance by which it was consumed during festivities and socialization was what left the door open for its negative impact. It had occupied such a central role that it can be said that its consumption was almost cultural. Cultural attachment shapes ones’ worldview and ones’ values and opinions are structured through this worldview and this affects not just the social, cultural realm but also the political realm as well. Zu itself had played such a central role in the Mizo culture that it had occupied a very important role in the political development of the Mizos.

Advent of the British in the Lushai Hills¹⁰ in 1891, particularly the missionaries in 1894¹¹ imposed a change which resulted in the existence of two perspectives in the Mizo socio-political development viz., the Chiefs and Missionaries. The Chiefs once proud and fierce became mere puppets of the British officials. Chiefs who resisted were imprisoned in far lands, those that remained had no choice but to comply for fear of the same fate befalling them. Freire rightly observes, “All domination involves invasion- at times physical and overt, at times camouflaged, with the invader assuming the role of a helping friend”.¹² The domination of the Hills as expressed by Freire came in the form of British Officials and missionaries who shook the very core of the Mizo tribe, consolidating their political rule through cultural rule with the introduction of Christianity. The consolidation of the colonial rule in the Lushai Hills came in the

¹⁰ Lushai Hills was changed to Mizoram in 1972 when it was made into a Union Territory. It became the 23rd state of the Indian Union with the signing of the Peace Accord on the 20th February 1987. From Hnamte, Lalnundika. (2014). *Prohibition-A Socio-Economic Assessment in Gujarat and Mizoram*. New Delhi: Serials Publication. P.15

¹¹ The Charter of 1813, clause XXXII allowed the propagation of Christianity and unrestricted entry of missionaries for the purpose to India henceforth. From Nag, Sajal, (2008). *Pied Pipers in North-East India Bamboo-flowers, Rat-famine and the Politics of Philanthropy (1881-2007)*. New Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors. p.106

¹² Paulo, Friere. (1996). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Myra Berrgman Ramos, Trans.). New Delhi: Penguin Books. p.34.

form of a helping hand through the British missionaries. With the growing number of converts, the earliest known prohibition order of liquor consumption for the Christians in Mizoram was introduced in December 1897 at Mission Veng, Aizawl by D. E. Jones (fondly named Zosaphluia by the Mizos).¹³ The law forbade the Mizo Christians to drink zu and those found defying the dry law were to be expelled from the village.

To be a Christian implied abstinence from zu and rejection of their culture. The simple tribal culture became a 'contested culture' as elaborated by Frantz Fanon in his book "The Wretched of the Earth". The sophisticated world view of the greater civilization of white man swallowed the simple tribal tradition, their entry marked the beginning of an invasion of the Mizo tribal life. One can interpret the advent of British missionaries as a means to consolidate the British rule through cultural invasion. To Freire, cultural invasion "implies the 'superiority' of the invader and the 'inferiority' of those who are invaded, as well as the imposition of values by the former, who possess the latter and are afraid of losing them"¹⁴ and impose they did their values and world view at the cost of annihilating the Mizo culture and traditional practices. The result of their culture becoming a 'contested culture', the tug and pull between the missionaries and the Chiefs also resulted in cruel treatment of the proselytes. Most Chiefs indulged in persecuting the Christians.¹⁵ The dividing perception of 'us' and 'them' disappeared with the successful proselytization of the animistic population and indigenization of the adopted religion. Today Christianity forms the major religion with the largest identified denomination being the Presbyterian Church¹⁶ consisting of nearly half the population of Mizoram. Christianity had provided cohesiveness and homogeneity in mobilizing the people. This marks the complete 'possession' of the simple tribal culture through the adopted Christian religion.

¹³ Lalrinmawia, K. (2002). *The Discourse on Zu in Mizo Christianity from 1893-1997*. (M. Th. Dissertation) Senate of Serampore College. p.57

¹⁴ Paulo, Friere. (1996). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Myra Berrigan Ramos, Trans.). New Delhi: Penguin Books. p. 141

¹⁵ Nag, Sajal. (2008). *Pied Pipers in North-East India Bamboo-flowers, Rat-famine and the Politics of Philanthropy (1881-2007)*. New Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors. p.170

¹⁶ The Presbyterian Church of Mizoram consists of 5,98,785 members, that makes up more than half of the total population of Mizoram. (April 2016 Census: Presbyterian Church of India)

The consented democratic rule later established in the land takes into account the opinions of its people and this resulted in the abandonment of Mizoram Excise Bill 1973 passed by Ch.Chhunga led Mizo Union Ministry on the 10th October 1973 later consented by the President of India on the 17th April 1974. On the other end, the Mizo National Front (MNF) while underground (1966-1986) vehemently campaigned against liquor but their over ground politics appeared to be a different story. They acted as a symbol of Mizo sub-nationalism and their political ideology based on self-determination.¹⁷ Championed by the people under the banner 'For God and Country' high expectations afloat their coming to power in 1986 under the leadership of Laldenga.

The MNF circulated a Letter to the Parents No V of 1988. The pamphlet showed that they had collected views and opinions from some 3000 people with regard to the issue of liquor sale permit. Their survey showed majority of the people opted for a rigorous control over prohibition of liquor. The church leaders met the Chief Minister to question their motive on liquor. The topic of contention had left the church leaders baffled as Laldenga accused them of encroaching on the jurisdiction of Government. To quote Laldenga on his opinion on liquor, "Zu is neither our enemy, nor our friend, it is only a thing. Whether it becomes our friend or foe depends on how we relate ourselves to it". The party leader's liberal conception of liquor seemed contrary to their prior acts of prohibition from underground. The ideology for which they were championed "For God and the Country" deteriorated with the authoritarian attitude of their leader. The church leaders having left with no option gave up negotiating on the issue, leaving the matters to the will of God. The fall of the MNF ministry was characterised by the church leaders as "an answer by God to the prayers of the Church on the liquor issue".

No longer regarded as the peoples champion, with a brief interlude of only 19 months, the familial dispute within the party led Laldenga's ministry to be tested on the floor of the house. Dethroning Laldenga resulted in Mizoram being placed under Presidents Rule. Fresh election held in 1989 led to a coalition rule of the Congress and MNF (D). With no rules formulated under the Excise Act 1973, the new ministry

¹⁷ Nunthara, C. (1996). *Mizoram: Society and Polity*. New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company. p. 218

followed a period of uncertainty. However, liquor was made easily available, yet no permits were claimed to be issued for the sale of liquor. The Church continued to press hard for stringent measures against alcoholism. The Congress government did not comply with the wishes of the church immediately. Instead, the Mizoram Excise Act was enacted in 1992, this permitted the sale of liquor under regulation and tax. Towards the end of their second term, the Congress too became unpopular and began to lose the trust of the people, the then Chief Minister Lal Thanhawla agreed to have prohibition enforced. Hence, the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act or MLTP Act was enforced in 1995.

Civil society represented by the church and various associations had been constant in their pro-prohibitionist stance since their inception till date. But the states response to the issue has been different from time to time. Aspirations of the people through the years had come in the form of liquor regulating law known as the Mizoram Excise Bill 1973 by the Mizo Union, enactment of the Mizoram Excise Act 1992 and the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act 1995 by the Congress. Despite vehement opposition from the Church, realising the failure of prohibition, the Congress initiated its repeal in 2014 through the Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition and Control) Act 2014 by the same political party who enforced its prohibition back in 1995. This study focuses on the issue of liquor in Mizoram since it is one of the most debated issue today. It will attempt to unravel changes in political agenda as a result of the relationship between ruling political regimes and its people. These changes in political agenda are brought about by different factors among which liquor was one of them. It enquires the tug and pull for greater power between the government and civil society.

Literature Reviewe

Liquor is all pervasive, it transcends societies. It continues to invite polarizing views; it is celebrated and hated by many at the same time. The existence of enormous literature on liquor comes as no surprise. Various articles, journals, books and published works remain available for reference. For theoretical exploration, available post-colonial literature is chosen. Selection of available Mizo literature on liquor had also been made. The review of literature has been given in chronological order of their

publications. The literature reviewed for the purpose of this research are as mentioned below:

1. In his book, "*Power/Knowledge Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972-1977*" (1980), Michel Foucault writes of the nature of power in society; not the conventional treatment of power that concentrates on powerful individuals and repressive institutions, but the much more pervasive and insidious mechanisms by which power "reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives". Foucault's investigations of prisons, schools, barracks, hospitals, factories, cities, lodgings, families, and other organized forms of social life. This book possesses profound implications for understanding the social control of our bodies and helps in providing a different perspective of power since power to Foucault is the one who possesses knowledge.

2. Nicholas Tapp in his paper "*The Impact of Missionary Christianity Upon Marginalized Ethnic Minorities: The Case of the Hmong*" (1989) writes of his study of the adoption of the world religion by the Hmong people of Thailand, Burma, China and Indo-Chinese peninsula. He writes of the complex interweaving of indigenous elements with Christian practices and beliefs. He also provides a serious understanding of what the adoption of Christianity has meant to the Hmong. He also compares the differential effects of adoption of the Catholic and Protestant missionization and its resultant effects on messianic tendencies. His writing has helped in understanding the impact of Christianisation on small tribes.

3. The author Lalrinthanga in "*Zoram Politik (1976-1986)*" (1993), gives a detailed account of the discourse between the Indian Government and the Mizo National Front (MNF). He also writes in detail of the origin of MNF till the peace settlement. This book has helped in understanding Mizoram political scenario from 1976-1986 and the MNF in particular.

4. In his book *“Pedagogy of the Oppressed”* (1996), Freire’s writes of his philosophy which is that the underclass, no matter how “ignorant” they may seem, are capable of looking critically at the world. These people can gradually perceive their personal and social reality, and transform it. He justifies the need for teaching the oppressed, explains the contradiction between the oppressors and the oppressed, and offers solutions to how oppression is overcome. He explains the “banking” concept of education and teacher-student contradiction and also describes the essence of education as the practice of freedom, which is dialogue. He also explores the opposing theories of cultural action, showing how one is an instrument of oppression and the other an instrument of liberation. His writing helps in understanding the post-colonial view and the repressive relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed.

5. Kipgen in his book *“Christianity in Mizo Society: The Encounter between Christianity and Zo Culture in Mizoram”* (1996), writes about the advancement and impact of Christianity in Mizoram. He begins with a persuasive argument for the use of the name Zo for the numerous clans inhabiting the regions bordering India, Burma and Bangladesh in place of more awkward and inaccurate anthropological classifications like Kuki-Chin or Chin-Lushais. He argued that it was the cultural aspect that helped the indigenization of Christianity. He comes to the conclusion that it was the engagement of Christianity with the traditional Mizo culture at its deepest level in the unique Mizo revival movements that accounted for its rapid growth in Mizoram. His writing has thrown light on the impact of Christianity in Mizo society.

6. In *“Discourse on Colonialism”* (2000), Aimé Césaire eloquently describes the brutal impact of capitalism and colonialism on both the colonizer and colonized, exposing the contradictions and hypocrisy implicit in western notions of “progress” and “civilization” upon encountering the “savage,” “uncultured,” or “primitive.” Here, Césaire reaffirms African values, identity, and culture, and their relevance, reminding us the relationship between consciousness and reality are extremely complex. It is equally necessary to decolonize our minds, our inner life, at the same time that we decolonize society. Césaire’s writing has helped to critically analyse the colonial rule and the necessity for a decolonized mind.

7. Nick Brownlee in his book *"This is Alcohol"* (2002) writes about the drinking culture of various professions and age groups. He also writes of the consumption pattern in Europe and provides a very interesting read on the history of alcohol. Brownlee also spreads awareness of the various alcohol related illnesses and the economic impact of alcohol. His writing has helped in answering the basic question on what alcohol is all about and provides a larger picture of drinking culture in western societies.

8. In his book *"Jacques Derrida of Grammatology"* (2002), Derrida examines the relation between speech and writing, and it is an investigation of how speech and writing develop as forms of language. Derrida argues that writing has often been considered to be derived from speech, and he says that this attitude has been reflected in many philosophic and scientific investigations of the origin of language. He says that the tendency to consider writing as an expression of speech has led to the assumption that speech is closer than writing to the truth or logos of meaning and representation. He explains that the development of language occurs through an interplay of speech and writing and that because of this interplay, neither speech nor writing may properly be described as being more important to the development of language. Derrida's work has helped to theoretically explore the possibility of critical reading of colonial history so as to free oneself from classical categories used by the colonial masters.

9. In *"The Politics of the Governed"* (2004), the author Partha Chatterjee writes on the rise of ethnic or identity politics particularly in the postcolonial world. This book considers the global conditions within which such local forms of popular politics have appeared and shows us how both community and global society have been transformed. Chatterjee's analysis explores the strategic as well as ethical dimensions of the new democratic politics of rights, claims, and entitlements of population groups and permits a new understanding of the dynamics of world politics both before and

after the events of September 11, 2001. Chatterjee's work has provided a full perspective on the possibilities and limits of democracy in the postcolonial world.

10. Sajal Nag in his book "*Pied Pipers in North-East India Bamboo-followers, Rat-famine and the Politics of Philanthropy (1881-2007)*" (2008) writes extensively of the phenomenon of bamboo flowering (Mautam) which occurs in Mizoram every 50 years. He writes of the politics of philanthropy endorsed by the British Missionaries as a means to promote their proselyte agenda. He also highlights the political agenda of Laldenga led Famine Front to which later led to 20 years long fight against the central government. This book has helped to understand the agenda of the British colonial power.

11. James Nicholls in his work "The Politics of Alcohol a History of the Drink Question in England" (2009) deals with the transformations that had characterised thinking about alcohol. It analyses the role of drink as a political issue. His work exposes the underlying cultural and political tension as a result of the drink question. He has also provided a distinctive lens for observing the complex relation between individual consumption, cultural values and social power. It also provides a long view of the development of public discourse on drink.

12. In his book "*Zofate Zinkawngah – (Zalenna Mei a Mit Tur a Ni Lo)*" (2012), R. Zamawia gives a very detailed account of the political development of Mizoram. He writes of the history of the Mizo people, the British colonial period, rise of political consciousness of the Mizos and gives a very detailed account of the Mizo National Front Movement. His work provides insight to the political development of Mizoram.

13. Revd. Chuauthuama in his book "*Bible, Zu leh Mizote*" (2014) educates the reader about the Bible verses which mentions about wine drinking, he also elucidates on drinking and Mizo culture, Christianity and liquor. His work represents response of the Church on repeal of the dry law, the MLTP Act in 2014. His writing represents the stance of the Church which provides insight to the debate on liquor.

15. In “*Mizoram: Society and Polity*” (1996), author C. Nunthara writes about the social organization of the people, political developments of Mizoram, political participation of regional political parties and the problems of identity crisis which ultimately led to the separatist movement led by the Mizo National Front (MNF). His writing has provided valuable insight to the discourse of political developments in Mizoram.

16. *Report of the Study Group of the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1995* has provided insight to the merits and demerits of MLTP Act, the socio-economic impact of alcohol, the success or failure of the dry policy enforcement, influence of alcohol on Mizo youth and women, and the impact of alcohol on health. It has brought an understanding to the reality of the situation where society faces a dilemma as they acknowledge the failure of prohibition with the never ending presence for the demand for liquor.

17. H.C Vanlalruata in his article “*Zu Politics*” literally translated as “Politics of Alcohol” which was published on the Mizo Daily Vanglaini newspaper, 10th-11th July 2016 p. 8. He provides insight to a very different side of politics; on a very debated issue regarding the dry law and its repeal. He describes the political scenario of Mizoram regarding alcohol since the inception of the first Government of Mizoram as a Union Territory back then in 1972 till the repeal of the dry law; the Mizoram Liquor Prohibition Act by the Mizoram Liquor Prohibition and Control Act 2014. He writes about how political parties in Mizoram have more or less the same manifestos, the opposition of government initiatives taken up by the ruling parties, the lack of continuity of the initiatives of the previous government and the frequent change of names of programmes. He further writes of the lack of opinion and principles of politicians; he elaborates this with regard to their stance on alcohol. He basically sums up the discourse on alcohol in the political arena and mentions the political parties in power relevant to the time of enactment of the dry and wet law.

18. The “*Mizo Language and Literature Emergence and Development (Contribution of Christian Missionaries from 1897-1947)*” (2017) is an expansion of the doctoral thesis of Dr. Lalzama. He writes of the traditional socio-economic and political conditions of Mizoram, the advent of Christian missionaries to Mizoram, India. He also writes of their settlement and their contribution for the development of education and their role in the formation of the Mizo language. His writing helps to understand the traditional setup of the Mizos and his factual accounts of the advent of missionaries provided a deep insight and to understand their role in transforming the traditional society to a modern one through the promotion of education.

19. The work of Joy Pachuau on “*Being Mizo Identity and Belongings in NorthEast India*” published in (2014) examines meaning to being a Mizo. It shine light to the marginalization of the tribes in India particularly the Mizos situated in the NorthEast of India that has endured silence all these years. It explores how territorialisation becomes an important feature of identity making in the twentieth century and introduces readers to an understanding of Mizo identity centred on Christianity of the Mizo kind.

Research Gap

Literature Review had shown that liquor issue had undergone studies under the initiatives of the Government where the focus of the exploration is concentrated on the outcomes or implications of liquor consumption in Mizoram. The study of liquor as a political narrative remained quite untouched. Literature review helped locate that most local writings on liquor had been written to basically help reduce demand. There had been no proper study undertaken to explore the political narrative of liquor with the aim of answering questions as to how liquor became a problem, how the negative perception came to proliferate, how the issue actually plays out in the larger political framework of the Mizos. Clues have been found in ethnographic writings that require binding from a critical and analytical perspective. One can say, the questions have been fragmented and so have been the writings. A critical analysis of the social, cultural and political past to the present is required to help locate an understanding.

Statement of the Problem

Liquor happens to be a very controversial issue which sparks debate in various societies. In fulfilment of campaign promises Governments at times impose interventionist policies that fail to bring solution to the drink problem. They have also been consequently seen reverting to liquor sale policies time and again. Indian states like Andhra Pradesh and Haryana (in mid 1990's) and of recent Mizoram (in 2014) lifted their dry status while some states continue to impose prohibition despite its failure. States like Kerala (since 2014) followed by Bihar (since 2015) and have also recently introduced phase wise prohibition. However, Kerala reverted to its sale in 2017 while Mizoram reclaimed its dry status in 2019.

Today, states like Gujarat, Lakshadweep, Mizoram and Nagaland continue to enforce total ban despite its failure while partial ban has been imposed in Manipur and Maharashtra. Prohibition promises and enforced policies by political parties have been used to woo voters, particularly women voters.

In the Lushai Hills, it was seen that the British with their paternalistic system of administration consolidated their political rule through the missionaries. Though consumption of zu was cultural in the old Mizo tradition, their cultural elements were rejected as anti-Christian and were marginalised as godless by the British Missionaries. Zu came to be identified in a negative light, necessitating one to cut ties with it. This adopted view continues to be the shared values of the present Mizo Christians. Therefore, the orthodox opposition of any form of alcoholic beverages and foreign brands of liquor can be seen sourced from the Church. In 1993, when the Coalition of the Congress and the Mizoram Janata Dal (MJD) came to power, pressures from different corners of the civil society resulted in the enforcement of the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1995 by the Congress party which was enforced on the 20th February 1997 to the immense pleasure of the Church and NGO's.

Once again, the debate on this issue has resurfaced in Mizoram with its legalisation in 2014. The paradigm of this debate continues to follow the same pattern with precedence given to religious views, economic factors (loss or gain) relative to drinking and assumed social consequences of liquor liberalization. It has become clear through the Report of the Study Group of the Mizoram Total Prohibition Act 1995

that prohibition was considered a clear failure by various local associations such as the Central Young Mizo Association (CYMA), Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP), Mizo Upa Pawl (MUP), Mizo Journalist Association (MJA), Mizo Academy of Letters (MLA), Mizo College Teachers Association (MCTA), Zoram Taxi Owners Association (ZTOA) and Zoram Drivers Union (ZDU) but most preferred the continuity of prohibition. Subduing the opinion of the various associations, the government responded with the enforcement of Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition & Control) Act, 2014. This act on the part of the government was opposed by the church and it shows a visible trend of changing attitudes of state and church emulating from the issue of liquor. Focus of the study will be made on ministries that have effected liquor legislations from the days of Union Territory to the most recent 2014 liquor legislation for analysis of the changing attitude of policy makers on this issue.

The narrative of liquor ethnography has often been side-lined in the exploration of the issue. Religious perspective of the people has put a veil on certain considerations like the heavy price of prohibition enforcement, negating the slightest light shown to the prospect of liquor sale and curbing the freedom of those that think otherwise. Prohibition enforcement is at times considered a wasted effort with the apparent availability of illicit liquor in the state. The time has come to reread the course of this debate on liquor with an attempt to understanding the debate and thereby exposing the relationship between the arbiters of power in the society. This study will provide a different view on liquor by exploring the issue from a post-colonial lens.

Scope

The scope of research is on liquor politics of the Mizos. The word liquor is inclusive of all alcoholic beverages: traditionally brewed, foreign made and foreign brand of liquors. The study is focused on exposing the liquor issue and contextualizing it to the socio-political structure of the Mizo society. Analysis is made on the colonial history to understand the tug and pull for greater power between the Missionaries and the Village Chiefs through the issue of liquor. Available literature, records and documents will be traced and reviewed to locate meaning to the study. It also traces those political regimes that had effected legislation on liquor from the times of the

Union Territory (UT) till the repeal of the dry law in 2014. This also brings an understanding to the changing attitude of the Congress on liquor policies and societal interventions. Opinions of stakeholders is analysed to determine their perception on sale and prohibition of liquor.

Significance of the Study

This study provides an insight to the issue of liquor in the following ways:

1. It adds to the existent body of knowledge an understanding of the relational development and changes in political agenda between society and the Government of Mizoram with liquor as the looking glass.
2. It throws light to understanding the tug and pull for greater power between the civil society and state.
3. Provides a new insight to the debate regarding liquor.
4. It helps to identify markers for future research.

Objectives

Objectives of the study are as stated below:

1. To enhance understanding on the role of liquor in the traditional Mizo society and contextualize it to the larger issue of Mizo socio-political structure to add its meaning.
2. To analyse the changing attitudes of the state and civil society on liquor policies and its consumption in the period (1995-2018).
3. To study the policy perspectives of both the prohibiting and legalizing Acts viz., the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1995 and the Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition & Control) Act 2014 respectively.
4. To analyse the multiple implications of liquor policies in Mizo society.

Hypotheses

1. Adoption of Christianity by the Mizos put an end to the opposition between the Chiefs and the Missionaries on the issue of liquor.
2. The repeal of the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1995 in 2014 resulted in

differences of opinion among the political regimes as well as the people of Mizoram.

3. The issue of liquor has been used by political regimes in Mizoram to influence electorates.
4. Liquor consumption has negative effects on Mizo society.

Methodology

The nature of this research is both qualitative and quantitative. It is both descriptive and analytical. Qualitative technique had been utilized for in-depth analysis and interpretation of the historical and contemporary context to the subject under study. It describes the policy effects as experienced by the civil society. Content analysis of policy documents, legislative debates and acts have been done. It is descriptive as it systematically describes the socio-political perceptions of stakeholders on liquor policy through interviews and questionnaires. The use of these methods also make the study quantitative in nature. It is also analytical as it tries to understand the cause-effect relationships between the Government and civil society within the context of liquor. The study employs statistical interpretation of data collected. SPSS is further used to help interpret research questionnaires. Statistical analysis was done on certain questionnaires using Pearson Correlation-coefficient. The details of the methodology is as described below:

Classification of data

The research is carried out based on two sets of data: primary and secondary data.

A. Primary data

Primary data had been collected from:

1. Policy documents, assembly debates, official records, official notifications of concerned Departments of the Mizoram state Government viz., Excise & Narcotics Department, Taxation Department, Finance Department, Record Room Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Library Mizoram Assembly Annex, Police Headquarters, Civil Hospital Aizawl Record Unit, Mizoram

Social Defence & Rehabilitation Board (MSD&RB). Important documents were also procured from Synod Archives and individuals.

2. Questionnaire collected from opinions representing perceptions of stakeholders.
3. Observation of Mizo socio-economic-political environment and the working relation between representatives of civil society and Government, a result of policy change on liquor.
4. Personal and telephone interview of liquor consumers.
5. A semi-structured interview conducted with –
 - a) Leaders of political regimes: The Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC), Mizo National Front (MNF) and People’s Conference Party (PC)
 - b) Key NGO functionaries: Secretary, Central Young Mizo Association (YMA), Secretary, Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP) and Vice President, Mizo Upa Pawl (MUP), Secretary of Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP)
 - c) Church functionaries: Former Coordinator, Synod Social Front, Presbyterian Church of Mizoram and Pastors.
 - d) Government functionaries: Former Commissioner of Excise and Narcotics Department and workers, Police Department workers.
 - e) Liquor consumers: 72 liquor consumers.

B. Secondary data

While secondary data had been collected from both offline and online resources available from books, magazines, newspaper articles, journals and websites.

Tools of Data Collection

For successful attainment of the objectives of the study, data had been collected using interview, questionnaire and observation. Data had been collected from different categories of respondents. The tools employed for the collection of data had been as elaborated below:

- i) Interview schedule: Interview schedule had been utilised to determine necessary information from political leaders who had affected liquor legislation viz., the

Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC), Mizo National Front (MNF), People's Conference (PC), leaders of civil society organizations who had been knowledgeable on the subject of liquor viz., Presbyterian Church leaders, the YMA, MHIP, MUP and MZP and people habituated to drinking. Interview schedule was conducted for clarification and elaboration of questions which need greater attention for the achievement of the objectives of the study. Interview was also conducted on the drinking population to study the financial implications of their sustained liquor consumption habit.

ii) Questionnaire: Closed ended questionnaire was prepared which would reflect the perceptions of different categories of respondents. The population had been divided in homogenous strata representing rural perception and urban perception, gender, age group, education qualification and profession.

iii) Observation: Observation had also been employed as a tool to collect data to determine the cause and effect of liquor policy on civil society.

Sample selection/size/technique

The sample for the questionnaire method which determined the perceptions of the stakeholders on the issue of liquor had been collected using stratified random sampling. The population had been divided into homogenous strata representing urban and rural perceptions, gender, age, religion, educational qualification and employment. Sample size of 240 was collected from three districts viz., Aizawl District, Mamit District and Kolasib District. Closed ended questionnaire had been prepared using Google Form and distribution of questionnaire hard copy had been done. Responses each representing opinion of rural and urban populace had been collected from the following areas:

1. 144 (24 each from a single area) responses representing rural perception had been collected from the following three districts:
 - a. Aibawk and Sialsuk from Aizawl District
 - b. Rawpuichhip and Lengpui from Mamit District
 - c. Lungdai and Zanlawn from Kolasib District.

2. 96 (24 each from a single area) responses from Aizawl localities representing urban perception had been collected from the following:
 - a. Durtlang
 - b. Mission Veng
 - c. Tanhril
 - d. College Veng

As for Interview of the drinking population, sample was drawn from response of research questionnaire. The research questionnaire helped identify the drinking population. Question 14 (of the research questionnaire) had asked to identify if the respondents had family members who consumed liquor. From a total of 240 questionnaire respondents, a significant percentage 56% (134) had identified to having they do. From that sample, drinking population to be interviewed was determined.

From the Aizawl district, respondents had identified to having a total of 64 drinkers from 96 respondents. Rural respondents identified to having a total of 70 drinkers from a total of 144 respondents. This helped map liquor consumers for interview.

Table: 1.0. Sample for Research Interview of drinking population.

District	Sample Area	Occasional Drinkers (from 240)	Heavy Drinkers	Total	Interviewed
Urban Aizawl	Durtlang	12	5	17	9
	College Veng	17	0	17	9
	Mission Veng	11	2	13	10
	Tanhril	14	3	17	9
Rural Aizawl	Aibawk	6	1	7	5
	Sialsuk	10	3	13	6
Mamit	Rawpuichhip	5	3	8	5
	Lengpui	13	4	17	6
Kolasib	Zanlawn	9	4	13	5
	Lungdai	6	6	12	5

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

Representing a little over half the identified sample of 134 (56%) both from the urban and rural respondents, seventy-two (72) were randomly selected and interviewed. Thirty-seven (37) from the urban and thirty-five (35) from rural areas were interviewed personally and on telephone (see Table 1.0). This helped determine the monthly expenditure of the drinking population of Mizoram.

Analysis of Data

1. Qualitative content analysis: Content analysis of the collected primary was done from policy documents, assembly debates, official records of concerned Departments of the State Government, important information collected from the voluntary organisations. Content analysis of secondary data collected from books, magazines, newspaper articles, journals and websites was also done. All data collected from primary and secondary sources will be crossed examined and analysed.
2. Quantitative analysis: Analysis of the 240 responses collected from the questionnaire received was done. Respondents answered a total of 43 questions and data scoring of each response was done using Microsoft excel and interpreted using simple percentage analysis and Pearson correlation coefficient analysis to selected questions. Responses to these questions have been coded as 1 to agree, 2 as no opinion and 3 to disagree. The details of statistical analysis of data is as mentioned below:
 - i) Simple percentage analysis on all 39 response statements out of 43 response statements of the questionnaire (Excluding: Q. 4, 8, 17, 21)
 - ii) Response Frequency analysis on age variable on items Q.10 16
 - iii) Pearson Correlation Coefficient on
 - a) Demographic variables of Gender and Domicile with items Q.1, 3, 6, 12, 22, 27, 32, 39, 40, 42, 43 and
 - b) Between response items such as Q. 1&11, 9&42, 25&27, 9&42 to help determine the relation between the response data.

Limitations

The major limitation faced during this study can be summarised as below:

1. The Covid 19 pandemic during field work was a major obstacle which restricted movement. Access to rural areas was prohibited by their respective Local Task Force (LTF) which led to the distribution of most questionnaires through social media.
2. Respondents of older age-groups found it difficult to navigate through the questionnaire as it was circulated using Google Form, however they were given proper guidance.
3. The society's sense of belonging to the collective: the YMA who ardently support and helps enforce prohibition might have led to the respondent's untruthful response.
4. Most official respondents who were interviewed both retired and serving opted for anonymity.
5. The biggest obstacle met was regarding poor maintenance of data by respective Government Departments. This makes it difficult to have a conclusive deduction to understand the actual scenario in the implication study.

Chapterization

Chapter I – Introduction

This chapter introduces the reader to the subject under study which begins with an insight to the contemporary socio-political debated on liquor where much of the debate is concentrated on the negative impact of liquor abuse. It also introduces the concept of civil society and locates the major actors in Mizoram. Description is made on how the simple tribal worldview had come to be contested by the greater worldview with the annexation of Lushai Hills by the British in 1891. The presence of a foreign element gave birth to the existence of two conflicting view, where the conflict is analysed through the issue of liquor. It also mentions the times of awakening; of political consciousness among Mizos to the present political scenario. Political leaders have taken prohibitionist and anti-prohibitionist stances which evoked responses from

the civil society. An introduction to a new kind of debate is also traced, where conflicting ideas on liquor have been presented by the Government on one hand and the Church on the other. Civil society's view as represented by the Church is made who continue to dominate the prohibitionist lobby till date. This chapter provides a blueprint of the methodology adopted for the study.

Chapter II – Locating Liquor

Chapter II provides the geographical, political, historical context required for a better understanding of the indigenous peoples. It provides meaning to the indigenous liquor brewed by the early Mizos contextualizing the role it had played in the larger cultural life of the Mizo people. Classification of the liquor produced by the people in the pre-colonial and post-colonial communal society is made. The chapter brings out an understanding of the simple tribal culture and their world view, the *sakhua* practised by them which highlights the significance of the role played by the liquor they brewed. The chapter explains the various drinking occasions and cultural dictates of consumption practised by the people through the festivities and rituals performed. It goes on to highlight how liquor consist an important signifier for Mizo identity as it was positively embraced in the olden days. It further explains the tug and pull for power between the British missionaries and the Village Chiefs from the lens of liquor; the result of the struggle had been the cultural annihilation of the Mizos. It provides an understanding of how the adoption of the new religion brought to an end the conflict between the two. It further elaborates the changes brought about by both the British administration and the missionaries.

Chapter III – State and Civil Society on Liquor

This Chapter provides insight to civil society organizations in Mizoram as they play a very important representational role in formulating Mizo identity in the contemporary world. This civil society organizations led by the Church and the Young Mizo Association (YMA) has been identified as remnants of the British missionaries. The Mizo way of thinking is exposed, hilighting the deep embedded teachings of the British missionaries on liquor. It explores the transition of community's attitude on

liquor from the positive to the negative. It explains the perception of the political regimes both ruling and opposition and their political stance on the issue. It also explores the perception of the civil society on liquor and its attitude towards it. The interaction of political regimes and leaders of civil society associations which throws light to their relationship has also been highlighted. The chapter also presents the perception of other stakeholders.

Chapter IV – The Liquor Narrative

This chapter analyses the work of the Presbyterian Church in pushing for prohibition through the detailed correspondence that took place between them and the Government. It also highlights the perception of the Church and the various liquor orders and laws issued by the Government spanning from 1972 to 2014. Content analysis of Assembly debates on various liquor bills is also made in this chapter. This clearly brings to light how the issue had been used by political regimes to influence electorates in Mizoram beginning from the Mizoram Excise Act 1973 to the Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition & Control) Act, 2014. It also presents the policies of political regimes on liquor, providing an explanation to their prohibitionist or anti-prohibitionist stances. The chapter further elaborates the changing attitude of civil society with the enactment of the wet law in 2014 as compared to the dry law in 1995. It elaborates the circumstances that brought about differences in opinion among the political regimes themselves and between the stakeholders in Mizoram. It also describes the socio-political-economic effects of liquor on Mizo society through comparisons made on data collected during the MLTP and the MLPC Acts from concerned Government departments.

Chapter V – Understanding the Consequences of Liquor Policies

This chapter elaborates the socio-political implications of liquor on Mizo society. Stress has been given to the impact liquor has on women and youths as they represent a more vulnerable section of the society; most impacted by liquor. It also dwells on the political implications of liquor in Mizo society; how it influenced the society during elections. It explains how the issue has been used by political regimes

to influence electorates to vote in their favour thus leading to change in ministries time and again.

Chapter VI – Conclusion & Findings

The final chapter summarizes the study and highlights the analysis and findings made from the pre-political era to the contemporary society. The chapter contains details that help deduce true or false the hypothetical assumptions of the study.

The upcoming chapters will be an elaborate study which will either help prove true or negate the hypotheses through dissection of liquor issue in a critical light beginning from the colonial period. To sum up, the study enables one to have an awareness of how the simple tribal culture became a contested culture and progressed thereon. It further attempts to locate understanding to the political narrative of Mizo people with liquor as the looking glass. With this knowledge, one will have a glimpse of the direction the research aims to navigate.

CHAPTER II

LOCATING ZU

This chapter provides the geographical, political, historical context required for a better understanding of the land and its peoples. It focuses on indigenous liquor brewed by the early Mizos, contextualizing the role it had played in the larger cultural life of the Mizo people. It locates the importance of liquor in the functioning of the indigenous society and explores historical writings to search for clues to find if the adoption of Christianity by the Mizos put an end to the opposition between the Chiefs and the Missionaries on the issue of liquor.

A. Profile of Mizoram

1. Geographical profile:

Located in the North-Eastern region of India and surrounded by the Chin Hills of Myanmar (Burma) on the east and south, the sovereign state of Bangladesh and Tripura on the western frontier, Cachar and Hailakandi districts of Assam and Manipur in the north lies the land of the Mizo people known as Mizoram. An international boundary with Myanmar runs for 404 kms and 306 kms with Bangladesh.¹⁸ It is situated between 21°56'N - 24°31'N Latitudes and 92°16'E- 93°26'E longitudes. The Tropic of Cancer passes at the southern periphery of Aizawl; the state capital of Mizoram at 23.30 degree (N) Latitude. Mizoram covers an area of 21,087 sq. km. The maximum dimension from the north to the south stretches for 285 kms and from the east to west a 115 kms. It shares an international boundary with Myanmar and Bangladesh which runs a total stretch of 722 kms thus, making its geopolitical location strategically important to the central Indian Government. The hilly terrain has a pleasant temperature varying from 11°C-21°C during winter, 25°C-34°C in the summer and 18°C-25°C during autumn.¹⁹ The hills are steep and separated by rivers

18 Lalkima. C. (1997). Social Welfare Administration in a Tribal State: A Case Study of Mizoram, Guwahati: Spectrum Publication. p.1

19 Pachuau, Rintluanga. (2009). Mizoram A Study in Comprehensive Geography. Delhi: Northern Book Centre. P-XIX

which flow in the southern direction creating deep gorges between the hill ranges. A land of rolling hills is characterised by as many as 21²⁰ major hill ranges or peaks of different heights which run through the length and breadth of the state.

The average height of the hill to the west of state is about 1000 metres which gently rises to 1,300 metres to the east. Some areas, however, have higher ranges which go up to a height of over 2,000 metres except for a small portion in the extreme north and south which is flat. The highest peak in Mizoram is the Phawngpui (2157 meters) also known as the Blue Mountain and located in Lawngtlai district which lies in the south-eastern region of the state near the Myanmar border. Also, located in the south-western part of Lunglei district in close proximity to the Bangladesh border is the lowest peak Tlabung (21 meters).²¹ The hills clumped with various greenery is home to some 9 general and 20 species of bamboo.²² These bamboo flower in cycles of 30 and 50 years, the phenomenon of the flowering of bamboo is known as the *thingtam* (30 yearly cycles) and *mautam* (50 yearly cycles).²³

Mizoram has a number of life giving rivers which gushes with its full might during the monsoon. This season usually begin from the month of May and lasts for four months with an average rainfall of 250 cm a year. The most important rivers are the Tlawng (also known as Dhaleswari or Katakhal) this being the longest river which stretches over 102 kms within the state, and the biggest river being the Chhimtuipui (Kaladan). Other important rivers constitute the Tut (Gutur), Tuirial (Sonai) and Tuivawl which flows through the northern territory and eventually join river Barak in Cachar.

2. The People

Accounts of the Mizos was very little known prior to the annexation of land by the colonial power. The narrative of the Mizo origin prior to their settlement in the hills

²⁰*The Land*. Directorate of Information and Public Relations. Retrieved from <https://dipr.mizoram.gov.in/page/about-mizoram/physiography>

²¹ Pachuau 2009, op.cit. p. XIX

²² Nag, Sajal. (2008). *Pied Pipers in North-East India Bamboo-flowers, Rat-famine and the Politics of Philanthropy (1881-2007)*. New Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors. p. 25

²³ Pachuau 2009, op.cit., pp. 63- 64

has been a difficult topic to decipher but one which had been traced to the southern part of China according to Mizo historians.²⁴ The indigenous people earlier known as ‘*head hunters*’ were warring villages who took heads of their opponents as a souvenir. The inhabitants of Mizoram are known as Mizo (known by the colonial British as Lushai²⁵). Mizoram meaning “Mizo Land” and the literal translation of Mizo being *Mi – Person* and *Zo – Highland*. Thus, the word Mizo literally means a ‘*Highlander*’ (people residing in the high lying place).²⁶ They are regarded as the descendants of Tibeto-Burma of the Mongolian race.²⁷ According to J. H. Lorrain, the ancestral home of the Mizo appear to be somewhere in the neighbourhood of South East Tibet and Western China from there they gradually moved southward and westward to their present habitat through the centuries.²⁸ J.H. Lorrain also mentioned the English word ‘Lushai’ is derived from the word Lushei (or Lusei). The word ‘Lushai’ was derived as a result of mispronunciation of the word ‘Lusei’ by the colonial masters and gradually came to be used to describe the whole tribe. Officially designated till 1952, the term “Lushai Hills’ often led outsiders to refer to the inhabitants as Lushai, despite recognition of the existing clan and tribe difference. Joy on describing the notion of Mizo identity mentioned that the Mizos relied on ‘cultural practice’ as the chief determinant of identity and as the boundary marker of identity.²⁹

Sub-tribes of the Mizos consist of the Lushais, Pawi, Lakher, Paite, Ralte, Hmar, Vaiphei, Fanai and so on.³⁰ Liangkhaia described ‘Lusei’ as the actual name of one of the subtribes (subgroups) of the land consisting of Pachuau, Chhangte, Chuaungo, Chuaungang, Chhakchhuak, Chawngte, Hauhnar, Hrahsel, Tochwawng, Vanchhawng and the descendants of Zahmuaka.³¹ Today most Mizos belong to the Lushai subgroup and the official language of the land is the Duhlian language or more precisely, the

²⁴ For more see Sangkima. (2004). *Essay on the History of Mizos*. Guwahati: Spectrum Publications.

²⁵ Pachuau, Joy L.K. & Schendel, Willem van. (2016 Reprint). *The Camera As Witness A Social History of Mizoram, Northeast India*. Delhi: Cambridge University Press. p.9

²⁶ Lalzama, Dr. (2017). *Mizo Language and Literature Emergence and Development (Contribution of Christian Missionaries from 1897-1947)*. Aizawl: KL Offset Printers. p.14

²⁷ Liangkhaia. (1976 4th ed). *Mizo Chanchin*. Aizaw: Mizo Academy of Letters. p.1

²⁸ Lorrain, J.H. (2008 Reprint). *Dictionary of the Lushai Language*. Kolkata: The Asiatic Society. p.V

²⁹ Pachuau 2014, op.cit. p. 11

³⁰ Nag, Sajal. (2008). *Pied Pipers in North-East India Bamboo-flowers, Rat-famine and the Politics of Philantrophy (1881-2007)*. New Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors. P. 37

³¹ Liangkhaia, op.cit. p. 9-11

Duhlian dialect of the Lushai language. Chakma, Bru and Gurkha who are not seen as branches of the *Zo* category form a minority population in the land of the Mizo people.³²

The earlier Mizos believed in a supreme being called '*pathian*' who was supposed to be the creator, watcher of everything, a benevolent being with very little concern with men. His relation to the world was believed to be very distant. The understanding of their god was quite vague that every sacrifice made can be attributed to their search for the pathian they worshipped.³³ To quote J.M Lloyd in his explanation of the earlier Mizo notion of faith he writes, "It is interesting to note that the Mizos did believe in one high God, but their ideas about him were vague. In general it was he who created the world. He was powerful and knew what was happening among men. He was also thought to be good and kind, but he never interfered with human affairs or in the daily life of people. As a high remote impassive being they regarded him. Their favourite name for him was pathian, the word later adopted by Christians for God. But the name *Khuavang* was also used and there were certain other beings such as Lasi, *Vanchung Nula*, *Khuanu*, *Pu Vana* and so on. Pathian and these other beings were not worshipped, and sacrifices were never offered to them".³⁴ However, they were animists, their animistic practice was quite elaborate. Obligatory and non-obligatory sacrifices were performed by the *bawlpu* and the *sadawt* (two types of priests where the *sadawt* was considered a more dignified figure than the *bawlpu* and could possibly act on behalf of the clan). The officiating priests held such important place in the traditional society that Zairema designates them to be 'the real repository of tribal tradition – and its creator too'.³⁵ These sacrifices were done to appease the cruel, malicious and capricious evil spirits who inhabited and animated the non-human world in and around the village.³⁶

Religion consisted of the worship of '*Sa*' and '*Khua*', together pronounced as '*Sakhua*'. *Sakhua* described as religion may be argued as it generally indicates the

32 Ibid p. 9

33 Zaliana. (1983). *Mizo Sakhua Kumpinu Rorel Hma*. : Aizawl: Tribal Research Institute. p. 1

34 Lloyd, J. Meirion. (1991). *History of the Church in Mizoram (Harvest in the Hills)*. Aizawl: Synod Publication Board. p. 11

35 Ibid. p. 9-10

36 Ibid.p 9

‘tribe spirit’ of various tribes but today is at most times referred to as religion. The various tribes such as Lusei, Ralte, Paite, Pawi, Hmar and others each had an affiliated sakhua.³⁷ The worship of ‘Sa’ can be interpreted in three ways: One, in reference to the creator of individual. Two, the creator of a family and three, the creator of a clan. So the worship of *Sa* varies from one clan to the other. Examples of Lushai clan is a Pachuau clan, Sailo clan, Tochwawng clan, Chhangte clan, Hauhnar clan and more. Two clans worshipping the same *Sa* was known as ‘*dawisa kil za*’.³⁸ The worship of *Khua* or *Khuanu* is in reference to a ‘being’, a ‘feminine being’ sometimes referred to or called ‘*Lasi*’. It was believed that *Khuanu* was the protector of all men, their livestock and all the animals in the forest.³⁹ Bearing testament to the animistic religion of the Mizos, John Hughes Morris writes, “The ruling spirits Ram-huai and especially *Khuavang*, who is sometimes regarded as on an equality with *Pathian*. The spirits have power for good or evil, at their will; and in order to secure favour, sacrifices must be offered according to the instructions of the *Pui-thiam* or village priest”.⁴⁰

They also traditionally believed in notion of life after death a paradise known as ‘*pialral*’. It was considered a place of rest only for those deemed worthy; a place where entry was granted only to the rich, mighty, brave and skilful. The *thangchhuah*; *thangchhuahpa*⁴¹ or *thangchhuahnu*⁴² (a title given to an especially distinguished man) alone were considered qualified to enter *pialral*.⁴³ *Pialral* was a hypothetical place of abundance with plenty of food to eat of without having to struggle and work anymore. This place of rest was where all aspired to go to and all they did; the sakhua they practised; the daily back breaking work they performed was in hope for eternal rest in

³⁷ Pachuau 2014, op.cit. p. 179

³⁸ *Dawisa kil za* is used to express the brotherhood of a clan.

³⁹ See Zaliana. p. 8-9

⁴⁰ Morris, John Hughes. (1930). *The Story of Our Foreign Mission*. Aizawl: Synod Publication Board. p. 79

⁴¹ *Thangchhuah* title can be achieved in two ways: 1. By giving a series of feasts, seven or more times for the whole village. Tradition stipulates the sacrifice of various domestic animals or 2. By excelling in hunting skills, the task was to kill seven wild animals or more such as a bear, wild boar, gayal, eagle, big snake, a barking deer and a flying lemur (the list could vary from clan to clan, village to village). Such extraordinary hunters were known as a *pasaltha* and ultimately granted the *thangchhuah* title. For more see Lloyd, op.cit. p. 13-15

⁴² *Thangchhuahpa* refers to the male *thangchhuah* and *thangchhuahnu* of the female *thangchhuah*.

⁴³ Lloyd, op.cit. p. 13-15

the afterlife at pialral. Thangchhuah title could be attained through two ways: i) *ram lam a thangchhuah* that is to be a skilful hunter and ii) *buh leh bal a thangchhuah* that is to be wealthy and perform the series of ceremonial performances of the Khuangchawi. Either way will bestow them the coveted thangchhuah title. There was also a belief in the existence of ‘*mithi khua*’ (the Village of the Dead), the destination of the common man without the thangchhuah title which they believed was ‘a shadowy, colourless underworld⁴⁴’ where their earthly struggle continued. Evangelization by the British missionaries which began from 1890’s changed the entire cultural and religious scenario. Today the seed sown by the missionaries have grown and multiplied; having majority of the indigenous population identifying themselves to the Christian religion.

The early Mizos traditionally lived a semi-nomadic life, fending for themselves, their village and ‘nobody owed them a living’. Self-reliance and self-sufficiency was vital to their survival and they fostered basic skills and simple virtues. Honesty, courage, self-discipline, mutual help, a readiness to organize and be organized were values tightly woven in their social fabric. The manifestation of the altruistic value of ‘group over self’ simply expressed as *tlawmngaihna* was highly venerated by the people. J.M. Lloyd explained the act of *tlawmngaihna* as “the Mizo code of morals and good form. One cannot, for example, be regarded as *tlawmngai* unless one is courteous, considerate, helpful, unselfish, courageous, industrious and ready to help others even at considerable inconvenience to himself. A ‘*tlawmngai* man or woman’ will try to ensure that he or she does not stand in need of help from others, instead will be the one lendig help and will try to surpass others in performing his or her ordinary daily task efficiently. We thus see that *tlawmngaihna* embraces various types of activities and manifests itself in various forms be summed up as “group over self” wherein self-sacrifice for the needs of others is the spontaneous outcome. A man who practices the precepts of *tlawmngaihna* is highly respected”.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 14

⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 4

3. Education Profile

History depicts the oral culture of the natives and the absence of any written scripts. Clutural practices, songs, chants, stories, folktales, ditty, rules and more were taught and learnt orally. Learning for a man was imparted verbally and practically at *Zawlbuk*,⁴⁶ they were taught their way of life and the necessary skills required for survival. Traditional education was not inclusive, women were excluded and their place confined to making the household functional. Often at war with their neighbouring villages, it was vital for each village to have strong and skilful warriors. The tribal culture devoid of any complexities might seem backward and undeveloped, however, they found way to cope with all challenges. They had a centralised system, which was patriarchal and communal in nature. It will not be wrong to deduce that life for them was concentrated to making successful harvests, raids and hunts, accompanied by the provision of a strong defense.

The gradual change in society began with the introduction of alphabets by the missionaries on March 1894. The A, Aw, B script introduced by J.H. Lorrain (called by the locals as Pu Buanga) and Sapupa (the locals referred the British Missionaries in reverence as Sapupa) consisted of 24 letters in Roman character.⁴⁷ One must note that different dialects were spoken by different sub-tribes, however, the majority of them belong to the Lushei clan, therefore their dialect viz., the *Duhlian* dialect was the lingua franca. Therefore, the introduced letters were based on the Duhlian dialect and came to be known as *Mizo tawng* (Mizo Language).⁴⁸ Thus, the origin of literature had been traced to the Sapupa. This was done so that the locals could read the translated Bible and hymns; to help spread the gospel. Sunday schools were opened and became an institution of learning. Thangphunga, Suaka, Lalchhinga and Khamliana became the first literate. Suaka became a teaching assistant of F.W. Savidge. The centre for primary learning which opened in 1894 was further developed to a formal Primary

⁴⁶ Zawlbuk was a large traditional house where all young unmarried men of the community slept together and learned their way of life. It was here they were taught how to wrestle, the art of hunting and disciplined when need be.

⁴⁷ Lalzawna, C. (2005). Mizoram Education Chanchin. Khatla: H. Rokhumi. p. 3

⁴⁸ Lalzama, Dr. (2017). *Mizo Language and Literature Emergence and Development (Contribution of Christian Missionaries from 1897-1947)*. Aizawl: KL Offset Printers. p.14

School by 15th February 1898. This institutionalization had taken place under Rev. Edwin Rowland (called Pu Zosaphara), the school had 39 students.⁴⁹

In 1901, three other Primary schools were opened at Khawrihnim, Phulpui and Chhingchhip and many others followed. Middle school and High school were consequently opened in 1905 and 1944, thereby, increasing the percentage of literacy. Thus, institutionalization of learning was sourced from the missionaries (their lead followed by the Government).⁵⁰ These centres of learning encouraged women to learn as well, whether they did or not depended on the need felt by their respective families. Today survey shows that there are 682 villages having Anganwadi Centre, 710 villages having Primary School, 636 villages with Middle (Upper Primary School) and 323 villages with High Schools and 54 villages with Higher Secondary School.⁵¹ What began as just four in the late 1890's, the number of literates soared to a total of 8,48,175 constituting 91.33% of the total population in 2011 (2011 census).⁵²

4. Political profile

The early Mizos lived in group of small villages scattered around the land. They raided villages and each successful raid would enhance the prestige of their Village Chief. Villagers required the protection of an able Village Chief. Each Village Chiefs governed with the aid of the council of ministers or elders known as *Lal Upa*. Their villages were built on safe mountain ridges far apart with rough paths in between.⁵³ Annexation of the ancestral land by the colonial power was complete by March 1890.⁵⁴ Supreme source of authority previously identified as the Village Chiefs suddenly come to possess a different face. For administrative convenience, the land

⁴⁹ Lalzawna, op.cit.

⁵⁰ Lalzawna. op.cit. pp. 4-16

⁵¹ Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Mizoram. (2017-2018). *Village Profile & Development Indicators 2017-2018, Mizoram State*. Aizawl: Mizoram Statistical Development Agency (MSDA). p.vii.

⁵² Male literates numbered 438529 and female literates numbered 409,646. Thus, male literacy rate stands at 93.35% while female literacy at 89.27% as per the 2011 Census. For more see <https://www.census2011.co.in/census/state/mizoram.html#:~:text=Literacy%20rate%20in%20Mizoram%20has,literacy%20is%20at%2089.27%20percent>.

⁵³ Loyd. op.cit. p. 3

⁵⁴ Reid, Robert. (1978 Reprint). *The Lushai Hills*. Calcutta: Firma KLM Pvt. Ltd. p. 243

had come to be demarcated as North Lushai Hills and South Lushai Hills with Headquarters at Aizawl and Lunglei respectively.

Also for the purpose of establishing political influence over the Chiefs, a Political Officer was appointed in the Northern Lushai Hills⁵⁵ and a Superintendent in the South Lushai (Mizo) Hills District.⁵⁶ The work of the Political Officer was to establish political influence over the Chiefs and to induce them to submit to the British rule whereas the Superintendent was instructed to settle all disputes between the Chiefs and to prevent all raiding and public breaches of peace. Following the successful subjugation of the Mizo Chiefs, both North and the South Lushai Hills was amalgamated on the 1st April 1898. The new district made was under the charge of an officer designated “Superintendent of the Lushai Hills”. The first officer to be appointed Superintendent was Major John Shakespear.⁵⁷ Following the policy of the internal control of the villages by their own leaders, the Chiefs,⁵⁸ the British rulers administratively interfered as little as possible to impress upon the Chiefs their responsibility for the maintenance of order in their villages.⁵⁹ Thus making the Chiefs agents of the British; acting as liaison between the Government and the general public.⁶⁰

The land was excluded from any political participation through the branding of the Mizo Hills as “Backward Tract” by the Government of India Act 1919.⁶¹ The passage of the Government of India Act 1935 authorised the King-in-Council to declare any area of the British territory to be an “Excluded Area” or “Partially Excluded Area”. So, under the said Act, the Lushai Hills came to be known as an

⁵⁵ Ray, A.C. (1982). *Mizoram: Dynamics of Change*. Calcutta: Pearl Publishers. p. 13

⁵⁶ Ibid. p.13

⁵⁷ Government of India’s *Proclamation No. 977-P*, Vide Assam Secretariat, Foreign A, May 1898, Nos. 13-46

⁵⁸ Reid, Robert. (1942 Reprint). *History of the Frontier Are Bordering on Assam from 1883-1941*. Guwahati: Spectrum publications. p.60

⁵⁹ Ibid. p.60

⁶⁰ Lalrintluanga. (2016). The Genesis and Functioning of the Mizo District Council. In Dounge, Jangkhongam. (Ed). *Autonomy Movements and the Sixth Schedule in North East India*. Guwahati: Spectrum Publications. p.3

⁶¹ Singh, Chandrika. (1989). *Emergence of Arunachal Pradesh as a State*. Delhi: Mittal Publications. p. 89

“Excluded Area.”⁶² The name Lushai Hills was later changed to Mizoram through the Lushai Hills District (Change of Name) Act No. 18 of 1954. Once a district under Assam formally known as “Lushai District” came to be called “Mizo District” with effect from 29th April, 1954.⁶³

Change was imminent with the emergence of a new class identified by McCall as ‘the intelligentsia’. The rise of this class was a consequence of the spread of western education introduced by the Christian Missionaries. This rise of the intelligentsia awakened political consciousness of the people. Verbal permission of A.R.H. McDonald, Superintendent at the time eventually led to the formation of the first political party in Mizoram, the ‘Mizo Union’ on the 9th April 1946.⁶⁴ The Mizo Union (MU) dominated the political scene for a long time. It is imperative to mention that the first ever organization to be formed in the society was the Young Lushai Organization (YLA) in 1930. It was an organization affiliated to the Christian church which was later renamed the Young Mizo Association (YMA).⁶⁵ It was under this socio-religious platform of an organization that the idea of forming a political party originated.

Exclusive to the participation of the common people, Lushai Common Peoples’ Union was established with R. Vanlawma as the General Secretary. However, the name was suggestive of the divide in the society between the Chiefs and the commoners.⁶⁶ For the sake of presenting a united front, the name was changed to the Mizo Union. So the origin of the first political party in Mizoram can be traced to the Young Mizo Association (YMA)

⁶² McCall, A.G. (1949). *Lushai Chrysalis*. Guwahati-Delhi: Reprints Spectrum Publications. p. 6

⁶³ Verghese, Brigadier C.G. & Thanzawna, R.L. (1997). *A History of Mizos Volume – II*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd. p. 8

⁶⁴ Lalrintluanga. (2016). The Genesis and Functioning of the Mizo District Council. In Dounge, Jangkhongam. (Ed), *Autonomy Movements and the Sixth Schedule in North East India*. Guwahati: Spectrum Publications. p 7

⁶⁵Note: The Lushai nomenclature included only one of the Zo tribe amongst many that exist. So, for the sake of inclusivity (of all the Zo people; the Lushai, Pawi, Lakher, Paite, Ralte, Hmar, Vaiphei and more) the organizations name was changed and this move was politically motivated.

⁶⁶ The common people wanted to do away with the tyrannical rule of Village Chiefs. The transitional society struggled in becoming the depository of power. The struggle between the two led to the abolition of chieftainship in 1954.

The exit of India by the British Raj in 1947 and the transfer of power to the people of the land under the democratic system thus encouraged the formation and rise of regional political power in Mizoram like the Mizo National Front (MNF). The subsequent flowering of bamboo known as *mautam* (or bamboo flowering) in 1961 through 1965 correlated with famine in the land.⁶⁷ This phenomenon caused immense suffering among the people and the indifference of the then Assam Government in rendering help sparked 20 years insurgency against the Government of India.

Mizoram became a Union Territory with the implementation of the North-East Area (Reorganisation) Act, 1971 on 21st January, 1972, prior to which it was one of the districts of Assam. Consequent upon the passing of the Constitution 53rd Amendment Bill and the State of Mizoram Bill 1986 by the Parliament on 7th August, 1986, statehood was conferred on 20th February, 1987 thereby becoming the 23rd state of the Indian Union.⁶⁸

B. Zu in Mizo Society

Zu consisted a very important component the early Mizo culture. It signified more than a drink, its meaning could be located deeply embedded in their traditional way of life. It is a common and local name given to a beer or any fermented liquor made from fermented rice, millet, maize etc. mixed with yeast.⁶⁹ It is believed that Mizos used Zu as early as AD 800 to AD 950.⁷⁰ One can only speculate how they came to discover *chawl* or *dawidim* (yeast) and learnt the art of *zu sa*⁷¹ or brewing. The process to prepare the malt rice for brewing beer was traditionally referred to as *zu sa*. Rice was the quintessential ingredient for the beer they prepared. The potency of the beer they brewed or the concentration of alcohol rises with aging and prolonged fermentation.⁷²

68 Nag, Sajal. (2008). *Pied Pipers in North-East India Bamboo-flowers, Rat-famine and the Politics of Philanthropy (1881-2007)*. New Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors. p 28.

69 Tribal Research Institute. (1983). *Zu in Mizo Society (Past and Present) Mizoram*. Aizawl: Government of Mizoram. p.1

70 Hnamte, Lalnundika. (2014). *Prohibition. A Socio-Economic Assessment in Gujarat and Mizoram*. New Delhi: Serials Publication. p.60

71 Lorrain, James Herbert. (2008 Reprint). *Dictionary of the Lushai Language*. Kolkata: The Asiatic Society. p. 576

72 Ghosh, Sushanta., & Rahaman, Lovely., & Kaipeng, David Lalvohbika., et.al. (2017). Community-wise evaluation of rice beer prepared by some ethnic tribes of Tripura. *Journal of Ethnic Foods*,

How, when and where they learnt to brew their beer is unknown since the history or origin of the Mizo people remains quite vague. J.M. Lloyd had remarked “Zu always figured largely in these events. This was rice-beer of various degrees of potency. It is a popular drink throughout S.E. Asia, especially in the hills from Nepal to Vietnam”.⁷³ It is known to have a kick, the longer it is fermented the stronger the kick. The consumption of rice beer appears to be popular in countries like India, China, Japan, Korea, Thailand, Indonesia and many more. Also named differently by different tribes in India particularly among the tribes of Northeast India, West Bengal, Orissa and Jharkhand. Taken in moderation, it may also seem to have beneficial effects; have nutritional values and a positive influence on mental well-being,⁷⁴ acting as a potent probiotic as it is produced by microbial fermentation of the steamed rice with yeast and water.⁷⁵

Four types of traditional drinks had been identified viz., i) *Zupui*, ii) *Tin zu*, iii) *Rakzu* and iv) *Zufang*.⁷⁶ ‘Preparation and drinking zu’ had a deep cultural connotation which included the sanctioned participation of the entire community at times depending on the festivity or the occasion(s) called forth. One must understand that the early Mizos did not have any form of a beverage drink like tea other than their rice beer. It was a necessary drink tightly woven to the social fabric which was served or offered as a refreshing beverage on all occasions.

B.1. Classifying the drink

Thomas M. Wilson rightly expressed “Drinking is the veritable stuff of any perhaps every level and type of culture, and is implicated in the behaviours, values,

Volume 4, Issue 1, March 2017, p. 64 retrieved from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2352618116300452>.

⁷³Events referred here are the three great annual festivals or feasts following the rhythm of the agricultural season viz., *Pawl Kut*, *Chapchar Kut* and *Mim Kut*.for more see Lloyd, J. Meirion. (1991). *History of the Church in Mizoram (Harvest in the Hills)*. Aizawl: Synod Publication Board.

⁷⁴ Ghosh, Sahana. (6/3/2018). *Cheers! Raise a Glass of Rice Beer for your Mental Well-Being*. Retrieved from <https://fit.thequint.com/chew-on-this/rice-beer-benefits-may-help-with-mental-wellbeing>

⁷⁵ Rucker, Michael. (11/10/2007). *Rice Wine Health Benefits and its effects on the Body*. Retrieved from <https://michaelrucker.com/functional-supplements/rice-wine-health-benefits/>.

⁷⁶ For more see Tribal Research Institute. (1983). *Zu in Mizo Society (Past and Present) Mizoram*. Aizawl, Mizoram: Government of Mizoram.

ideologies and histories of these cultures. In essence drinking itself is cultural; it is not so much an example of national and other cultural practices, in the sense that it is a performance of something that runs deeper in the national or ethnic makeup, as much as it is itself a bedrock of national and ethnic culture. As such it is an integral social, political and economic practice, a manifestation of the institutions, actions and values of cultures".⁷⁷ This runs true for the early Mizos, one can see the dictates centred on zu in the aged old culture. Understanding its essence help locate the meaning, actions and values held by the indigenous tribes. In this quest, one has to trace the existence of various liquor found in the society and the practices centred on its production.

Different types of zu were brewed and served depending on the occasions or festivities celebrated at the time. According to the Tribal Research Institute in their study of the history of liquor in Mizo society, published under the title 'Zu in Mizo Society (Past and Present)'⁷⁸ in the pre-colonial era *Zupui* and *Zufang* were found to be the most popular drinks brewed by the early Mizos. It is written, on the arrival of British in the Lushai Hills, zupui was the most popular drink (consumed on festivities and other special occasions) which was made from husked rice and at times from millets, maize and from the kernels of a species of oak.⁷⁹ Known as the communal drink, it was mostly made from steamed, fermented or unfermented rice, with less potency than the spirited drink *rakzu* and a little more potent than the *zufang*.⁸⁰ "Zupui made of rice were of two types namely '*Hranden*' and '*Vaizu*' of which the latter was common and the former was brewed occasionally when a large quantity of zu was needed for performing *Chawng* ceremony".⁸¹

The brewing of beer for festivities and occasions invited mobilization of the younger section of the community well in advance. They husked rice in preparation for the upcoming feast and one must know that for mass consumption, large quantity

⁷⁷ Wilson, Thomas M. (2005). *Dinking Cultures Alcohol and Identity*. New York: Berg. P. 4. In Wilson, Thomas M. (Ed.), *Drinking Cultures: Sites and Practices in the Production and Expression of Identity*. p.3

⁷⁸ For more see the Tribal Research Institute. (1983). *Zu in Mizo Society (Past and Present)* Mizoram. Aizawl, Mizoram: Government of Mizoram. p. 36-37

⁷⁹ Ibid. p.3

⁸⁰ Lorrain, op.cit. p.576

⁸¹ Ibid. p. 3-10. The traditional *Chawng* ceremony was the first step of the series of sacrifices with feast and dances to ensure entrance to the primitive Mizo notion of paradise.

of zupui was then prepared from the smaller fragmented rice grains they husked. However, the popularity of this drink was then replaced by the *tin zu* in the later part of the British rule.

Despite the nomenclature assigned such as - zupui, zufang, rak zu, tin zu, other names have been conceived of the drink. This classification will be made for the sake of categorization. It is found that names have been attached to their drink based on the following:-

i) Named on the basis of ingredients used for the zu they brewed: The local beer named the vai zu or zu vai was indicative of the ingredient used for the beer they made. *Vai* meaning husks of grain, bran, chaff or bran and chaff mixed together.⁸² Such other varieties of beer made were the *buhtun zu* – zu made from *buhtun*, a millet,⁸³ *mim zu* – zu made from a nut, job's tears, *coix lacryma*, locally called *thingse mim*,⁸⁴ *fangra zu* – zu made from a large edible bean⁸⁵ and *thingchang rah zu* – zu made from the acorn of a species of oak, *quercus corrugate*.⁸⁶

ii) Named on the basis of service performed or simply 'performative zu': Drink were also named on the basis of the work performed. The function performed was put as a prefix like the *hranden zu* was prepared from 'specially husked rice'. *Hran* or *hrang* meaning distinct, separate⁸⁷ and *den* meaning *to hammer, to pound*.⁸⁸ It was prepared from rice which had been 'specially set aside and pounded' for making the beer and not from the fragmented rice. Hence, the name *hranden zu*. *Sumdeng zu* was so called because it was a beer supplied to young men and maidens who were husking rice, *sum* meaning a large wooden mortar used for husking or pounding rice,⁸⁹ *deng* means to hammer or to pound.⁹⁰ Hence, the zu served to those who husked and pounded rice using the mortar was named *sumdeng zu*. We also find mention of other performative zu such as the *thingek zu*, (lit. *thing* – a tree, wood, firewood, fuel, a log⁹¹

⁸²Ibid. p. 539

⁸³ Ibid. p. 50

⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 315

⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 133

⁸⁶ Ibid. p. 465

⁸⁷ Ibid. p.179

⁸⁸ Ibid. p.112

⁸⁹ Ibid. p. 422

⁹⁰ Ibid. p. 112

⁹¹ Ibid. p. 464

ek – to split or cleave⁹²) *umla zu*, (lit. *um* – a gourd, bamboo for holding liquids,⁹³ *la* – to take⁹⁴) and *rualbacho zu* (lit. *rual* – a herd, a flock,⁹⁵ *ba* – edible arum bulbs,⁹⁶ *cho* – to stir, to unearth⁹⁷).

These performative types of *zu* were labelled ‘special’ since it was served in lieu of the services performed. Youths; young men and maiden were not allowed to casually drink. The communitarian society did not condone casual consumption for commoners.⁹⁸ So, these ‘performative *zu*’ indicates that serving drinks in the traditional society was customary, essential and purposive. It played a functional and quintessential role in binding them together, thus, forming a large part of their socio-cultural identity.

The most popular drink found back then was the *zu fang*, made from *buhtun*, *mim*,⁹⁹ *vaimin* (Indian corn, maize¹⁰⁰), *kawnglawng* or *fazu* (a glutinous rice¹⁰¹). The highest quality *zu* considered was the *zu fang* made from steamed rice sprinkled with yeast.¹⁰² It was consumed more like a refreshing beverage to quench one’s thirst. It was not a potent drink so it was hardly counted as *zu* and was considered a suitable drink for women and children as well.

Besides *zupui* and *zu fang* another popular however, exclusive drink found in the traditional society was the *rakzu*. It was a strong, spirited, intoxicating drink that was occasionally consumed only by the Chiefs and his elders. A distilled drink comparable to whisky, brandy, rum,¹⁰³ this drink was out of reach for the common people. Drink such as *rakzu* signified the hierarchical divide in the traditional society. However, in the post-colonial era, by 1950, as society progressed and became more modern, the dividing line between the elite in the society viz., the Chiefs and the Lal Upa became

⁹² Ibid. p.120

⁹³ Ibid. p. 537

⁹⁴ Ibid. p. 279

⁹⁵ Ibid. p. 392

⁹⁶ Ibid. p. 25

⁹⁷ Ibid. p. 64

⁹⁸ Hluna, Prof. J.V., (retd. Head, Department of History, Pachhunga University College) personal communication, 4/11/2020

⁹⁹ Tribal Research Institute, op.cit., p. 5

¹⁰⁰ Lorrain, op.cit., p. 540

¹⁰¹ Ibid. p 238 & 134

¹⁰² Tribal Research Institute. (1983). *Op cit.* p. 7

¹⁰³ Lorrain, op.cit., p. 374

thinner, the drink once considered exclusive to ‘them’ became more accessible and more common for the ‘others’ as well.

The least potent drink that comes under this classification was *zulawm*. A drink made by boys for their consumption and often brewed by a group of girls for sale, the proceeds of the sale was then equally divided among them.¹⁰⁴ It was basically drunk during festivities, once a year by the young (on a festive occasion), the ingredients was either a *mim* or *buh* (lit. rice). The making of *zulawm* evoked a tradition of “young boys collecting fermented grain or unhusked rice from house to house for the purpose of converting into beer, as the Lushai boys do once a year. They go in a company into each porch by turn and demand the above by chanting the *mim-pawng tlawh hla* (a ditty) and stamping their feet. This ditty concludes with a blessing which is chanted to those who comply with their demands or with a curse which is chanted to those who refuse.”¹⁰⁵ As requested by the boys, the collected *mim* or *buh* would then be brewed by village women they were well acquainted with. Once the beer was ready, the boys drank them with contentment, with a sense of being able to do what the men could do.¹⁰⁶

It can be seen that the traditional society positively endorsed brewing of *zu*. However, they strictly regulated its consumption. Back then, it signified something much more so than it actually does in the modern society. A signifier of culture; of the traditional Mizo society; of a social divide; of the communitarian spirit, the making of which mobilised the entire community. Though being a society with a deep love and appreciation for the beer they brewed, drunkenness was never endorsed and was to be avoided at all cost. Drunkards were despised and scorned.¹⁰⁷ The Mizo tradition expected young men to abstain from drinking and for those that did consume, the matter was taken up at *Zawlbuk*, where they were disciplined. The only time young men and women were permitted to drink was during their *kut* festivities and *Chawng*

¹⁰⁴ Tribal Research Institute, op.cit., p. 9

¹⁰⁵ Lorrain, op.cit., p. 315.

¹⁰⁶ Tribal Research Institute, op.cit., p. 10

¹⁰⁷ Hluna, Prof. J.V., (retired. Head, Department of History, Pachhunga University College) personal communication, 4/11/2020.

*chen*¹⁰⁸ occasions. On such occasional merriments, young men and maidens sat together, sang songs and performed the traditional dances while they all judiciously sipped zu from one small cup.¹⁰⁹ However, there was one exception, the village *tlangau*¹¹⁰ could drink as much as he wanted; highest consideration was given to him since he was perceived as ‘*mi pangai ai a hniam deuh*’ (literally translated as below average. The tlangau’s mental fecundity and profession was considered somewhat below average).

A different type of zu introduced during the colonial period was known as the *tin zu*. It was introduced to the locals by the wives of the Gurkha sepoy who lived within the military cantonment around 1911. The Gurkha wives used kerosene or ghee tins for brewing zu hence derived the name *tin zu*.¹¹¹ Made from husked rice without the chaff it gained popularity during the latter part of the colonial rule from 1947 to 1967.¹¹² However, this drink whose origin was not local, was not distributed and consumed by the people during festivities. It was rather commercially sold by illicit liquor sellers.¹¹³

The cultural, social, economic and political transitioning society gradually came to know of the Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL). It was introduced in the Lushai Hills with the arrival of the colonial power in the indigenous land. It was known but hardly consumed due to its limited supply. The import of foreign liquor from neighbouring districts and states was done during the late 60’s by some profiteers. They sold them for a two or threefold profit. But such import was discontinued since the Government of Mizoram issued permits to a few for selling foreign liquor during 1973 to 1976.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁸ James Herbert. Lorrain explains “*Chawng was the name of a sacrifice and three days feast and dancing given by a single individual or a family – the first of a series of sacrifices and feasts to ensure entrance to the Lushai Paradise.*” And Chawng Chen as “*to join or take part in a chawng feast and festival*” in Lorrain, James Herbert. p.65

¹⁰⁹ Lalthlangliana, B., & Laitanga, C., Lalchungnunga., Hluna, J.V., & Lalsangliana, F. (1988). *Mizo Hnam Zia Leh Khawtlang Nun Siam Thatna*. Aizawl: Synod Publication Board. p. 48

¹¹⁰ Tlangau was the town crier, a herald whose duty was to make known the orders of the Chief in Lorrain, James Herbert. p. 511

¹¹¹ Lorrain, op.cit., p. 504

¹¹² Tribal Research Institute, op.cit., p. 48

¹¹³ Ibid. p. 36

¹¹⁴ Tribal Research Institute, op.cit., pp. 48 & 49

The changing landscape of the Mizo society shed its traditional practices with the introduction of new elements in the post British era. The traditional drink and its regulated drinking customs gradually came to be replaced by more potent drinks, devoid of social hierarchy as to who drank what and when. The traditional society which held dearly its drinking norms enabled the early Mizos to embrace their drink positively. This slowly shifted to a more negative charge with a shift in source of authority, dissipating cultural drinking practices, the norms surrounding its brewing and most important of all the adoption of a new religion and its dictates viz., the embrace of Christianity.

C. Indigenizing liquor within the larger framework of Mizo cultural life

A recollection of the old Mizo society was one which was simple, with almost all abled body engaged in agriculture with the hope of producing enough rice to last them a year. Topography of the Lushai Hills consisted of Villages scattered far apart, separated by narrow unforgiving paths and inhabitant by a few peoples administered by a Village Chief. The strength of a village depended on the capability of the Chief and his warriors since villages constantly raided each other. One had to be very capable in order to survive and flourish. However, each village followed a similar pattern of social setup, governed by a similar set of social norms forming a tightly knit collective society who endorsed and instilled in them ‘others over self’ as the highest form of social value.

C.1. Contextualizing the traditional set up

A typical set up of a Mizo village consisted of the i) *Lal* or *Lalpa* (the Village Chief)¹¹⁵ the owner of all the land, an authoritarian figure whose word was law, ii) *Lal Upa* the Chief’s council of elders, iii) *Ramhual* the principal men of the village, favoured by the Chief who was given the honour of choosing their patch for cultivation prior to everyone else’s choosing, iv) *Thirdeng* the village blacksmith, v) *Tlangau* the village crier, a herald whose duty was to make known the orders of the Chief, vi)

¹¹⁵ Lalthangliana, B. (2016 Revised & Enlarged). *Mizo Chanchin (A Brief Account of Mizo History)*. Aizawl: B. Lalthangliana. pp. 149-155

Sadawt the village priest who performed all ceremonial functions on festivities and occasions, vii) *Bawlpu* the village priest who catered the ill and performed exorcism to pacify evil spirits, viii) *Valupa* who played a very important administrative role in the welfare of young men at *Zawlbuk*, the honour was neither bestowed by the Chief nor elected by the people, he was admired by all as he rose to rank based on his valour and social services provided to the community.

The common people were the ‘subjects’ of the Chief, they found their identity in their Chief who gave them protection and they gave him various taxes in return for the protection – they gave taxes like i) *Fathang*, one to three baskets of paddy tax given to the Chief, ii) *Ramhual*, the Chief appropriated more tax from them, they gave three to six loads of paddy iii) *Sachhiah*, the meat tax iv) *Khuai leh Sangha chhiah*, the bees and fish tax v) *Sekawt hawn man*, the sale of a gayal required the submission of two rupees to the Chief vi) *Chi Chhiah*,¹¹⁶ the salt tax. There existed the *Zawlbuk* otherwise known as the bachelor’s dormitory where all the unmarried men slept. It was a way of maintaining vigilance of the needs of the community under the supervision of the Valupa. It was an institution vital to the functioning of the Mizo village and it served various purposes – a place where young men were instilled values of *tlawmngaihna*, a club house for recreation, a boarding house where men were taught social education and values, a hub for weary travellers; a safety inn and a place where young boys learnt the art of hunting, dancing, singing and wrestling from the young bachelors.¹¹⁷ It was also a place where the issue of young men who drank was discussed and disciplined.¹¹⁸ They established a communitarian society where authority was centralized and work distributed, where values such as self- sacrifice and valour was celebrated, where subjects worked hard together in harmony, where the aim was to be self-sufficient and with a deep sense of belonging they looked out for one another.

¹¹⁶ Parry, ICS, N.E. (1976). *A Monograph on Lushai Customs and Ceremonies*. Aizawl: Firma KLM Private Limited. pp. 1-17.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. p. 21 & 22

¹¹⁸ Lalthlangliana, B., & Laitanga, C., Lalchungnunga., Hluna, J.V., & Lalsangliana, F. (1988). *Mizo Hnam Zia Leh Khawtlang Nun Siam Thatna*. Aizawl: Synod Publication Board. p. 48

C.2. Understanding the dictates of celebrations and rituals

Significant markers of the early Mizo tradition would be their cultural festivities, dictates of customary occasions and their rituals: the times of merriment enjoyed on 1) festivities like the *Pawl Kut*, *Mim Kut* and *Chapchar Kut*, ii) other special occasions such as *Sa ai*, *In then*, *Rallu ai*, *Khuangchawi*, *Sechhum*, *Chawng* rituals to ward off evil spirits who were believed to cause illnesses etc. and iii) annual sacrificial days such as *Kawngpui siam* and *Fano dawi*. As mentioned earlier under the various classification of zu, these celebrations mobilised the entire community into giving their services for preparation of the upcoming feast. It was customary for all to contribute labour for the successful celebration of a cause. Such occasions might be different but a constant remain, it dictated the preparation of the *zupui* well in advance. Morris writes “Smoking, drinking and feasting comprise the supreme delights of the Lushai. Every circumstances – birth, death, burial, marriage, sowing, weeding and reaping – is made the occasion for drinking.”¹¹⁹ The centeredness and cultural role played by zu in the by gone era can be better understood by elaborating the occasions for which it was consumed. Through these celebrations we explore the dictates of drinking occasions. Borrowing the works of the Tribal Research Institute, the subject at hand is as expanded and elaborated below -

i) *Kut* celebrations

Three annual festivals were celebrated called *Kut* – *Pawl Kut*, *Chapchar Kut* and *Mim Kut*. According to J.M Lloyd festivities or feasts “followed the rhythm of the agricultural seasons. It was these that involved the sacrifices which were made by the village *sadawt*. Although these festivals were not strictly religious festivals a kind of religious aura attached to them and there were many taboos to be observed, and many semi-sacred rites and customs to be performed. Zu always figured largely in these events. This was rice-beer of various degrees of potency”.¹²⁰ N.E. Parry also mention the celebration of *kut* as one with a heavy involvement of zu consumption, he writes

¹¹⁹ Morris, John Hughes. (1930). *The Story of Our Foreign Mission*. Aizawl: Synod Publication Board. p. 79

¹²⁰ Lloyd, J. Meirion. (1991). *History of the Church in Mizoram (Harvest in the Hills)*. Aizawl: Synod Publication Board. p. 11

“...on the appointed day the Lusheis all killed pig, drink zu and have a feast. The next day the Lutawis¹²¹ in the village do the same. The next day is known as the kut zan and all the people gather round the village lungdawh,¹²² a stone platform put up as a memorial to the dead, add plates of meat, rice, eggs and more are brought out and people give tit bits to their friends to eat and all drink zu. The next day is known as the zupuini which is passed in drinking zu”.¹²³ This certainly shows the integrated the consumption of liquor was in their festivities, it would have certainly liven up their festive mood.

In December, Pawl Kut celebration takes place to celebrate the completion of harvest.¹²⁴ It can be interpreted as a thanksgiving festival for the harvest they have had. For the event, “pigs are killed and zu is drunk and the duration of the feast depends on the amount of zu available”.¹²⁵ J.M. Lloyd writes “To feast to their hearts content was what everyone aimed during Pawl Kut, and there would be zu in abundance at other times zu-drinking would be controlled by the Chief and his elders”.¹²⁶ It was on these occasions, young men and maidens were permitted to drink zu which otherwise is prohibited by the Chief and the elders.¹²⁷ The Chief would never run out of zu since he was given rice tax (fathang) by his subjects, which he made use of to have abundant stock of zu for these festivities.¹²⁸ This shows that the availability of liquor decides the longevity of a harvest celebration. A celebration of a years worth of hard arduous work in the field, signifying the time of adundance of rice to brew their local drink.

Come spring, around March, when land for the next sowing had been cleared and heavy handed work had been completed, a three day festivity followed known as *Chapchar Kut*. The Tribal Research Institute writes of the duration of the celebration may last for more than three days depending on the abundance or quantity of the rice they had for the feast. Zupui for the rice beer was brewed well in advance by the

¹²¹ J. H. Lorrain explains the Lutawi as those belonging to the lower class of the Lushai or Lusei tribe in Lorrain, op.cit., p. 304

¹²² Lungdawh is a platform erected in memory of the dead; a memorial platform in ibid., p. 302

¹²³ Parry, op.cit., p.90

¹²⁴ Lloyd, op.cit., p. 11

¹²⁵ Parry, op.cit., p.90

¹²⁶ Meirion, op.cit. p. 12

¹²⁷ Ibid. p. 12

¹²⁸ Ibid. p. 12

villagers. Young men, maidens and even children collected and prepared their respective *zulawm*. On this day, it was customary for the Mizos to perform the traditional *Chai*¹²⁹ dance. Those who did not sing, dance and consumed *zu* throughout the celebration were not allowed to perform the *Chai* dance in the ensuing days. This ensured the participation of all, their tendency to be inclusive. “The next day is known as the *zuthing chawini* and more *zu* is drunk and they continue to drink *zu* until the supply runs out”.¹³⁰

The other festival celebrated was the *Mim Kut* which was done so around September after the harvest of maize, this was done so in remembrance of or mourning the dead. “In houses in which someone had died during the year *zu* is drunk.”¹³¹ These festivities according to Lloyd gave release to a people whose lives were generally harsh and monotonous. The festival lasted for two or three days. Children also prepared *zulawm* and drank it on the occasion of this festival.¹³²

These festivities invited the participation of the young and old into singing and dancing accompanied by the consumption of *zu*. Young men and maidens sat close to one another forming a circle and performing the traditional *Chai* dance. They sat around the man who distributed *zu* to the performers and those that played the traditional instruments who led the tempo of the *Chai* rhythm. The merriment of these festivities centred on singing, dancing, having meat to eat and abundant *zu* to drink.

It is here, that one makes a connection of how the Mizos go about with their celebration. They love their communal get together, this nature of ‘continuity of celebration until the supply of their drink runs out’ can also be seen in the modern world. For example, in the case of *Krismas ruai theh* or Christmas feasts organized by different Church denominations or *Kohhran*, celebrations often find continuity in many small *Kohhran* especially in the rural areas. Some celebrations stretch for more than three days till the supply of food runs out. This celebration continuity is very dependent on i) the number of members - The larger the members, the less likely they

¹²⁹ J. H. Lorrain defines *Chai* as “the name of a dance in which young men and young women formed a circle round a man who serves out beer, and other who play a drum and beat the horn of a gayal etc., to engage in the above dance” In James Herbert Lorrain. p. 54

¹³⁰ Parry, op.cit., p.90

¹³¹ Ibid. Parry ICS, N.E. p.91

¹³² Zawla, K. (1976). *Mizo Pi Pute leh an Thlahte Chanchin*. Aizawl: Zawla. P. 56

will continue celebrating. This continuity mostly takes place in a small church denominations and ii) the spiritual state of the members – The spiritual status of the members also determine the length of celebration. If a church is in a state of *Kohhran hlim* (a church in a state of spiritual revival; filled with the Holy Spirit) the food for feasts continue to flow in from the members thus, ensuring the celebration continuity for days. The members get together and sing their praises to God and eat together in harmony. The difference remains that these festive Kuts are no long celebrated vigorously in the modern world, as converts were taught to ‘disassociate themselves’ from such celebrations. True to their new faith, the Christians focus of celebrations shifted to Krismas ruai theh and Kumthar ruai theh (New Year feast). Festive celebrations of the Mizos are no longer accompanied by liquor.

ii) Other occasions

Besides festive drinking, there also existed other forms of drinking in the Mizo social customs. As Thomas M. Wilson emphasized the need to view “drinking as an act of identification, of differentiation and integration, and of the projection of homogeneity and heterogeneity, particularly in the social arenas of ethnicity and national identity. Drinking practices are active elements in individual and group identifications, and the sites where drinking takes place, the locales of regular and celebrated drinking, are places where meanings are made, shared, disputed and reproduced, where identities take shape, flourish and change.”¹³³ So far, one has seen only the collective facet of the Mizo drink culture, a further exploration of the social custom will further help locate a deeper meaning to the zu brewed by the early Mizos. The other occasions highlighting the centrality of zu is as elaborated below:

- a) In the olden days, men in the village often went hunting for wild animals. To have on display numerous counts of animal heads killed in a hunt signified valour and courage of the hunter. Such men were highly respected and admired in the

¹³³ Wilson, Thomas M. (Ed.) (2005). *Dinking Cultures Alcohol and Identity*. New York: Berg in *Drinking Cultures Sites and Practices in the Production and Expression of Identity* in Wilson. Thomas M. p. 26

community. On a successful hunt, the hunter would invite his friends and neighbours to celebrate his kill. This auspicious kill will then be ceremoniously celebrated in a ceremony known as ‘*sa lu men*’.¹³⁴ This celebration is accompanied by at least one pot of beer, the flesh of the animal’s head that was killed and a fowl. This was followed by the performance of ‘*sa aih*’ ceremony (also known as ‘*ai*’¹³⁵ or ‘*aih*’) the following day or a few days later. This was done in preparation for the afterlife; to put the spirit of the animal killed under his control in the after life. They believed that the spirit of the animal would accompany the hunter in the after-life on his path to *Pialral*.¹³⁶ A sacrifice had to be made of either a mithun (other wise known as a Gayal) or a goat or a pig for the *sa aih* ceremony performed by the hunter. The villagers enjoyed this with *zu* and feast. The ceremony was concluded with the performance of a ritual called ‘*salu chhuan*’¹³⁷ or ‘*salu thui phuh*’¹³⁸ performed by the village priest. This ritual was done by the spraying of beer out of the mouth upon the head of an animal killed, after which it could be hung on the verandah wall with other trophies.

- b) Men at most times went on long raiding expedition and hunts far removed from their homes for big prey like elephants, tigers and more. On their return, they were entitled to a day of rest which was known as *hahchawlh ni* (lit. day of rest). On such days they drank *hahchawlh zu*. The name *hahchawlh zu* was symbolic of the reason why they drank; a relaxing drink they were entitled to after days of hard work. Again, the people were accustomed to drinking *hahzu* (lit. *hah* meaning tired, fatigue) after having worked very hard clearing the forest land for *jhums* and the last weeding day.

¹³⁴ J.H. Lorrain provides an explanation for ‘*sa lu men*’ as to sit up at night with the head of the animal killed in the chase. Usually accompanied by a feast consisting of at least one pot of beer, the flesh of the animal’s head itself, and a fowl. In Lorrain, op.cit., p. 402

¹³⁵ *Ai* refers to a sacrifice of domestic animal and perform a ceremony over or for (a wild creature killed in hunting or foe killed in fighting). This is done with a view to getting the spirit of the slain into the power of the slayer after death. It was also done to protect him from evil consequences during his life. In Lorrain, James Herbert. p. 4

¹³⁶ Lloyd, op.cit., p. 15

¹³⁷ *Salu chhuan* lit. Hoisting the head of the animal. In Shakespear, J. (1975) *The Lushei Kuki Clans. Part I*. Aizawl: Tribal Research Institute. p. 78

¹³⁸ *Salu thui phuh* lit. Spraying beer out of mouth upon the head of the animal and after which the head could be hung on the verandah wall with other trophies. In Lorrain, op.cit., p. 402

- c) Happy occasions such as marriage, birth was celebrated with drinking zu and on grave times like death of a family, friends and relatives drowned their sorrow in all the zu they could get their hands on.¹³⁹
- d) On the passing of a family member, ‘*inthian*’ or ‘*in then*’ ceremony took place. It marked the end of the dead persons spirits stay in its old home and the beginning of its journey to ‘*mithi khua*’. In then ceremony usually took place five to nine weeks counting from the day of a person’s passing when his/her spirit was believed to leave his/her earthly home thus, beginning the journey to mithi khua. The ceremony consisted of throwing away the basket in which the offerings to the spirit were made during its stay at home. This was always accompanied by a beer drink and at times the killing of a fowl.¹⁴⁰
- e) The early Mizos were known as head hunters. The return of menfolk from successful raiding expedition with the head(s) of their enemies (taken as trophies) was celebrated with a dance known as ‘*rallu lam*’. The villagers spent this day dancing and shouting the warriors cry, this custom was accompanied by consumption of zu. The next day or a few days after the ceremony, the one who had taken the head(s) performed the *ai* ceremony called *rallu aih* so that the spirit(s) of the killed might become their faithful slave(s) in the afterlife. This ceremony was enjoyed with zu and feast.
- f) On the eve of harvest, once completed, the *buh ai* ceremony was performed by a wealthy person who had an exceptionally good harvest. A communal feast was prepared to celebrate a good harvest. A crop usually rice, less than a hundred basket full was deemed not worthy of this ceremony (a basket could contain about 50 kgs of rice). The feast was prepared with the meat of a pig or a mithun, rooster accompanied with zu. A special pot of zu prepared on the platform in front of the house would be drunk by only those who performed the *buh ai* ceremony and drinking it was considered ‘*thianglo*’ or forbidden for the rest.¹⁴¹ The person who performed the *buh ai* ceremony last was entitled to enjoy the first of the special

¹³⁹ Shakespear, op. cit., p. 37

¹⁴⁰ Lorrain, J.H. (2008 reprint). *Dictionary of the Lushai Language*. . Kolkata: The Asiatic Society. p. 460

¹⁴¹ *ibid* p. 460

drink. There was an ordinary zu for others to drink and if it was not all finished on the first day the guests returned the next day.¹⁴²

- g) *Khuangchawi* ceremony was performed to obtain the coveted title of being a *Thangchhuah*. It consisted a series of ceremony which was normally performed by a well to do family since it required a lot of animal sacrifices and pots of beer for the feast. Upon completion of the entire series of ceremonies, the coveted *Thangchhuahpa* or *Thangchhuahnu* (*pa* is to refer a man *nu* is used to refer a woman) title would then be bestowed to the performer; this title ensured his place at Pialral. The attainment of this title was everyone's goal but attained only by a few.

Chawn or *Chawng* or *Chawngfang* was the earlier step performed to initiate a series of sacrifices with feasts required for the *Khuangchawi* ceremony. Custom dictated the sacrifice of three pigs, specifically one female pig and two male pigs. The female pig for the consumption of children; pork porridge was made for them. The specificity of the sacrifice is rooted in their tradition and religious beliefs.¹⁴³ It also required at least 40 ngan(s)¹⁴⁴ (from here forth will be mentioned as a pot) of rice beer depending on the population of village, 40 ngans can be considered insufficient.¹⁴⁵ In preparation of this ceremonial zu, the performer of the Chawng ceremony known as *Chawngpa* or *Chawngnu* had to invite the assistance of young boys and girls for pounding rice. Fourteen pots of zu had to be given to those young people for their services.

Tradition dictated that the eldest sister of the *Chawngpa* or *Chawngnu* to contribute at least six pots of zu for the young people. On the first night young people enjoyed *sumdeng zu* (seven pots of zu) at the residence of the host. Friends and relatives contributed pots of rice beer which accumulates to more than hundred pots of rice beer for the occasion. The first drink of *sumdeng zu* was offered to honour the bravest, most altruistic of them all; most '*tlawmngai*' young man. This

¹⁴² Shakespear, J. (1975). *The Lushei Kuki Clans. Part I*. Aizawl: Tribal Research Institute. p. 91

¹⁴³ Saiaithanga, Rev. (1981). *Mizo Sakhua*. Aizawl: Maranatha Print Press. pp. 24 -25

¹⁴⁴ Ngan is a brass pot with a hole in the bottom. It was used as a distillery pot for brewing local zu. It was also used as a tool to steam local delicacies made from sticky rice.

¹⁴⁵ Zaliana. (1983). *Mizo Sakhua Kumpinu Rorel Hma*. Aizawl: Tribal Research Institute. p. 25

selection was made by the *val upa(s)*. The rest could drink only after the honorary cup had been drunk.¹⁴⁶ The selected *tlawmngai* man was to receive and drink rice beer from the coveted *nopui* (literally translated as the 'Big Cup'). To be singlehandedly picked to receive the honorary *nopui* for his virtuous act of selflessness, kindness and helpfulness was the wish of every young men. Such was the symbolism of the drink in the olden days. It was tradition for the boys and girls to sing and dance throughout the night. The main event ensued the following day; the sacrificial day. Pigs were killed and the entire day was passed in merriment, feasting accompanied with the consumption of *zu*. Completion of this task permits the Chawng to make a platform at the side of his home called *luhkapui*¹⁴⁷ the making of such was not allowed for a common man.¹⁴⁸

The following ceremony performed was the *Sedawi* ceremony which required the sacrifice of a young male mithun. As done so in the Chawng ceremony, the performer invited the young to pound paddy mainly for the preparation of rice beer. On the eve of the sacrifice, all young men and maidens were engaged to collect and carry firewood. *Sumdeng zu* was given by the Chawngpa or Chawngnu for their services to promoted levity. Again, at night, the first drink of the *sumdeng zu* was offered to honour the *tlawmngai* young man only after which the rest could start drinking.¹⁴⁹ The following day, the mithun was sacrificed with the consumption of rice beer, the rice beer required was double to that of the Chawng ceremony. Other animals like pigs, goats, fowl and more were also sacrificed which had their own significance in the religious ceremony.

Sedawi was followed by the *Sekhuang* ceremony which required the sacrifice of a full grown male mithun along with a pig, goat, fowl etc. Similar to other steps of the *Khuangchawi* sacrifices, firewood was collected by young boys and girls. *Thingek zu* was provided for them and a separate rice beer was provided for the group who helped repair the house of the performer. The sacrifice required the

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. p.25

¹⁴⁷ *Luhkapui* is a platform built at the side of the *luhka* (a platform in the front of the platform of a Lushai House) in Lorrain, op.cit., p. 299

¹⁴⁸ Khiantge, Dr. Laltluangliana.(Ed.) (2015). *Fungki Bu Thar*. Aizawl: College Text Book (Mizo) Editorial Board (CTBEB) Publication. p. 51.

¹⁴⁹ Zaliana. (1983). *Mizo Sakhua Kumpinu Rorel Hma*. Aizawl: Tribal Research Institute. p. 81

utility of a large quantity of water, so, a group of people were engaged to collect bamboo for *tui um* (tui um or bamboo pipes; used for collecting water) from the jungle for fetching water, they too were served *umla zu*. Further, a group of ladies were engaged to collect arum bulbs (locally called *bal*) from the jhum land of the performer. It was cooked for the boys and girls to eat who were to dance overnight. To this group of ladies, *rualbacho zu* was supplied.¹⁵⁰ *Sumdeng zu* was then served to all the boys and girls who danced overnight on the eve of the main day. The most *thawmngai* young man was selected and honoured with the first cup of the *sumdeng zu*.

First day of the Sekhuang sacrifice was also regarded as *zupui ni* since a lot of their special brew was consumed on this day. At night, *mitthi rawp lam*¹⁵¹ ceremony was performed, the performers made effigies of their loved ones and placed them around and observed the occasion in their memory.¹⁵² They had abundant provision of rice beer which was drunk at night, it signified a drink with the loved ones that had passed. The next day was regarded as *zuthing ni* as the day was again spent drinking the left over zu (*thing* is translated as leftover, thus *zuthing* meaning *left over zu*). The third day known as *chawn do ni*, a sacrifice of a male pig was made which they feasted along with the drink of rice beer. This sacrifice marked the completion of the mandatory feasts required to provide by the Chawngpa and Chawngnu and was known as the *Sedawi*¹⁵³ sacrifice. Having fulfilled the provision of the feasts, the performer could modify his home by building an open window and wear a striped turban called *diar*.¹⁵⁴ These changes symbolised his status in the community.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid p. 100

¹⁵¹ *Mitthi rawp* is the name of a festival held in honour of one's ancestors and deceased near relatives in which their effigies are carried in a group in the village and are seated on the luhkapui (entrance of the house) platform and made to drink along with the living. These effigies are made so to keep the festival of the Mitthi rawp lam. In Lorrain, J.H. (2008 reprint). *Dictionary of the Lushai Language*. Calcutta. p. 319

¹⁵² Khiangte, op.cit., p. 55

¹⁵³ Sedawi was the name of two of the series of sacrificial public feasts given by aspirants for the distinction of thangchhuah in Lorrain, J.H. (2008 reprint). *Dictionary of the Lushai Language*. Calcutta. p. 412

¹⁵⁴ Khiangte, op.cit., p. 55

The final leg on the series of ceremonies conducted was the most prestigious called the *Khuangchawi* ceremony. Performance of this ceremony afforded the performer the coveted title ‘*Thangchhuah*’. Preparation for this ceremony began three months in advance, October was the preferred month for *Khuangchawi*, hence, October is marked as *Khuangchawi thla* by the Mizos.¹⁵⁵ It was a grand affair conjuring high expenditure, required large quantity of rice beer for provision of *thingek zu*, *umla zu*, *rualbacho zu*. The proceedings of the drink can be said to be the same as that of *Sekhuang* ceremony. The ceremony demanded the sacrifice of two male mithun, a female mithun and two male pigs. On the day of repairing the house separate rice beer was served and on the eve of the sacrifice, *sumdeng zu* was served to the young participants who sang and danced the entire night. Honouring of the best young man was made with the offering of the first cup of the *sumdeng zu*.

As seen from above, drinking followed a certain pattern with a day designated by the freshness of the special brew as mentioned under the *Sekhuang* ceremony; the main event labelled *zupui ni* implying a drink of a fresh brew followed by the *zuthing ni*, a drink of the leftover brew. The stipulated quantity of *zu* required for the ceremony might exceed depending on the affluence of the performer of the ceremony. Having completed the ceremony, the performer and his wife will then be known as ‘*thangchhuahpa*’ and ‘*thangchhuahnu*’. This new elevated social status permitted them to make not just a window but also *bah zar*.¹⁵⁶ It afforded the *thangchhuahpa* and *thangchhuahnu* to wear striped clothes and striped turbans decorated with *vakul chang* (a plume made of a long tail feather of a *bhimraj*). They believed that the performance of this ceremony guaranteed the *thangchhuahpa* and *thangchhuahnu* entry to *pialral*. Wherever they went, they commanded respect and were honoured. These prestigious modifications made them distinguished and highly respectable in the community.

¹⁵⁵ Zaliana. (1983). *Mizo Sakhua Kumpinu Rorel Hma*. Tribal Research Institute: Aizawl. p. 74

¹⁵⁶ *Bah zar* was a dias, an enclosed verandah with a raised floor at the back of a Lushai house. In Lorrain, op.cit., p. 460

- h) In the olden days the intentional or unintentional kill of a gibbon locally known as *hahuk* required the performance of *ai* ceremony and thus known as *hahuk ai* for the hunter to rid himself of the spirit of the gibbon; for fear of being haunted by the spirit and to save himself from being transformed to a gibbon.¹⁵⁷ This ceremony required the sacrifice of a pig and twenty small pots of rice beer. According to their custom, special *ai* ceremony was required because of the superstition connected with the killing of such animals.¹⁵⁸
- i) Special brew was consumed on days such as warming the Chief's house and Zawlbuk,¹⁵⁹
- j) They drank on the occasion of erecting stone platform known as *lungdawh* in memory of the departed,
- k) They also drank on occasion of feasts without any sacrificial or religious intent such occasion were locally known as *sapawk*.¹⁶⁰
- l) The early Mizos would invite friends and neighbours when they had important guest(s) from a different village or place. It was customary to serve beer in honour of the guest, this was known as '*khual tha zu zuk*', (lit. *khual* as guest, *tha* as good, *zuk*¹⁶¹ as to drink beer; describing the act of sucking the beer through a tube from the beer pot served in honour of the guest) this act symbolized their joy and hospitality.
- m) Also when settling disputes, the Chiefs court would decide at times a fine of '*zu bel khat*'¹⁶² (lit. one pot of zu).

¹⁵⁷ The gibbon according to Mizo myth is regarded to be cursed. It was during the *thimzing* a period of great darkness which lasted for seven days and nights, many dreadful things was said to have occurred in the darkness. It was also believed that a man and a wife were transformed to a gibbon. Hence, the belief of the said animal to be cursed and its killing was to be followed by the *ai* ceremony.

¹⁵⁸ Shakespear, J. (1975). *The Lushei Kuki Clans. Part I*. Aizawl: Tribal Research Institute. p. 80

¹⁵⁹ Note: Zawlbuk was known as the Bachelors Dormitory, a large house where nights were spent by young men. They would gather and were imparted knowledge by village elders. It was an educational institution where they were taught and learnt the ways of life. Dr. Lalzama in his book "*Mizo Language and Literature*" had written that Zawlbuk sowed the seed of *tlawmngaihna* through all the training received there.

¹⁶⁰ Lorrain, op.cit., p. 404

¹⁶¹ Ibid. p. 576

¹⁶² Lalthangliana, op.cit., p. 154

n) It is also known that the early Mizos as cultivators broke their backs tirelessly working in their cultivated land and they at times consumed *hah zu* (lit. *hah* as tired, fatigued) for physical relief.

iii) Annual sacrificial days

The old culture dictated the annual performance of two sacrificial days known as *kawngpui siam* and *fano dawi*. The sacrificial ceremony observed by the entire village was known as *kawngpui siam*. It was so performed to ensure prosperity of the village especially in the sphere of hunting and trapping wild, for protection from enemies, raiders and animals. The ceremony was performed on the main path just outside the southern entrance to the village by the Chief's Priest with some elders. This was done a few days before the Chapchar Kut celebration. *Zu* was placed in a bamboo tube known as *tui um* and in a gourd known as *peng*. It was consumed on the spot with meat of the animal sacrificed except for the parts offered to the spirits known as *serh*. No one was granted entry (to strangers or visitors) nor allowed to go out from their homes.

Other sacrifice observed for the welfare of the village was *fano dawi* ceremony. Performed for the protection of their paddy from destruction by animals and birds also, for a good harvest. It was usually performed in the month of July, Shakespear recounts, "the Chief prepares *zu* in his house. Puithiam and two upas¹⁶³ go just outside the village on the road to the *jhum* and sacrifice a cock, and its wings are hung on either side of the road and the *serh* are placed in the middle of the road".¹⁶⁴ On this day the *fano dawi zu* was specially brewed for the ceremony and consumed by the villagers. No one was allowed to go out of the village except to carry water. Husking of rice was also strictly prohibited. If one violated this, one was fined a pot of beer.¹⁶⁵

From the above, it is seen that celebration of Kut festivities in the bygone era was made merrier with the consumption of *zu*. It throws light to the fundamental role it played in their social construct. It can be regarded as vital to the functioning of their

¹⁶³ The Chiefs Elders are referred to as Upas. Singlarly called Upa and collectively known as Upas.

¹⁶⁴ Shakespear, J. (1975) *The Lushei Kuki Clans. Part I*. Aizawl: Tribal Research Institute. p 80

¹⁶⁵ Hrangthiauva & Lalchungnunga. (1978). *Mizo Chanchin*. Aizawl: Lalrinliana & Sons. p. 31

custom and culture. It is seen as a mobilizing factor for hnatlang or voluntary social action; a customary drink served as a special treat for the social services performed like the *sumdeng zu*, *thing ek zu*, *umla zu*, *rualbacho zu*; a fine for dispute settlement; an incentive for hard work like the *hahchawlh zu* or *hah zu*; an incentive for altruism, the first drink served in Nopui; vital for ritual and ceremonial purposes. The purposiveness of their drink promoted cohesion and homogeneity thereby giving it a greater meaning.

Zu also represented a differentiating factor. The spirited drinks of highest potency consumed only by the Chief and his elders like the *rakzu*. The only people allowed to drink on a regular basis were the Chief and his elders while discussing administrative agenda. *Zulawm* which had next to none potency being consumed by children and even womenfolk whereas *zupui* and *zufang* being available for all. Custom dictated the sanction of the beer drinks to the commoners; the subjects only on festivities and special occasions. It is often regarded that one's culture is dictated by the religion or in this case *sakhua* practised by the people. The animistic rituals done to pacify evil spirits required the utility of zu by the priests, thus making zu so much more than just a 'drink', it too represented a religious experience.

One must also note that consumption of liquor is seen regulated; its time and place dictated by custom. Their culture did not permit casual drinking, unlike western societies. It is recounted that drunkenness was vehemently condemned in the olden days. R. Zuala who wrote of the early drink culture of the Mizos mentioned that the daily consumption of zu might be done by a few elderly but the young did so only during festivities: like on the eve of performing the *chai* and *chawng chen* occasions. For them to drink zu casually was considered shameful or a taboo. On occasions children were also permitted to drink zu called *Zulawm*¹⁶⁶ (a drink made from the contributed of a handful of rice by each child). However, they never did consume it in the vicinity of an elder out of respect. Abstinence was advocated for women, so they seldom drank, women who regularly did so were belittled, while in fact all drunkards

¹⁶⁶ Zuala.R (1985) Mizo Nunphung leh Zu. Aizawl: Zoeng. In Lalmingiana, Dr. C. (1992). *Zu Hi Zu leh a Kaihawnawih Thilte*. Aizawl: Synod Publication Board. p.46

were belittled. Only women of high social standing like the wife of a *Lal Khawnbawl* or the Chief's Councilmen were permitted a casual drink.

If a person was found drunk on the streets or entered Zawlbuk on a drunken state, severe punishment was served. The fire lighting the Zawlbuk would be put out, with the darkness concealing the identity of the perpetrator, the drunkard would then be severely beaten and then would be carried home. For a person found drunk on the streets the saying goes "*Phungin kawmkarah a keuh*" meaning he was attacked by an evil spirit and would be carried home.

Drunkards were ostracised and considered unworthy of socializing with. The shame of being ostracised would even lead them to migrate to a different village. Society's attitude towards elderly drunks was a little more lenient. The shame of their drunken state would evoke an apology or an excuse from them, the old would announce "*Hei, in nu leh pa, mi hausa zarah kanlo rui a nih hi*" meaning I am drunk as I have indulged plenty on the abundant provisions of your affluent parents. An excuse predisposed to the abundant supply of zu by the affluent in the performance of ceremonies. However, they too were punished if one's drinking habit failed to exhibit signs of slowing down.¹⁶⁷ It can be said that strict scrutiny was what maintained public order despite the commonality of zu in the bygone era.

Thus, one can understand the factors which answers 'the why(s)' the early Mizos predominantly had a positive attitude towards zu in their communal society. Its presence all pervasive, a necessity for the fulfilment of their customs and rituals, its making and consumption a way of life and celebration. Forming a very important signifier of their Mizoness one can conclude that zu had been a necessary representation of the socio-cultural identity of the early Mizos.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. Pp.45-48

D. Advent of the British: the colonial power and the missionaries

The British believed that total subjugation of the people of India was possible through the propagation of Christianity and provision of education.¹⁶⁸ Edward Parry, Chairman and Charles Grant, Vice Chairman of the Court of Directors in their letter to the President of the Board of Control, in their support of the Evangelical Party argued “ifthey embrace our religion, they would have a new cause of attachment to us...which would give us better assurance of their fidelity.”¹⁶⁹ With 837 petitions from different missionaries and support from the Free Trade Merchants, the move to opening the door to India for evangelization at the Parliament in England was initiated by William Wilberforce.¹⁷⁰ This pressure resulted in the granting of the Charter of 1813. The Charter of 1813, clause XXXII allowed the propagation of Christianity and granted unrestricted entry of missionaries for the said purpose to India. The Charter of 1813 was a triumph of colonial-evangelical collaboration.¹⁷¹ Proselytization of Indians by the missionaries was not just about increasing the Christian population but also 'reclaiming' the people from 'savagery' to 'civilization'; a typical exhibit of the white man's superior need to 'impose' their way of life on all else. The missionaries were instrumental in consolidating political rule of the British. Christianity was perceived as instrumental in the maintenance of order, an instrument of subjugation to carve a place of permanence of the British Raj, to quote Charles Grant, Clapham Sect, 'Christianity of the English sort might keep the Indians passive just as it induced contentment in the English lower order.'¹⁷² The strategy to introduce Christianity for the colonial power is clear as day; a means to consolidate their rule.

Annexation of the Hills by the colonial power was complete by 1891. Encounter with the virtually naked tribes occurred first with the Garos and the Kuki-Lushais on the Bengal Frontier and the Nagas on the Assam Frontier. Penetration of the land with the establishment of tea plantation was successful at first. However, harassment of the

¹⁶⁸ For more details see Nag, Sajal, op.cit., pp.157-160

¹⁶⁹ Potts, E. Daniel. (1967) *British Baptist Missionaries in India 1837: The History of Serampore and its Missions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 174-95

¹⁷⁰ Nag, op.cit., pp.157-160

¹⁷¹ Ibid. p.160

¹⁷² Francis G. Hutchinson. (1967). *The Illusion of Permanence: British Imperialism in India*. Princeton: Princeton University. Press. p.3

tea planters and the border people increased. For the sake of protecting their subjects from the tribal harassments, a number of violent expedition to the hills was made but often resulted in failure. The inhabitants were regarded by the few Europeans then residing in Bengal as the fiercest and most barbarous of all the Hill tribes within the Province, notorious for their head hunting expeditions to the neighbouring plains.¹⁷³

The colonial rulers welcomed the missionaries into the North Eastern Frontier not so much for evangelical purposes but to work among them so that they would view the white men not as hostile foreigners but to civilize them to succumb to peace. Peace would put an end to the uncivilised tribal outrages – raids, plunders, kidnapping and head-hunting writes Sajal Nag.¹⁷⁴ David Scott was the first to seek the assistance of Christian missionaries in ‘civilizing’ the Garos to prevent their outrages.¹⁷⁵ Jenkins also confirmed, ‘to put an end to their outrages, there could be no other means than a reformation of their feelings and habits through Christian religion’.¹⁷⁶

Navigating their way through the rough terrain and heavy jungle, the first missionary to visit the Mizo Hills was Rev. William Williams of the Welsh Calvinistic Church in 15th March 1891. Then came J.H Lorrain and F.W Savidge on 11 January 1894 sponsored by the R. Arthington of Arthington Aborigine Mission, many others followed.¹⁷⁷ The Presbyterian missionaries found their niche in the northern part of the Hills (present Aizawl) whereas the Baptist missionaries evangelized in the South (present Lunglei).¹⁷⁸ Haunted with the fear of the head-hunting tribe, the pioneer missionaries described their experience as ‘living in horrors of savage warfare.’¹⁷⁹

Upon the subsequent study of the tribal way of life by the missionaries, there came an understanding of the ineffectiveness of their proselytization. Their mission work at the beginning proved to be hard and disheartening with the reluctance of the natives to part with their native Sakhua. They were said to be lazy, cruel, superstitious and

¹⁷³ Morris, op.cit., p. 77

¹⁷⁴ See for more details Nag, op.cit., pp.162 -165

¹⁷⁵ H. K. Barpujari. (1986). *The American Baptist Missionaries in North East India, 1836-1900: A Documentary Study*. Guwahati: Spectrum. p.13

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. 20

¹⁷⁷ Nag, op.cit., p.166

¹⁷⁸ With the Presbyterian Missionaries based in the North (Aizawl) and the Baptist based in the South (Lunglei), the two denominations have come to thrive in their respective places, the mission seed sown by the pioneer missionaries have today evolved to denomination tussle between the two.

¹⁷⁹ Nag, op.cit., p.164

very prone to drunkenness.¹⁸⁰ The missionaries detested the tribal culture of breaking out into community singing, dancing and feasting where animals were sacrificed and spirit worship practised, accompanied by drunkenness. The missionaries in their evangelization effort tried to discourage such performances.¹⁸¹ The Lushai administration found it difficult to govern the tribals. They were still in protest with the colonial authority, they were suspicious of all white men. Activities of the missionaries did not sit well with the administration. They feared that interference with the tribal culture would incite further resentment against them.¹⁸²

The slow growth in the number of Christians was attributed to an attempt of the missionaries to introduce the western culture which was resisted by the tribals.¹⁸³ As seen from Sajal Nag's writing, "Not all missionaries in the Mizo Hills were for Empire or supportive of the administration. This was not only because the missionaries in these remotes parts of India were not all British but also there were clashes of ideas on the issue of the degree of conversion. For the missionaries, conversion involved not just Christianization but also 'reclaiming' the people from savagery to 'civilization'. To them civilization was identical with Westernization.¹⁸⁴ They had a sense of superiority with the need to impose their worldview on 'others'. The association of Christianity with the west was really curious, as it was originally an eastern religion. English Christianity, involved not just conversion to a new faith but complete transformation of the natives – from attire to attitude, food to festivals.¹⁸⁵

On this issue the colonial administration in India, there had been quite different ideas. The two agencies often confronted each other. They were autonomous, but mutually interdependent for sustenance. They reinforced each other. While the colonial state conquered the tribals, the missionaries rendered them conquerable. The administration governed them and the missionaries made them governable. One

¹⁸⁰ Ibid. p 169

¹⁸¹ Ibid. p.165

¹⁸² Ibid. p.166

¹⁸³ Morris, op.cit. p.91

¹⁸⁴ Sajal Nag notes that the issue has been debated in Eric, Robert Frykenberg. (Ed.) (2003). *Christians and Missionaries in India: Cross Cultural Communication since 1500, Studies in the History of Christian Mission Series*. London: Routledge. Pp. 1-32.

¹⁸⁵ For details see Nag, Sajal., Kumar, Satish. (October-December 2002). Noble Savage to Gentlemen: Discourse of Civilization and Missionary Modernity in North East India. *Contemporary India*, Journal of Nehru Memorial Museum & Library, Delhi, Vol.1 4. pp. 113-128

conquered them politically; the other consolidated it by conquering them morally and culturally. The former looked after peace, law and order, while the other established new social and cultural institution. The conquerors annexed them to the Empire while the missionaries made them English. If the colonial state had made them dependent on the British by disintegrating their traditional, political, economic, social and cultural support structure, missionaries consolidated that dependence.¹⁸⁶ This had been the case of the Mizos, the Missionaries truly did make them conquerable. The task here was not just to sow the seeds of Christianity but also to culturally conquer, thus introduce the western way of life making them fit to govern for the administration.

Mention has been made of the deep intertwining of the Mizo cultural practices and sakhua of the people. Their hard laborious work; struggle in their mortal form had all been done to earn a place in the afterlife at Pialral. This worldview shaped their work ethics which was deeply intertwined with the practice of their sakhua. The fulfilment of all their ceremonial customary rituals was key for them. They worked tirelessly to have plenty to harvest, so that they could perform their ceremonies and ultimately help them earn eternal rest. So what they did in their mortal form had all been in preparation for the afterlife. The description of their vices as lazy, cruel, superstitious and prone to drunkenness could only have stemmed from lack of ethnographic knowledge of the Mizos viewed from the so called 'enlightened eyes' of western societies.

The introduction of the Christian way of life would have very little effect on the people, often proving to be a very frustrating task for the missionaries. Thus, the effectiveness of the work of the British missionaries first lay in trying to dispel the aura of mistrust of the tribes had on them. The same white skin of the missionaries and the administration conjured perception of similarity of both origin and intent by the tribes, therefore the mistrust.

Conformity with the western Christian values demanded abstinence from Zu and various cultural practices for one to cross over the threshold from savagery to the civilized. Prohibition law was first sourced from the Church, the earliest known Prohibition law in Mizoram was its introduction in December 1897 at Mission Veng,

¹⁸⁶ Nag, op.cit. p. 161.

Aizawl by DE Jones (Zosaphluia).¹⁸⁷ It forbade the Mizo Christians to drink liquor and those who defied the dry law were to be expelled from the village.¹⁸⁸ Following this example, zu was formally prohibited in the southern Hills through the passage of Agenda No. 4 by the Baptist Church at Sethlun, this church was attended by F.W. Savidge and J.H. Lorrain. This somehow caused a chain reaction for a new movement; the temperance movement. Following the example of Setlun, prohibition laws were enforced in different villages by their respective churches.

In April 1910, the Presbyterian Church Conference chaired by D.E. Jones, in its Agenda No. 7 not only prohibited Christians to drink zu but also encouraged them to teach others not to drink as well.¹⁸⁹ Drunkenness was not endorsed either, in fact it was prohibited as well. Such prohibition laws implicates the missionary's failure to interpret the cultural significance of the local brew; their misinterpretation of consumption as an 'excuse' to drunkenness; a source of the 'undoing' of their mission work with the tribes. Soon after, 'abstinence from zu' and 'non-participation' in their traditional rituals and festivities then came to be symbolic of the new adopted persona who had accepted the new faith. In short, to be a Christian required the adoption of Christian values; the western values and the rejection of their culture; their way of life.

E. Struggle for power: The Village Chiefs and the Missionaries

The British introduced a simple system of administration in the Lushai Hills. Taking into account the difficult terrain and the need to administer with least spending, they thought fit and expedient to continue with the indigenous system of village administration through the Chiefs. The principle of 'interfering as little as possible' and the policy of 'internal control of villages by their own leaders, the Chiefs'¹⁹⁰ was then promoted. To impress upon the Chiefs the responsibility for the maintenance of

¹⁸⁷ Hnamte, Lalnundika. (2014). *Prohibition. A Socio-Economic Assessment in Gujarat and Mizoram*. New Delhi: Serials Publication. p.67

¹⁸⁸ Lalrinmawia, K. (2002). *The Discourse on Zu in Mizo Christianity from 1893-1997*. (M.Th. Thesis) Senate of Serampore College. p. 57

¹⁸⁹ Lalfakzuala. (2006). *Human Rights vs Ruihhlo*. Aizawl: Lengchhawn Press. p. 23

¹⁹⁰ Reid, Robert. (1942). *History of the Frontier Area Bordering on Assam from 1883-1941*. Shillong. Delhi: Spectrum Publications. p. 60

order in their villages,¹⁹¹ the internal control of the villages was left to the Chiefs.¹⁹² The colonial power soon became the Chief maker. Found in the writings of McCall, the initial years of the colonial rule had seen the existence of about 60 Chiefs.¹⁹³ This number increased to more than four hundred within 40 years. This rise in Chiefs number was sourced as a reward for good services rendered to the Government and owing to their custom of setting up new villages by the sons of Chiefs.¹⁹⁴ The Chiefs once proud and fierce were reduced to being mere agents of administration for the British rulers. The absolute power they once wielded came to a decline.

Boundaries had been demarcated for all the Chiefs and were given boundary paper known as '*Ramri lekha*'. The Chiefs ruled within their respective boundaries.¹⁹⁵ The will and desire to resist 'change' in their way of life was aspired by the Chiefs but left helpless. Hence, changes the missionaries hoped and prayed for; change of societal values and culture through the adoption of Christian values was met with vehement resistance by the Chiefs. The casualties here being the proselytes.

As the number of Christians grew, hostility towards them grew too. Here we see the beginning of the tug and pull between the missionaries and the Chiefs. The latter in their attempt to resist changes happening around them resorted to persecuting the proselytes and the missionaries. It is in this phase that one witness's zu becoming an instrument of persecution. One can interpret this as being a negative response of the 'others' to the prohibiting laws of the Church. Stern opposition was faced from the Chiefs. Young preachers were challenged by village strongmen (as was the practise amongst the Lushai to challenge visitors) to a bout of wrestling. Sometimes men used to try to compel them to drink zu and this happened to Rev. D. E. Jones himself. A

¹⁹¹ Ibid. p. 60

¹⁹² See for more information Lalrintluanga. (2016). The Genesis and functioning of the Mizo District Council. In Doungel, Jangkhongam., (Ed), *Autonomy Movements and the Sixth Schedule in North East India*. Guwahati: Spectrum Publications. p 3

¹⁹³ Today there exists around 309 Chiefs seeking compensation from the Government for having their reghts relinquished in 1954.

¹⁹⁴ Mc.Call as cited in Zorema, J. (2202). *The Bureaucracy, The chiefs and indirect rule in the Lushai Hill of Assam 1898-1952*. (Ph.D. Dessertation): North-Eastern Hill University. P Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/61376>

¹⁹⁵ Lalzama, Dr. (2017). *Mizo Language and Literature Emergence and Development (Contribution of Christian Missionaries from 1897-1947)*. Aizawl: KL Offset Printers. p. 25

bamboo cupful of zu was pushed in his face and almost down his throat. Dr. Fraser wrote of the incident,

'We had heard that all the Christians had reverted to paganism. The chief there is very cruel. He recently compelled all the Christians to come together and his strong men forced zu down every Christian throat.'

In 1910, the Chief of Chhingchhip village called all the Christians and forced them to drink zu as a result, all Christians of that village reverted back to their original religion. Christians were beaten up during worship services and injured inflicted.¹⁹⁶ This locates the symbolism of liquor in the tug and pull for power between the two. Most of the Chiefs indulged in persecuting the Christians. Converts were also forced to perform forced labour, fined unnecessarily, husbands were encouraged to batter their Christian wives, women were stripped and paraded naked.¹⁹⁷ Vanchhunga, one of the first evangelist in the north had a list of five chiefs who persecuted Christians most, they were - Vanphunga of Zawngin, Thangkama of Sihfa, Lalzika of Buhban, Dorawta of Saitual, Lalruaia of Lailik. The Chiefs also forbade giving food to Christians and denied them the right to cultivate. They were expelled from villages and made to leave their homes at midnight. In some villages non-Christians refused to bury dead Christians. Such refusal was contrary to the traditional to refuse burial to anyone. To stop the evangelization movement, the old guards retaliated with the indigenous instruments abhorred by the missionaries - with song and dance.¹⁹⁸ This counter-Christian movement surprisingly came in the form of *Puma zai* a catchy two liner songs (later became a three liner). Puma zai was a song in praise of the god Puma, about the traditional life and culture of the Mizos which had humour, melody and colloquial language.¹⁹⁹ The result of their culture becoming a 'contested culture' was the tug and pull between the the two forces. Frustration is seen in the autobiographical writings of D.E. Jones, he writes:

¹⁹⁶ Lalsawma. (1994). *Four Decades of Revivals: The Mizo Way*. Aizawl: A Gospel Centenary Souvenir. pp. 39-42

¹⁹⁷ Lalsawma, op.cit., pp. 39-42

¹⁹⁸ Nag, op.cit. pp.170-171

¹⁹⁹ Nag, op.cit. pp. 196-198

“We ourselves eagerly believed that the whole of that country would be evangelised despite all oppositions. When we learned of the success of missions in Uganda, Korea, the South Sea Islands and other places. We hoped for something similar but helpless our work seemed at times... a missionary’s faith and patience is tested when he sees a promising convert who begins to slow down, lose his enthusiasm and turns away from the Light. Our privilege is to pray for them. We don’t know whether we shall find success despite many vicissitudes”.²⁰⁰

This certainly shows that it was not a smooth sailing, they however had not lost hope. They reminded themselves, “Not by power, and not by might but by my Spirit, saith the Lord”.²⁰¹ The persecution of the early converts were seen as “a cause for rejoicing” because they believed that “the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church”.²⁰²

The resistance on the other end; the counter-Christian movement; the cultural revivalism through the Puma zai movement gained momentum in 1908. It was sung to spite the white men and isolate the proselytes from the mainstream tribal community.²⁰³ It was catchy and could be composed by any on issues addressing their contemporary world. The singers became dancers and was later its performance came to be called the *thanglam zai*²⁰⁴ (lit. a song of public dance). The popularity of the Puma zai spread like wild fire. These chants made the converts nostalgic of their old ways of life, causing them to revert to their old ways. The song was despised by the missionaries as it often resulted in undoing of the works of the missionaries. The losing battle to proselytize the Mizos changed course at the turn of 1911.

When proselytization mission seemed to be dwindling, a strange calamity presented itself; the famine in the Lushai Hills in 1911-12 and 1929.²⁰⁵ This famine

²⁰⁰ Jones, D.E. (1988). *A Missionary’s Autobiography 1897-1927*. (Llyod, J.M. Trans.). Aizawl: H. Liansailova. pp. 33-5

²⁰¹ Report of the Lushai Hills, 1899-1900 by D.E. Jones in Reports of the foreign Mission of the Presbyterian Church of Wales in Mizoram 1894-1957 compiled by K. Thanzauva. Aizawl: Synod Literature and Publication Boards. p.9

²⁰² Report of the Lushai Hills, 1909-1910 by Rev. Dr. P. Fraser *ibid.* p.42

²⁰³ *Ibid.* pp.196

²⁰⁴ Zawla cited in Lalsawma. (1994). *Four Decades of Revivals: the Mizo Way*. Aizawl: A Gospel Centenary Souvenir. p. 45

²⁰⁵ Sajal Nag has exhaustively written on Mautam or Bamboo Flowering phenomenon in the Lushai hills and the politics surrounding the phenomenon for more read Sajal Nag. (2008)

was the result of a phenomenon called *Mautam* or Bamboo Flowering. It is a phenomenon where *Mau* or Bamboo bears flower in cycles of 30, 50 or even 120 years for certain species of bamboo. The 30 years cycle was known as *Thingtam* and the 50 years cycle as *Mautam*. These bamboo flower bear fruit, at the centre of the fruit is a seed which is loved by rats. Once it flowered, the rats came in multitudes to eat this seed, the abundance of food causes the rats population to explode. They ravage anything in their path thereby causing the destruction of paddy or food stock, thereby inducing famine in the Hills. This famine induced hunger claimed many lives²⁰⁶ and had been a cause of great distress to the tribes.

The immeasurable sufferings caused by the famine weakened their spirit thus making them more malleable to embrace the new religion. The concentrated effort to resist change under the initiatives of the Village Chiefs had come to an abrupt halt with the changing circumstances. The lack of rice grains had left them starving, unable to make rice beer that added fuel to their celebrations and had left them unable to perform many of their festive celebrations and practice their *sakhua* as it required giving feasts and providing *zu* to the community. It had dimmed their spirits and made them look for new hope which they found in the new religion. The knowledge they once received from *Zawlbuk* was replaced by the teachings of the missionaries, thus gradually changing their world view.

The famine had caused immense suffering and ill health among the people. People lost their lives from the outbreak of cholera in several districts, destitute orphans were dealt with from the help rendered through funds and necessities contributed through the *Lushai Famine Fund* under the initiation of the Mission Directors.²⁰⁷ Recurrence of the phenomenon in 1911-12 afforded the colonial power particularly the missionaries to help provide humanitarian assistance. As humanitarian works of the missionaries were witnessed, the role of the protector and provider ultimately shifted from the Chiefs to the Missionaries.

Many children, women, decrepit, blind and paralysed approached the Mission Compound seeking help and they had been given food and shelter, even when supply

²⁰⁶ For more information on *mautam* or bamboo flowering phenomenon see Nag, op.cit., pp. 63-75

²⁰⁷ Nag, op.cit. p.176

seemed to run very low to feed all.²⁰⁸ Their distress had been alleviated and the presence of the missionaries had become a real source of comfort for the Mizos. Sajal Nag had pointed out the significance of the famine as a site for the missionaries to 'earn the goodwill of the people' through humanitarian deeds, this won over the hearts of the people thereby aiding their proselytization endeavour.²⁰⁹ The missionaries themselves had interpreted the phenomenon as a silver lining that aided their work. They believed the phenomenon had provided a good opportunity in the following ways:

1. The famine stopped the conquering power of the new heathen song (i.e., Puma zai) which had drawn away most people from the Gospel during the past few years.
2. It made the whole country free from rice beer for there was no rice.
3. It gave the mission an opportunity of witnessing through Christian Social Service
4. It gave the Christians an opportunity to show their Christian virtue in such a situation.
5. The Government was asking the missionaries to help in supervising the relief work which entailed visiting most of the villages, which gave them the unique opportunity to fulfil not only the cultural mandate but the missionary mandate.
6. Their physical hunger made the people hungry for the Word of God and people were turning their ears again to hear the preaching of the Gospel.²¹⁰

The popularity of missionaries grew thereon, perception of the white man came to have a different light. They came to be identified as a friend and a benevolent saviour. The tribe who once asked their Chief for assistance now approached the missionaries for help. The religion they preached also came to be seen in a different light. They began embracing the God of the missionaries, as heaven was attainable for all through the Christian God. The pathian they once worshipped was a distant and a vague god;

²⁰⁸ Ibid. p.176

²⁰⁹ Ibid. pp.176-177

²¹⁰ Annual report of the Lushai Hills 1911-12, in Thanzauva, op. cit.

a place at pialral quite unattainable for the common man. Thus, they saw and learnt that the Christian God was a more benevolent God, stood for the downtrodden and those they worshipped and embraced Him was promised a place in heaven. They followers as seen through the acts of missionaries and converts were more kind and loving. So the number of converts grew since 1911. By 1912, there had been 1800 converts (552 were communicant members), churches and preaching stations were be found in 80 villages.²¹¹ The famine had truly helped the Church grow!

Other events which added to their popularity was over the issue of slavery. Dr. Peter Fraser led a crusade against Slavery or the *Bawih* system which was practiced back then. He stood for the rights of *bawis* (slaves) getting himself expelled from the land for causing a threat of political destabilization.²¹² He led a successful campaign which resulted in the abolition of the use of Bawih.²¹³ He left the Lushai Hills on the 26th November 1912.²¹⁴ Dr. Peter Fraser helped indigenize the evangelizing mission by mobilising the tribal youths under the banner “Kraws Sipai” (Soldiers of the Cross).²¹⁵ This made him champion of the common man, the impoverished and the *bawis*. These acts of the missionaries earned the trust of the people and in turn had their religion promoted.²¹⁶

The Census report of 1921, shows the growth of the Christian population. There were 12915 male and 15005 female Christians in the whole Lushai Hills.²¹⁷ In 1931, the number rose to 26, 727 male and 32583 female.²¹⁸ By 1951 the Christian population rose to 157 575 with 65, 711 male and 91864 female.²¹⁹ The spiritual revival in the Mizo Hills (locally called *Harhna*) which began in 1906 did a lot of good in raising the Christian percentage. The phenomenal success of the Gospel preaching in Mizoram was brought about through revival movements. Having the whole population converted to Christianity within the pace of 50 years is nothing short of exceptional.

²¹¹ Nag (2008). Op.cit. pp.177

²¹² Parliamentary Question on Slavery (Lushai), Answer to Sir John Gardine’s Question, no. 101, 12 June 1913.

²¹³ Nag, op.cit. p. 185

²¹⁴ Ibid. pp.180-187

²¹⁵ Ibid. 187

²¹⁶ Ibid. pp. 177-187

²¹⁷ Lushai Hills Village Census Tables, 1921, Mizoram State Archives, Aizawl.

²¹⁸ Lushai Hills Census, 1931, Mizoram State Archives, Aizawl.

²¹⁹ Vaghaiwalla, R. B. (1952) Census 1951, Assam, Lushai Hills District Handbook.

Gospel preaching which began in 1894, saw the repeated occurrence of spiritual revival affecting mass conversions 12 years later. The end of the Second World War, 1945 saw the whole land embracing Christianity to in total abandonment of their old religion.²²⁰ Conversion of the entire Mizo population to Christianity had indeed been a great phenomenon, one which no doubt could be regarded as the most successful legacy of the British missionaries in India.

The new religion introduced also stood for equality, it freed the slaves, the *bawi(s)* through the works of Dr. Peter Fraser. Bawis living as freemen was something which they would never have imagined possible, but then the intervention of the missionaries made it happen so. Fuelled by the spiritual revival movements that followed in the wake of the famine, they had all endorsed the Christianity in time, thus, bringing to an end the opposition that existed between the Village Chiefs and the missionaries; after all they had become one in Christ. This proves true the hypothesis “adoption of Christianity by the Mizos put an end to the opposition between the Chiefs and the Missionaries on the issue of liquor”. Embrace they did the foreign religion; Christianity with the total abandonment of their old culture and all it represented.

F. British impact on Mizo Society

The British Missionaries introduced many changes in the Lushai Hills. These changes reoriented the people to a new way of life; to the western way of life. These changes uprooted the Mizos 'sense of belonging' in their aged old culture. They introduced them to a world far larger than they believed existed. The British annexation of the land in 1890, according to Prof C. Nunthara, had three immediate effects on the Mizos: a) nomadic character of the Mizo social life rapidly came to an end as a result of restriction on territorial mobility of the Chiefs. b) external relations of the Mizos with the neighbouring people became channelized through the British code of peaceful co-existence. c) appearance of monetary economy immediately giving rise to a small group of privileged classes to the hitherto classless, simple

²²⁰ Lalsawma.(1994) *Four Decades of Revivals: The Mizo Way*, Aizawl: A Gospel Centenary Souvenir. Pp. 39-42

society.²²¹ The missionaries had taken great initiatives for the tribes to 'conform' to their standard through Christianity acting as a catalyst for the transformation. The less immediate but rather transformative impact of the British in all dimensions - socio, cultural, economic and political can be briefly mentioned as under:-

- 1) Abolition of Chieftainship: Their entry resulted in an abrupt of power from the traditional leaders; a shift from the village Chiefs to the British Raj. The Chiefs became mere puppets of the British. Abolition of Chieftainship in 1954²²² was the indirect consequence of the spread of education through Christianity. The consequences of the clash between the Chiefs and missionaries was borne heavily by the proselytes. The proselytes forming the bulk of the common man population stood opposed to the Chiefs. The Chiefs exhibited tyrannical traits on the absence of the British Raj. The common man became more educated and resulted in the emergence of the educated middle class. They began holding positions and status in the newly stratified socio-political establishment.²²³ The clash continued between the Chiefs and new educated middle class and were finally disposed of their position through legislation.

- 2) Changes in Social Customs and Tradition: Traditional customs of the Lushais were considered archaic, savage and primitive. The pioneer missionaries insisted on doing away with many elements of their culture since it was considered responsible for stunting the growth of the mission. The prohibiting liquor law of 1897 by D.E. Jones at Mission Veng is one such example of wanting to do away with culture. Consumption of the rice beer was one major issue they wanted to do away with. Any representation of the old culture was rejected by the missionaries. They propagated the adoption of Christian values which could be equated with the propagation of western values.

²²¹ Nunthara, C. (1996). *Mizoram: Society and Polity*. New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company. pp. 34-35

²²² Chieftainship was abolished through the passage of the Assam Gazette, Government of Assam. (30th June 1954). *Assam Lushai Hills District (Acquisition of Chiefs' Rights) Act, 1954*.

²²³ Rosanga.O, (32nd Session, Agartala, 2011). *Mizo Resistance against Colonial Rule in Mizoram*. NEIHA Proceedings. p. 336

- 3) Introduction of Tea: The Mizos drank zu as a beverage for lack of any other alternative beverage drink. Milk and tea was a scarce commodity unknown to the tribe. However, they had rice, they brewed their rice beer and served as a beverage drink. Their special brew had been their staple; what every household had, consumed and served on various occasion. Tea came to be introduced with the arrival of the White man. J.M. Lloyd writes “there was no milk at all in an average village, and even water was scarce! It was providential that tea was beginning to be easily available in Mizoram at the time the Gospel arrived. Needless to say the tea came from the very area where the Mizos had once plundered. Tea replaced the rice beer”.²²⁴ D.E. Jones’s father made sure there was ample supply of tea from the plains. His friend, Chalmers owner of the tea estate of Katlacherra near Alexandrapur was engaged in a very honourable trade with the Mizos, this trade was done through D.E. Jones without any profiteering. He used to send a chest of tea to every missionary and another chest to be distributed among the Mizos before Christmas.²²⁵ Thus, the Mizos were introduced to a non-alcoholic beverage which ultimately replaced the rice beer.
- 4) Abolition of Zawlbuk (Bachelors Dormitory): Zawlbuk was the source of knowledge where young men were taught the traditional ways of life. The native Mission employees were the prime movers for abandoning the Zawlbuk system.²²⁶ Christianity taught morality and humanity above others to be in the service of Christ this consequently implied the rejection of the native pride in head hunting and aggression of all forms. This led to the demoralization of Zawlbuk practices. Disciplined and organized life of the Zawlbuk was gradually replaced by the Church based organization and school disciplines. Raids were prohibited by the government which also contributed to the redundancy of the traditional Zawlbuk system and ultimate closure in 1938.

²²⁴ Lloyd, op.cit., p. 13

²²⁵ Ibid. p. 13

²²⁶ McCall, A.G. (1949: Reprint 2003). *Lushai Chrysalis*. Aizawl: Tribal Research Institute. p. 211

- 5) Change in the Bawi (Slave/Slavery) system: The crusade led by Dr. Peter Fraser for the release of all the bawis or slaves on the ground that slavery was illegal within the British dominion. He was strongly opposed by the Chiefs and the British administration. However, his fight for the rights of the bawis resulted in a settlement that further use of the word 'bawi' was prohibited. However, the Chief could claim compensation; for the help rendered to the bawi. The first Chief to become a Christian and the first to emancipate his bawis was Khawvelthanga, Chief of Maubuang in October 1909.²²⁷ This saw the beginning of the end of the bawi system at Lushai Hills.

- 6) Prohibition of Zu: Zu played a central role in the celebration of traditional festivities, rites and rituals. However, the missionaries preached against its consumption as opposed to Christian values. The prohibitionist policy in the Hills first initiated from the church. First initiated in December 1897 at Mission Veng, Aizawl by DE Jones (Zosaphluia),²²⁸ which prohibited the converts to consume liquor and refusal to obey led to their expulsion from their locality.²²⁹ It was also prohibited by the Baptist Church at Sethlun (in the southern Hills) through the passage of Agenda no. 4; the church attended by F.W. Savidge and J.H. Lorrain. This move caused a chain reaction for a new movement; the temperance movement. Following the example of Setlun, prohibition laws were enforced in different villages by their respective churches. This prohibitionist stance continue to be supported by the contemporary churches today and have led them to push for the implementation of prohibitionist policies by the government.

- 7) Introduction of Mizo Alphabets: Mizo language belongs to the Assam-Burma branch of the Tibeto-Burmese family of languages.²³⁰ The ancestral tribe orally passed on knowledge. The missionaries introduced the 24 letter Roman script for the Mizo language through the publication of 'The Mizo Primer in 1897'. This book was also

²²⁷ Welsh Foreign Mission Report for 1909. p. xlix

²²⁸ Hnamte, op.cit., p.67

²²⁹ Lalrinmawia, K., (2002). *The Discourse on Zu in Mizo Christianity from 1893-1997*. (M.Th. Thesis). Senate of Serampore College. p. 57

²³⁰ Lorrain, J.H. (1975 Reprinted) *Dictionary of the Lushai Language*. Calcutta: The Asiatic Society. p. V

called the 'Mizo zirtir-na Bu' or a Mizo learning book.²³¹ This intent of this initiative of the missionaries was to help the tribal population to read the translated Bible. This book was followed by other publications which became instrumental in ushering the tribal population from an era of illiteracy to literacy; a great leap from orality to literacy.

- 8) Introduction of the Print Culture: The era of print culture also began in the Hills with the missionaries. Rev. J.H. Lorrain and Rev. F.W. Savidge of the Indian Aborigines Mission formulated the script of the Duhlian language thereby introducing writing. Dr. Perter Fraser later brought a small hand press and started printing for the first time in Mizoram in 1911. The press was named Lushai Christian press. *Krista Tlangau* (Christ's Herald), the first Church monthly was started in October, 1911. It was later renamed *Kristian Tlangau* (Christian Herald). The small printing machine broke and knowing the need of a printing machine, Commandant Lt. Colonel G.H. Loch made a donation to the Welsh Mission. The donation was used by D.E. Jones to buy a treadle operated printing machine in 1914. This was named Loch Printing Press in honour of its donor till it was renamed Synod Press in 1973.²³²

- 9) Introduction of Schools: With only two pupils in attendance, J.H. Lorrain and F.W. Savidge opened the first school on the 1st April, 1894. School began at 9 a.m to 11 a.m daily.²³³ The first two learners were able to master the alphabet in just a week. The development of education in Mizoram was rapid with the passion to learn ignited by the desire to be able to read and write. School was also used for worship service. However, one must know that the first formal school was opened at Aizawl in November 1893 for the children of the sepoys. All the pupils were non-Mizo. The teachings in all the schools was elementary reading and writing in Mizo and simple arithmetic but a few learnt Hindusthani and English.²³⁴ However, the credit for

²³¹ Carter, H.W., et al. (Ed.)(1981). *Mizoram Baptist Kohhran Chanchin*. p. 97

²³² Presbyterian Communications (2019) retrieved from <https://www.mizoramsynod.org/page/1217>

²³³For more see Lalzama, op.cit., pp. 74-76

²³⁴ Ibid. pp. 74-85.

introducing education to Mizos have been given to the missionaries as they were the ones who helped establish it from the ground up.

- 10) Introduction to Modern Medicine: The first missionary with a medical degree to be of service in the Lushai Hills was Dr. Peter Fraser in 1908. Prior to his arrival, a hospital had already been built but Dr Fraser himself built a well-equipped dispensary which accomodated a number of patients. The first year of his stay he attended to about 10,000 people for various ailments.²³⁵ The introduction of modern medicine popularised the evangelization mission and had been a very good service for the indigenous population. The most popular private hospitals in Mizoram till date continues to be the legacy of the pioneer missionaries viz., the Synod Hospital at Durtlang and the Serkawn Hospital at Lunglei respectively.
- 11) Introduction to mass based politics: The abolition of Chieftainship in 1954 led to change of leadership. McCall traced the rise of a new educated middle class, the intelligentsia. They had come to occupy important positions in the society. The unpopularity of the Chiefs consequently resulted in their end. Introduction and understanding of the democratic system of universal suffrage soon implanted the need for self representation. With such situation, the intelligensia began to dominate the political space with the formation of the Mizo Union in 1946; the first political party in Mizoram. They stood for promoting the interest of the common man. Gradually, politics in the hills truly came to be represented by the the common man.
- 12) Introduction of new economy: The chief occupation of the Mizos had been agriculture with a few engaged in trade as well. The introduction of currency by the British put an end to the barter system the tribes were accustomed to. The Deputy Commissioner of Cachar began to maintain bazar (market) at three places and maintained a trade center by the Cachar traders till 1889. They were the Tipaimukh Bazar, Sonai Bazar and Changsil Bazar. The Mizo sold rubber, cotton, wax, bamboos and other forest products to the traders and also brought from the shops utensils, salt, cloth and more.

²³⁵For more see Nag, op.cit. p.178

The number of shops opened by the locals increased. Shop were opened at Aizawl in 1911,²³⁶ there had been a total of 92 shops established by 1922.²³⁷ As a consequence to the introduction and establishment of educational institutions by the British, the number of educated tribals began to multiply. Mizo society began to recognise new economy like Cirlce Interpreters (C.Is), Lushai Clerks, Mission School teachers, Pastors and Church Elders.²³⁸ People gradually changed their occupation; they shifted to trade, business, government services, carpentry etc. for their livelihood.²³⁹

The presence of the British had entirely reoriented the Mizo society. They impacted and restructured very nook and corner of the indigenous existence – the political, social, economic, cultural identity of the land. They molded the Mizo tribe to an entirely different persona and avatar tailored to resemble the Whiteman. The promoted values of the missionaries demanded the tribles to disassociate themselves with their cultural past; to un-learn their old ways. They sacrificed their tradition, rituals and practices and embraced what had been imposed upon them as the new truth. Among many things, Mizo Kristianna (Mizo Christianity) has come to vehemently oppose liquor consumption as it is viewed as a mascot of their cultural past.

It can be concluded that the changes brought by the British: both administrators and missionaries was immense, impacting their lives in every way possible. They transformed every aspect of the tribal life, introduced a new religion, the Mizo alphabets, schools which ultimately gave rise to the new educated elite class with political consciousness, the print culture, gave them modern medicine through the establishment of the first hospital, established new economy, did away with their traditional institutions with the aged old culture becoming mere remnants or a casualty sacrificed at the altar of modernity of the western kind.

²³⁶ Mizo leh Vai Chanchin Bu, 1924. P. 174

²³⁷ Ibid. p. 87

²³⁸ Lalrintluanga. (2016). The Genesis and functioning of the Mizo District Council. In Dounge, Jangkhongam., (Ed), *Autonomy Movements and the Sixth Schedule in North East India*. Guwahati: Spectrum Publications. p. 5

²³⁹ Ibid. pp. 18-19

CHAPTER III

STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY ON LIQUOR

This chapter provides insight to the socio-political evolution of the contemporary Mizo society. Context of the Mizo identity as Mizo Kristianna and civil society will be provided prior to focusing on the state and civil society's perception on liquor. This will help locate understanding to the 'reoriented Mizo' and source of conformity to the dictates of the Church. It will further locate the importance of the Church in the so called modern Mizo society. One will also be exposed to how the liquor prohibition propaganda had been dominated by the educated elite. The collective perception of the Mizos on liquor through their NGOs and statistical analysis of the perception of other stakeholders is also made to help understand people's sentiment towards liquor in the contemporary world.

A. The Context

The pre-colonial Mizo society consisted a small population of villages scattered across the land. Each village had houses numbered a few hundreds which had been ruled and protected by their respective Village Chiefs and Council of elders. When the Land was incorporated into the British dominion, there had been only 60 identified Village Chiefs and by 1950's there existed 309 Chiefs, most of whom had been appointed to power following the decentralized norm devised by Captain Shakespeare.²⁴⁰

The ancestral Mizos being illiterate had orated knowledge and history from generation to generation. Political and civil society prior to the annexation can be said to be absent. However, they did have their indigenous system in place; a simple yet well-established traditional system of administration and way of life. They had their system shaped by custom and experience which worked to meet their end. The pre-political society was tightly interwoven with very simple communitarian values which

²⁴⁰Doungel, Prof. J. (March 2019). *Chieftainship as a Traditional Dominant Political Institution of the Lais: A Case Study of the Chieftainship of Mizoram*. Annual North East India Political Science Conference (Society and Politics in North-East India), Assam. p. 5

stressed the importance of ‘others over self.’ Associations did not exist in the pre-colonial times, people remained under the protectorate of their Chiefs, and he administered as per their customary law and his word was absolute. Lallianchhunga writes, “The Chief, with the assistance of his Council, administered all aspects of the village life in accordance with the customary laws of the Mizos. Their administrative system, planning of the villages and implementation of local development, and administration of justices were not inferior to the systems adopted by even most civilized society of the world”.²⁴¹ True to the comment, if one had an understanding of their traditional worldview, even though ‘they’ as a group of ‘uncivilized tribes’ had been negatively conceived by the Whiteman: falling short of ‘their standard’ of the supposed ‘greater culture’. The Chief could rule over two or more villages, the collective identity of the subjects was represented by the Village Chief and the sakhua practiced by various sub-tribes. The problem here lay in the Whiteman’s intent to reorient things ‘their way’, unconcerned with the preservation of the system the tribes in place. Development planning, administrative and judicial system sourced from years of collective wisdom by the Chiefs and council of elders had not been lacking.

A Chiefs protection was necessary for a subject as it was common for villages to be at war with each other. This was an exhibit of power, strength and courage. Villagers had learnt to work together, exhibiting unity. Key functionaries in the village community performed their respective functional duties – i) The Lalpa governed with the advice of his council of his elders Lal upa(s), ii) the favoured Ramhual cultivated the best patch of land and submitted more taxes than the others, iii) the Thirdeng, the village blacksmith forged and re-forged necessary tools, iv) *Sadawt* and *Bawlpu* performed ceremonial functions, v) *Valupa*(s) administered the young men at the Zawlbuk and vi) the common subjects in the society engaged in agriculture aimed for self-sufficiency. With a proper taxing system in place, the welfare of the weak and the widowed were also taken care of by the community. They worked together to survive,

²⁴¹Lallianchhunga. (July-December 2018) *A Comparative Study of Village Councils in Mizoram and Panchayati Raj Institutions: A Critical Appraisal*. Senhri Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies. Senhri Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies, Vol. 3, No.2. p. 34. Retrieved from <https://senhrijournal.ac.in/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/A-Comparative-Study-of-Village-Councils-in-Mizoram-and-Panchayati-Raj-Institutions-A-Critical-Appraisal.pdf>

aimed to make their respective villages thrive and become more imposing to deflect attack from any corner. However, a different picture is presented with the arrival of a foreign invader.

The colonial society witnessed changes to the traditional construct. The colonial administrators and missionaries became the producers of knowledge, imposing their virtues and vices to the indigenous population. They imposed changes which entirely reconstructed the tribal way of life, this transition occurred in the short span of less than a 100 years. Administrative restructuring had taken place under the initiatives of the colonial power. Having the land divided to North and South and then unified again as Lushai Hills District under the administration of Assam in the late 1898.²⁴² The source of real authority came to be identified as the foreign invaders while having the Chiefs position reduced to do the biddings of the invader.

The colonial powers appointed new Chiefs like Suaka, who was appointed as Chief of Durtlang for his contribution to the government.²⁴³ The appointments increased in number with their role and power greatly subdued: none as powerful as their counterparts who ruled before the colonial intervention. The disappearance of their traditional norms and institutions gave rise to the formation of a civil society of the western order. Education introduced by them had sparked the formation of a different class of people viz., the indigenous educated intelligentsia. At the apex stood the British administrators, next in the structure came the Chiefs and then came the common man. However, the power structure gradually began to shift in favour of the common man in the colonial and postcolonial society. This shift came from the push initiated by the enlightened minority.

The days of the Chiefs authoritarian rule slowly dwindled to an end in 1945. The emerging new class of people who later came to be identified as the ruling elite gave birth to political consciousness. This resulted in the formation of the first political party: the Mizo Union on the 9th of April 1946.²⁴⁴ This very class of people opted for

²⁴² Zorema, Dr. J. (2013). *Establishment of British Rule in Mizoram: Initiatives and Changes in Administration*. In Malsawmdawngliana., & Rohmingmawii.(Eds.). *Mizo Narratives: Accounts from Mizoram*. Guwahati: Scientific Book Centre. Pp. 143-157.

²⁴³ For more see Lalsawma. (1994). *Revivals: The Mizo Way*. Aizawl: Lalsawma.

²⁴⁴ Vanlawma. R. (1972). *Ka Ram leh Kei (My Country and I)*. Aizawl: Zalen Printing House. p. 90

democracy and pushed to abolish Chieftainship. This pressure resulted in the acquisition of certain rights and interests of the Chiefs through the Assam Lushai Hills District (Acquisition of Chief's Rights) Act, 1954.²⁴⁵ By this Act, 259 Mizo (Lusei) Chiefs and 50 Pawi-Lakher Chiefs were dethroned since 14th April, 1956.²⁴⁶ Prior to the formation of the first political party, the first ever organization established was the Young Lushai Organization (YLA) which later evolved to the Young Mizo Association (YMA). It became the biggest and the oldest voluntary organization, its formal date of establishment is recognized as the 15th June, 1935.²⁴⁷ The 15th of June is observed as YMA day, a holiday formally recognized by the state Government.

Rise in literacy with blooming participant culture at the socio-political front helped acquire the characteristic likeness of a modern state and civil society 1930's onwards. The case of Mizos had been unique as their society has a homogenizing factor in their adopted religion: their identification to Christianity. Besides being officially designated as the Lushai Hills District: the land inhabited by the Lushais, the term Lushai was not inclusive of the many of the sub-tribes like Pawi, Lakher, Paite and more. However, Christianity on the other had had provided a unified and inclusive identity. The ancestral identity represented by Village Chiefs and their practised sakhua was replaced by Christianity. This identity in their new religion had altered the perception of the people. The church dictates moral standards, ethics and values for the people. Conformity and alignment with the dictates of the church had been complete. This makes the religious factor all the more important to the Mizos, as it became the basis of new construct for their society and culture. To further understand the perception of civil society in Mizoram, it is vital to first understand the

²⁴⁵ Government of Assam. (1954). Assam Act XXI of 1954, The Assam Lushai Hills District (Acquisition of Chiefs' Rights) Act, 1954. Retrieved from https://legislative.assam.gov.in/sites/default/files/swf_utility_folder/departments/legislative_medhass_u_in_oid_3/menu/document/The%20Assam%20Lusai%20Hills%20Dist.%20%28Acquisition%20of%20Chiefs%29%20Act%2C1954.pdf

²⁴⁶ Poonte, B. (1965). *Zoram Thlirna.* , Aizawl: Deputy Commissioner, Mizo District. p. 20

²⁴⁷ Ralte, Liandingpuii. (July. 2017). *Towards Understanding Civil Society – Government Relationship: the Study of Young Mizo Association (YMA) in Mizoram.* IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS) Volume 22, Issue 7, Ver. 17. PP 24-32. Retrieved from <http://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/Vol.%202022%20Issue7/Version-17/D2207172432.pdf>

Christian centric perception of the Mizos, where social engagements are planned according to church time²⁴⁸ with a heavily internalised Christian ethics.

B. Reconstucting the Social Perception

Traditional values slowly came to be replaced by a new set of imposed values and customs. Social construct has been made on the teachings of the church. One must note that the Church today operates as an establishment, it also defines what values to endorse or discard. Its function goes beyond preaching the gospel. This causes certain tensions with the state government especially on the issue of liquor. To understand the Mizos, it is imperative to understand the ethics that guide civil society which is centered on *Mizo Kristianna* (Christianity of the Mizo kind); how the church came to be deeply embedded in the psyche of the Mizos and the social construct around it. Joy writes, “Respectability, honour, propriety, hierarchy, and so on are idioms expressed through the institutionalized church in Mizoram”.²⁴⁹ Honour, respectability according to the Mizos is given to men of God or men of spirit like the Pastors and Upas.²⁵⁰ Also outside the church there exists gospel teams who at times are invited by the Church to lead Gospel Camping. Gospel campings are often organized consecutively in different sessions. A single session spans for about a week, the entire camping is organized over a month and sometimes more. Gospel preachers who are spiritual, have healing ministries, inspire spiritual revivals become icons and are highly regarded by the society.

Society admires and aims to generate more ‘*Kohhran mi*’ those that actively participate in the Church programmes and activities. Social members generally teach each other to cleave onto the Church/Congregation as they say locally *kohhran bel tlat tur* for it is considered to be a trait that maketh a man socially acceptable or decent or *mi pangai nihna*. It is a known fact that one must adhere to the church and its norms to be considered ‘decent member of the society’. For example, a politician is perceived

²⁴⁸Joy Pachuau has written a detailed account of the implication of Christianity in Mizoram. For more see Pachuau, Joy. (2014). *Being Mizo Identity and Belonging in North East India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. P. 136-182

²⁴⁹ Ibid., P. 146

²⁵⁰ An elected Church elder, chosen by two-third majority of church members without prior nomination.

in a more positive light, more admired, legitimate and trustworthy if he/she can preach the Gospel and is a regular church goer.

Church time in Mizoram spans throughout the week except for Thursdays and Fridays. Early Morning Prayer service known as *tawingtai inkhawm* (prayer meeting) takes place throughout the week at six o'clock. On a Sunday: morning, noon and night services are attended. Morning service at 10 a.m. is a designated time for Sunday school. Monday evening service is designated for the Youth wing; Tuesday evening service for the women; Wednesday evening service known as the Wednesday Night Theme Service (Nilai Zan Thupui Inkhawm) is designated for the study of a specific theme (a study guide book is annually prepared) and Saturday night services are attended by all as well. So, one finds church services organized throughout the week and can be seen that it caters not only to the spiritual needs of the people but is also the focal point of socio-cultural interaction in the absence of entertainment of any kind.²⁵¹ Society perceives those active member(s) of the church (irrespective of ones economic status) as principled, good natured, a person of God and given the highest social approval.

A good *Kristian chhungkua* (Christian family or a Christian centric family) is what every Mizo family strive to establish. It is vital for the Mizo Christians to remain spiritually strong as opposed to be in a state of *tharau chau* (Spiritually weak). Therefore, anything that does not feed the spiritual facet of the person is to be opposed and discarded. Once such identified vices by the church continue to be the sale and consumption of liquor. Revd. Chuauthuma on the sale of liquor had expressed his belief that 'such actions form a barrier for God to speak to his people'.²⁵² This sense of opposition seem to be more extreme coming from the indigenized churches. Joy Pachuau writes, "Mizo society emphasizes greatly the wrong-ness of alcohol, and very often a person's moral integrity is judged on basis of his or her attitude to alcohol".²⁵³ It is true that the church dictates moral standards, values, especially the wrong-ness of liquor. This consequentially imbibes in the collective psyche of the Mizos a sense of

²⁵¹ Ibid. p. 142

²⁵² Chuauthuma, Revd. (2014). *Bible, Zu leh Mizote*. Guwahati: Bhabani Offset Private Limited. p. 69

²⁵³ Pachuau, Joy. (2014). *Being Mizo Identity and Belonging in North East India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. P. 147

opposition, fear and unopeness regarding the issue. Therefore, the collective remains staunch in their stand against the legitimization and consumption of alcohol simply because ‘the church dictates it so’. What the church teaches and propagates the people think and believe, an open objection to what the church teaches will be an alienating act against the collective. So in a society with such homogenized, indigenized Christian values, consumption and sale of liquor is seem collectively repelled as it represents a disassociation; a thing of the past. A disassociation the churches wish to nurture.

C. Christianity in the Lushai Hills

i) Zu is a sin: A symbolic break from the past

The pre-colonial era had been perceived as the dark ages by the British missionaries and they believed their presence would bring light to the land and its people. Viewed as ignorant, the missionaries felt the innate need to ‘light up’ or ‘reconstruct’ the values of the indigenous population. The expectation for a convert was to sever ties with the heathen practices of the old. “The standard of church membership of the Mission field was set high and clear from the beginning. It was enjoined that every candidate should not only have renounced all heathen practices, and lead a moral life, but that he must possess an intelligent knowledge of Christian principles, observe the Sabbath, and abstain from all intoxicants”.²⁵⁴ The converts were expected to be different from the rest, in heart, in mannerism, divorced from their old ways. Thus, creating a differentiation of ‘us’ and ‘them’ in the communitarian society: the converts and the non-converts.

The previous chapter had highlighted the centrality of zu in the traditional set up. So, one is oriented to the meaning of the drink. It holds or represents a deeper meaning to the Mizos; an attachment to their old culture. Its presence provided sustainance to their practices. Despite all positive attachments and representation located of zu, its negative implication would not have gone unnoticed. Prof. J.V. Hluna relates that in the olden days offences or faults of a man was condoned or excused if

²⁵⁴Morris, John Hughes. (1990). *The Story of Our Foreign Mission: Presbyterian Church of Wales*. Aizawl: Synod Publication Board. p. 91

it was committed under the influence of zu. A person was considered to exhibit lack of discernment and the phrase ‘zu a rui a nih kha’ (lit. he is drunk) would often lead to dismissal of crimes committed like the beating of a wife to even murder committed to avenge or to appease a repressed anger against a foe.²⁵⁵

These harm factors would also have added the need to do away with its presence from the other. The missionaries thus introduced new understandings like the concept of ‘sin’ as they claimed they were ignorant of such concept.²⁵⁶ The connotation of sin would have been different if one compared the two worldviews: the tribal view as compared to the western oriented Christian world view.

The converts were expected to adhere to the rules established by the missionaries. Zairema had written, “to become a church member in Lushai means a definite break with old traditions, customs and habits. Total abstinence is insisted on, old forms of worship must be abandoned, Sabbath must be kept and regular attendance at church”.²⁵⁷ The aim had been to do away with anything associated with the old thus the introduction to the new standards of Christian morality, ethics and customs. What the missionaries considered sin was not regarded as a sin by the Mizos, like taking liquor, not observing Sunday, etc.²⁵⁸ Abstinence from the consumption of zu thus became symbolic of being a Christian, ‘a marker of disassociation from the old’. Amidst many values inculcated, giving up the drink was the ultimate test for the converts. It became the one temptation many converts found difficult to resist and thus reverted to the old life. The discipline maintained by the church in this regard was very stern. A lick of a finger dipped in rice beer made one liable to excommunication.²⁵⁹ To

255 Hluna, Prof. J.V., (retired Head, Department of History, Pachhunga University College) personal communication, 4/11/2020

²⁵⁶ Reports by Missionaries of Baptist Missionary Society. (1901-1938. Comp.) (1993). Serkawn: The Mizoram Gospel Centenary Committee (Baptist Church of Mizoram). pp. 93-94.

²⁵⁷ Zairema. (1978). *God's Miracle in Mizoram: A Glimpse of Christian Work among Head-Hunters*. Aizawl: Synod Press & Bookroom. p. 17

²⁵⁸ Rohmingmawii. (2013). *Society and Religion in Mizoram: A Study of Revival Movement (1906-1937)*. (Doctoral Thesis). Department of History and Ethnography, School of Social Sciences.

Mizoram University, Tanhril, Mizoram. p. 18. Retrieved from [http://mzuir.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/123456789/240/1/Rohmingmawii%20\(History\)%20-%202013.pdf](http://mzuir.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/123456789/240/1/Rohmingmawii%20(History)%20-%202013.pdf).

²⁵⁹ Zairema, op.cit., p. 11

drink zu was then symbolic of reverting to the old tradition which also lead to excommunication of church members!

Remthangi²⁶⁰ a 94 year old nerrates glimpse of her past as an early convert. Her grandfather was an early convert, therefore the entire family embraced the religion. Prior to the conversion, she recollects, how her parents would always keep a pot of rice beer at home ready for any occasion. Nostalgically she recalls the sweetness of the rice beer brewed by her father. However, once they became Christians, they no longer brewed because their religion prohibited drinking. A young girl herself at the time, she was neither allowed to take part in any cultural occasion. She further narrates during festivities when all non-converts would be out drinking, and singing the night away, her family would stay at home because such associations to the old ways was 'no longer allowed'. It will not be wrong to assume that such change as narrated by Remthangi had been the same for all the converts. It indicates an embrace of the new Christian custom, entailed commitment to the new norms and renunciation of the old.

The expectation of the missionaries had been to redefine, to be able to distinguish the new person by mere sight as well. They were expected to groom themselves in the likeness of the White man. Men were expected to cut their hair as against the long tresses they were used to wearing as a bun, women who used to wear *saiha bengbeh* or ivory earrings were expected not to wear it anymore.²⁶¹ Lloyd writes, of the two indicators for a man to show his earnestness in becoming a Christian:

- a) First, to give up drinking zu because it involves discontinuing numerous religious and social rites.
- b) Second, surrendering the *kelmei*²⁶² amulet they wore around the neck, they considered it to provide protection from evil spirits, to set it aside showed serious intention to become a Christian free of superstitions.²⁶³

²⁶⁰ Remthangi (Early inhabitant of Sikulpuikawn, Mission Veng, Aizawl. She was 94 years old by the time she passed away in 2017), personal communication, 3/8/2016.

²⁶¹ Sangkhuma, Z.T. (1995). *Missionary Te Hmunhma*. Aizawl: M.C. Lalrinthanga. p. 139

²⁶² *Keimei amulet* was the tuft of the tail of a goat that had been specially sacrificed, a tuft which was worn around the neck to ward off evil spirit. For more see Lloyd, J. Meirion. (1991). *History of the Church in Mizoram (Harvest in the Hills)*. Aizawl: Synod Publication Board. p. 53

²⁶³ Lloyd, J. Meirion. (1991). *History of the Church in Mizoram (Harvest in the Hills)*. Aizawl: Synod Publication Board. p. 53

The aim was the ultimate transformation both intrinsically and extrinsically. Amidst many values and standards inculcated, the introduction of zu as a sin had resulted in the stern prohibitionist stance of the church. This conception of zu as a sin has been deeply embedded in the minds of the Mizos.

ii) A tale of conformity

The Village Chiefs resisted the Colonial administration even after 1890. The realization of settlement in their land followed with the demand of house tax of ₹ 1/- per annum, 12 maunds of rice and 6 days labour from each household sparked renewed effort to resistance.²⁶⁴ However, any form of resistance was subdued by 1895 under the command of McCabe. He captured the resisting Chiefs, confiscated their guns and burned their villages.²⁶⁵ Chiefs who resisted their authority were neutralised or either captured or deported to jails far removed from their beloved land. The Lakher region came under their control by 1924.²⁶⁶ The Superintendent had become the chief maker, thus, the right to rule which was once sacred and hereditary had come to be a post created and occupied by those aligned to the whims and fancies of the Colonial administration. With petty administrative powers left to in hands, the Chiefs continued to wield limited power over their subjects. At least, they received from the administration the right to rule with a small kingdom and subjects to rule over. However, the coming of the British missionaries procured a different kind of struggle for the Chiefs. The missionaries who preached not only the teachings of Christ but also set introduced new customs to follow (requiring the abandonment of their culture and its practices) created a grave challenge for the Chiefs. These multifaceted threats must have created in them a sense of being uprooted from the very community they protected and ruled. Acceptance of Christianity by their subjects directly implied the loss of culture one person a time. They had played their role in bringing about a complete change in the lives of the Mizos, such changes had not posed greater threat to the authority of the Village Chiefs. So, the effort of the Chiefs to put a stop to the

²⁶⁴ Lalthanliana. (2000). *Zalen Nana British Do*. Aizawl: Lalthanliana. p. 131

²⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 141

²⁶⁶ Chaube. S.K. (1999 Reprint). *Hill Politics in Northeast India*. Patna: Orient Longman. p.13.

conversion resulted in the tug and pull for power between them. The fight to preserve the 'contested culture' resulted in the cruel treatment of proselyte subjects by the Chiefs.

By 1952, the attitude towards the missionaries and the Christians had changed, Awksarala, Chief of Phullen and son of Vanphunga related his attitude, "But for many years I despised them. I despised missionaries too until quite recently. Now I am beginning to see the value of their work".²⁶⁷ The famine of 1911 bled the land dry but worked to the advantage of the missionaries. Had it not been for the hard circumstances caused by the famine and the superior position held by the British administrators over the Chiefs, proselytization might not have been much of a success as it had been.

The Chiefs persecuted their proselyte subjects, not the British missionaries as they were recognized as a part of the colonial power: the superior White men. They had greatly snubbed the revival movement from taking off in 1906. Had the missionaries gone to the land alone unaided by their administrative counterparts, the accounts of conversion might have been different. D.E Jones's encounters prove this argument. In 1901 when "Thankunga, son in law of Dawrphawka, a close friend of Sahon Roy and a keen Christian was put in Lunglei prison for a brief while, Mizo Christians in Aizawl were stirred and angered by this and went all the way to the southern capital to plead on behalf of their friend, and against the injustice done to him. D.E. was moved on this occasion to do something which he rarely did, viz. ask for the government to step in to set Thankunga free".²⁶⁸ D.E successful pleaded his release. Thankunga's release was followed by the first baptism in the South in 1902: the baptism of Thankunga, Tlawmi, Lengkhawia and Parima. Another account of D.E in 1906 at Lungpher village shows the connection between the missionaries and the government that subsequently led to the recognition of their connection by the chiefs.

"On Monday the party moved on to Lungpher which was Thangkham's own village. Thangkham was prepared for them. They arranged an open-air meeting and a small group of villagers gathered, apparently to listen. But the moment D.E began

²⁶⁷ Lloyd, op.cit., p. 103.

²⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 72

to speak the little crowd melted away, each to his house. It was impossible to get an audience so D.E. called on the chief elder to see if he could have an explanation. He was told that all the adults had gone off to their rice fields. This was quite feasible. But about a quarter of an hour later two mithuns (large semi-wild buffaloes) which had strayed into the village began to fight. It was too good to miss and all the villagers poured out of their houses to see the contest. The reason for their previous non-appearance was apparent. The chief had announced that any villager who listened to the preaching would be fined one pig. This was no mean threat for the pig was one of the most valuable sacrificial animals in a Mizo household, and esteemed more highly than any other domestic creature, often as a pet. D.E. felt that he had been very unfairly treated, so he had recourse to something he usually avoided. He threatened to report the chief's action. The chief then, knowing he had been in the wrong, rescinded his previous order and gave permission to listen if they wished."²⁶⁹ A threat to report of the directive of the Chief had then resulted in the immediate cancellation and change of the Chiefs decree. Had it not been for the presence and superior position of the colonial administrators, work for the missionaries would have definitely been less effective.

The growth of Christian population beginning the first spiritual revival movement from 1906 to the fourth revival movement in 1930 and the subsequent identification of the entire tribal population to the adapted religion by 1960 thus proved true the first hypothesis, 'Adoption of Christianity by the Mizos put an end to the opposition between the Chiefs and the Missionaries on the issue of liquor.' Analysis is made below:

- a) Adoption of Christianity was identified as loss of subjects by the Chiefs, as it implied the loss of culture and the crumbling of the social foundation of the communal society.
- b) Zu became an important signifier in the struggle between the Chiefs and the missionaries. One fought to retain culture and the other to change it. This was so because the making and consumption of zu against abstinence also signified continuance or discontinuance of numerous religious and social rites.

²⁶⁹ Lloyd, op.cit., p. 101

- c) The chiefs retaliated the change by harshly persecuting the converts, this was done with the aim of blocking the spread of Christianity. However, the Chiefs recognized the superiority of the White men, both administrators and missionaries were identified as one belonging to the same power, facilitating each other's work.
- d) The growth of the spiritual revival which began in 1906 was snubbed by the Chiefs through persecution and the counter cultural revival movement represented by Puma zai. However, this movement faded as a result of the Mautam famine of 1911. The fragile agrarian economy crumbled, there was shortage of food and zu no longer could be produced with the shortage of grains, the spirit of the counter cultural movement was finally nipped in the bud as a result of the famine.
- e) Cognizance of the humanitarian works of the missionaries made them more popular and perception of them came to occupy a more positive light from 1911. The Chiefs though untrusting and disapproving of the missionaries were helpless of the changes happening around them as Christians grew in number. Since the passing of more than five decades from the Khandaih persecutions of 1906, the conflict eventually subsided, the mistrust on both ends eventually dissipated as the Chiefs too became Christians. Thus, conforming to the Christian edicts set by the missionaries. Thereby transforming the entire socio-cultural practices of the people from birth to death. Christian names began to be adopted, their appearances changed, men cut their hair short, began to wear pants, women no longer wore their *saiha bengbeh* (ivory earrings), they observed Sundays, gave up their *kelmei amulets*, changed the way the buried the dead, the Zawlbuk slowly faded and could not be revived despite government effort to restart the institution. It did away with their socio-cultural practices and most important to the issue under study, zu came to be perceived as a sin and the people observed abstinence thus ending the social sanction to the making and consumption of indigenous liquor.

The Chiefs had done their absolute best to resist and held their own despite all the disadvantages. However, all attempts had been futile. Fifty years later, they too are seen conforming to the dictated norms of the new social construct.

iii) The mission work and growth of the church:

The stage of entry for the missionaries was set by 1891, the year marked the completion of the military expedition and the year of arrival of the first missionary Revd. William Williams who from 1894 was followed by J.H Lorrain and F.W Savidge and many more. Missionizing the population had taken place territorially. The Presbyterian missionaries set up base in Mission Veng, Aizawl, the Baptist mission centre located at Serkawn, Lunglei and the Lakher Pioneer Mission work among the Maras began in 1907 located further south of Lunglei.²⁷⁰ Their evangelization work initially failed to gain ground, however, revival movement (spiritual revival) that was experienced in various parts of the world in the early 20th century had also taken a hold of North Eastern region of India. The first converts Khuma and Khara were baptised on the 25th July, 1899. The first wave of revival took place on the 8th of April 1906 and was known as the Revival of Khandaih. The second wave had taken place in 1913 and the third wave came in 1919. The third wave was considered the greatest and most powerful revival in Mizoram. The fourth wave of revival which occurred in 1930 resulted in the increase of 41,263 converts all over Mizoram.²⁷¹ The revival helped Christianity gain more ground as it evolved and became indigenized; more suited to the taste of the people. Joy Pachuau, calculates the growth of Christian population as such,

“In 1901, rough estimates put the percentage of Christians (Presbyterians and Baptists) at 0.08 % of a total population of 82,434 in the Lushai Hills District. By 1911, 3.10 % of the population proclaimed they were Christians, and this increased to 28.0 % by the beginning of the next decade. There are no figures available for 1931, but by 1941 63.26 percent of the population considered themselves Christians, with a marginal increase in 1951 to 67.06 %. By the 1960s it was a recognized fact that all

²⁷⁰ Pachuau, Joy. op.cit., p. 158

²⁷¹ Rohmingmawii. (2013). *Society and Religion in Mizoram: A Study of Revival Movement (1906-1937)*. (Doctoral Thesis). Department of History and Ethnography, School of Social Sciences. Mizoram University, Tanhril, Mizoram. Pp. 110-136. Retrieved from [http://mzuir.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/123456789/240/1/Rohmingmawii%20\(History\)%20-%202013.pdf](http://mzuir.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/123456789/240/1/Rohmingmawii%20(History)%20-%202013.pdf).

those who considered themselves Mizo also considered themselves Christian, though the state continued to have non-Mizo, non-Christian population”²⁷²

Proselytization of the population had been a complete success among the Mizos thus making Christianity a homogenizing factor for it to be an important aspect of their identity. However, the efforts of the missionaries came with its own set of challenges, the most obstinate challenge came from the Village Chiefs. It is initially seen that the colonial administration had harboured quite a neutral attitude towards Mizo liquor. They had been the agents of change in the drink facet as they established the first wine shop. Thus, the locals came to know of ‘sap zu’ (lit. the White man’s drink).

iv) The success: An explanation

The case of the Mizo Christianity had been a unique phenomenon. The successful conversion of the entire population require an explanation. Sajal Nag in his exhaustive study of the bamboo flowering in Mizoram explained the success of proselytization owing to the situation presented by the Mautam induced famine in 1911 which weakened the position of the Lushais, leaving them impoverished and hungry, on the other side the situation provided a site for the politics of humanitarianism for the missionaries. This helped their mission work to gain ground, changing the perception of the indigenous population to a positive note thus, eventually leading to the acceptance of the religion propagated by them. On the onset, the success may also be interpreted according to Nicolas Tapp as similar to the ‘rice-bowl Christian’ who converted in order to receive some material benefit not dismissing the advantages of material and spiritual benefits to be inextricably mingled.²⁷³

On a deeper analysis Joy Pachuau in her study of the Mizo experience of Christianity and identity argued the embrace of Christianity as a structural phenomenon rooted in the traditional existent practise of changing one’s tribe through

²⁷² Pachuau, op.cit., p.159.

²⁷³ Tapp, Nicholas. (1989). *The Impact of Missionary Christianity upon Marginalized Ethnic Minorities: The Case of the Hmong*. pp. 70-95. In Cambridge University Press: *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*.

the process of *Saphun*. This change of tribe spirit is acknowledged because of the accepted existence of fluidity in group affiliation in the traditional society.²⁷⁴ It indicates a sense of belonging to a group: their group of tribes affiliated to their particular sakhua or tribe-spirit. Joy had argued the colonial occupation and subsequent unification of territory had led to “reformulation of an identity in which the adoption of a new religion would seem natural to the Mizos. The adoption of Christianity, the new ‘tribe-spirit’, was concomitant with the formation of a new political identity, that of the Mizo.” This argument presented by Joy seems to provide a plausible explanation as to why the proselytization was so successful compared to their proselytization work elsewhere in the colonies.

The changing circumstances of the society and the people’s imminent need to identify oneself to a particular group (the better alternative presented to the people) was to align oneself to the Christian identity. It promised them an end to all the appeasement sacrifices made to the spirits and also entry to Pialral without having to undergo the extensive and exhaustive ceremonial performance to earn the coveted Thangchhuah title. The promise of a better, more easier life preached by the new religion were reasons enough to identify themselves to Christianity. This transition had claimed identification to a greater, far larger political group, the Mizo identity. Thus, from the colonial times, one can see the identity of the Mizos centred on religion, the Mizo Kristian (Mizo Christian) identity.

It is evident that they: the colonial administrators and missionaries were agents who introduced modernity in the Lushai Hills. The modern Mizo society with its adopted religion Christianity had internalised conservative values as promoted by the British missionaries led churches, one such important teaching had been to stand for prohibition. To drink liquor had been associated as a sin, un-Christian behaviour and drunkenness a taboo.

²⁷⁴ Pachuau 2014, op.cit., pp. 179-182

v) Prohibition: A legacy of the ‘*Mizo Kristians*’

The course of this study had identified the presence of a narrative which counters the popular belief that ‘prohibition’ was instigated by the Zosap. In the course of interviews with church leaders and historians understanding the source of prohibition had come to locate a very important space in the debate. There is a saying that prohibition was infact legacy of the early *Mizo Kristians* (Mizo Christians). The early converts helped spread Christianity in various capacities and also helped lead the church. They themselves became one of them; the *Kohhran hruaitu hmasa* (or early church leaders). They formed the elite constellation of early Pastors and Kohhran Upas (or church elders) who helped shape and indigenize Christianity to Mizo Kristianna (or Mizo Christianity).

The ban on making and consuming zu was prioritized by the church mainly because it evoked nostalgia. The saying ‘lunglen a kai chhuak thei’ (lit. it can make one feel nostalgic) represented a recognition that consumption of their zu could evoke (and had evoked) a deep sentimental yearning for their cultural past and had converts revert. It stood as a bastion of the old culture that it was felt that a total ban must be imposed upon it. This was to ensure that (people) would not pine for zu and in turn revert back to the age old practices. Therefore, ‘khap law law ni mai se’ (lit. let it be prohibited) was the decision of the Kohhran hruaitu hmasate. Thus, prohibition of the drink can be understood as a form of ‘preventitive for a proselyte to revert to his original sakhua’.

The edicts of Christianity based on the conception of sin differ from place to place. Such difference can be illucidated from the simple case of liquor and tobacco. Naga²⁷⁵ Christiana consider the consumption of tabacco and liquor both a great sin. Rev. Dr. Mongzeung Mpom explains that both liquor and tobacco are conceptualised as ‘sin’, a source of ‘immorality’ among the Naga Christians. He affirms both perception as a colonial legacy and indulgence of both regarded as ‘un-Christian’.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁵ Naga tribes from Nagaland, a neighbouring state of Mizoram.

²⁷⁶ Mpom, Rev. Dr. Mongzeung. (Pastor Jalukie Town Baptist Church, Nagaland) telephone communication, 28/3/2022

However, the conception of sin runs halfway for the Mizos. Therefore, a smoking Mizo Christian is a norm, not conceptualised as sin and therefore not prohibited.

Agenda No. 7 of the first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in 1910 bore testimony to their pro-temperance stance. Contravention to their decision even extended expulsion from the area.²⁷⁷ Commenting to the ruling of the assembly, F. Lalsangliana added “It is often believed that the missionaries were the ones who prohibited the consumption of liquor but the reality was that the Mizo people firmly believed such an act of consuming liquor was against the Christian principle and it was this belief which ultimately led the Church leaders to firmly advocate for prohibition.”²⁷⁸ So, he presents a different interpretation as to why prohibition was prohibited by the Mizo Christians; it was ‘against Christian principles’.

Trace of the past gave light to the colonial documents on liquor dating back to 1923, it was a proposal for the ‘establishment of a wine shop and sale of spirit’ made by the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills to the Commissioner, Surma Valley and Hills Division (*see Picture 1*). The proposal was made as demand for spirits was constant by the armed forces stationed in Aijal (present Aizawl). The proposal indicates the presence of illicit brewers from whom the battalion sourced their spirited drink. This proposal surely aimed for the provision of a legal and better supply of liquor. Suggestion to find a legal vendor for the wine shop was considered a better option than an outstill system by the Superintendent. It also stated that the ‘Mizos would not frequently buy from the shop as they preferred to drink their zu’. This statement shows a glimpse of concern in setting up shop and making their brand of drink available to the tribes. The issue had perhaps been deliberated and therefore the statement of assurance made.

J. Hezlett, the Commissioner, Surma Valley and Hills Division passed the proposal for ‘country spirit and imported liquor shops in the Lushai Hills’ on the 15th May 1923 (*see Picture 2*). The passing of this Act granted the first Lushai Hills

²⁷⁷ Zu Chungchanga Mizoram Presbyterian Kohhran Dinmun. (1995) Aizawl: Mizoram Synod Social Front. p. 1

²⁷⁸ Lalsangliana, F. (Ex- Secretary, Mizoram Presbyterian Church Synod) personal communication, 6/2/2021, 19/2/2021 & 26/3/2022

(Mizoram) liquor selling permit.²⁷⁹ With the approval, wine shop was establishment, located well away from the bazaar and within reach of the Thana (police station) in Aijal. Vendor licensing permit was also granted to different people.²⁸⁰

Zu referred in the proposal is indicative of the locally brewed rice beer the preferred beverage of the Mizos. This legalizing act of the officials was met with stern criticism by J.H. Lorrain where he questioned the Superintendent that such legalizing act ran counter to their (the missionaries) efforts of promoting abstinence since the people (the Lushais) really did not know how to limit their drink, it would certainly destroy their race. He sternly asked for annulment of the order.²⁸¹ This stern opposition by Lorrain indicates the aligned intent of church leaders (both Zosap and the Mizo Kohhran Hruaitu hmasa) to promote prohibition. Prohibition promoted by D.E. Jones in 1897 also bore evidence to such aligned intent. The cause of the aligned intent ultimately favoured a unified outcome i.e, the proliferation of Christianity.

²⁷⁹ File No. 11-12 of 1923, vide letter No.366E (15th May 1923) under license No 565(T) Dt. 22.6.1923. Sourced from Mizoram District Council Record Room.

²⁸⁰ Attachment of the licensing permit granted to Dev Narain Ram, Silchar, registered no. 5 of 1923 is attached below, see Picture 6.

²⁸¹ Interview with C. Lalchawimawia, Rtd. LDC, Record Room (1984-1990), Aizawl District Commissioner Office. Aizawl. Dated: 20/2/2021.

Picture 1. Proposal made by Superintendent of the Lushai Hills.

#12A

in Meachengai

I have this proposal for the establishment
of an wine shop in Aijal for the reason
there is no demand in this place.

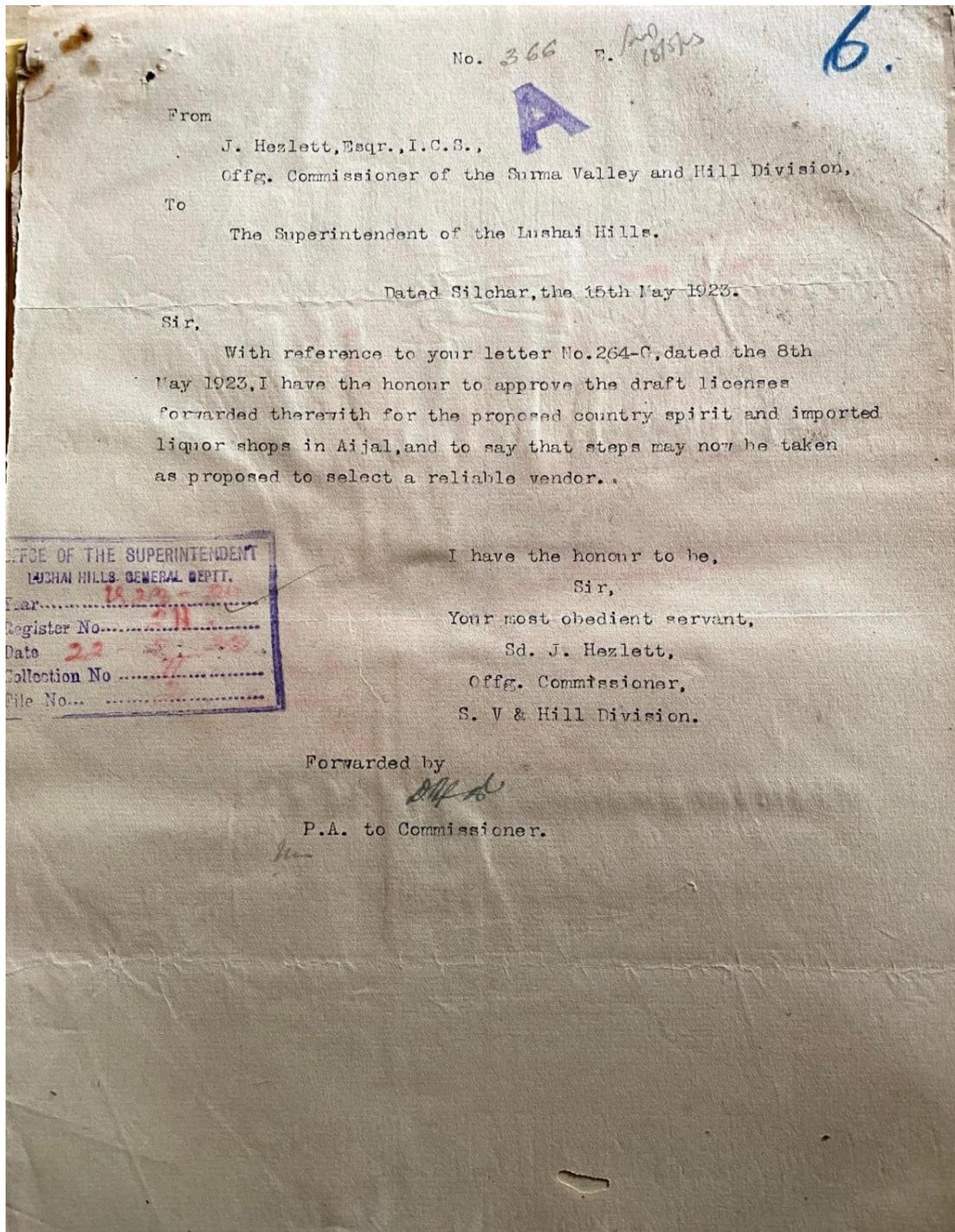
The principal points in my view, are
as follows

1. Whether the Centee in the Lushai Hills
sell liquor to outsiders
2. There is undoubtedly a genuine
demand for spirits, & if no legal supply
is made, it is very difficult to check
illegal distillation
3. I think it will be better for the
Battalion that a legal source of supply
of spirits to outsiders should be supplied,
than that outsiders should buy illicitly,
in such case sales to men of the Battalion
are inevitable.
4. In my opinion it would be advisable
to try the effect of licensing a shop to
sell country spirit & imported liquors on
the usual terms allowed in the plains. I
should certainly prefer this to an
outlet system
5. I would not believe a shop in the
main bazaar would be necessary to
meet a demand.
6. I think the business would
be done to a very great extent
then before the establishment of a shop

I would have opinion +
 change into table
 100/52

The proposal made by the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills to the Commissioner, Surma Valley and Hills Division in the Lushai Hills for the establishment of wine shop in Aijal. Source: Record Room, Aizawl District Commissioner Office. Aizawl. See Appendix I for contents of the proposal.

Picture 2: Approval for the establishment of wine shop in Aizawl (Part 1)



Approval for the establishment of wine shop in Aizawl by J. Hezlett, Offg. Commissioner, Surma Valley and Hills Division in the Lushai Hills on the 15th May 1923. Source: Record Room, Aizawl District Commissioner Office. Aizawl.

Picture 3: Approval for the establishment of wine shop in Aizawl (Part 2)

A

No. 3578/II-12
19-05-22

D.C. Cachar.

Sir. I have the honour to inform you that the Command S.O. & H. Unit has approved a proposal to open a C.P. and the public liquor shop in Aizawl. The fee for the licence is Rs. 100/- but you may apply for a licence for Rs. 50/- subject to very strict conditions. You would be required to pay Rs. 100/- before the licence is issued. The licence would be valid for one year. You may apply for a licence at any time during the year. The licence would be issued to you on the condition that you will be allowed to sell the liquor only in the licensed premises. The licence would be issued to you on the condition that you will be allowed to sell the liquor only in the licensed premises. The licence would be issued to you on the condition that you will be allowed to sell the liquor only in the licensed premises.

Yours faithfully,
D.C. Cachar
19-05-22

Approval for the establishment of wine shop in Aizawl sent to the D.C. Cachar. No. 35/G/II-12. Details of the approval statement (as can be deciphered) is seen in Appendix II. Source: Record Room, Aizawl District Commissioner Office. Aizawl.

Picture 4: Site proposal statement.

Superintendent.

A

With reference to your order to try and find a site for the proposed liquor shop on the Sairang Road. I could find no suitable site on the Sairang Road except at the junction. This is over a mile from the Station and in my opinion too far away.

The only other site which is at all suitable is below the Subinspectors quarters. I am enclosing a sketch map and the proposed site has been marked in blue pencil. The site proposed is well away from the bazaar, and within reach of the thana. If you approve of the site the man could be instructed to start his building.

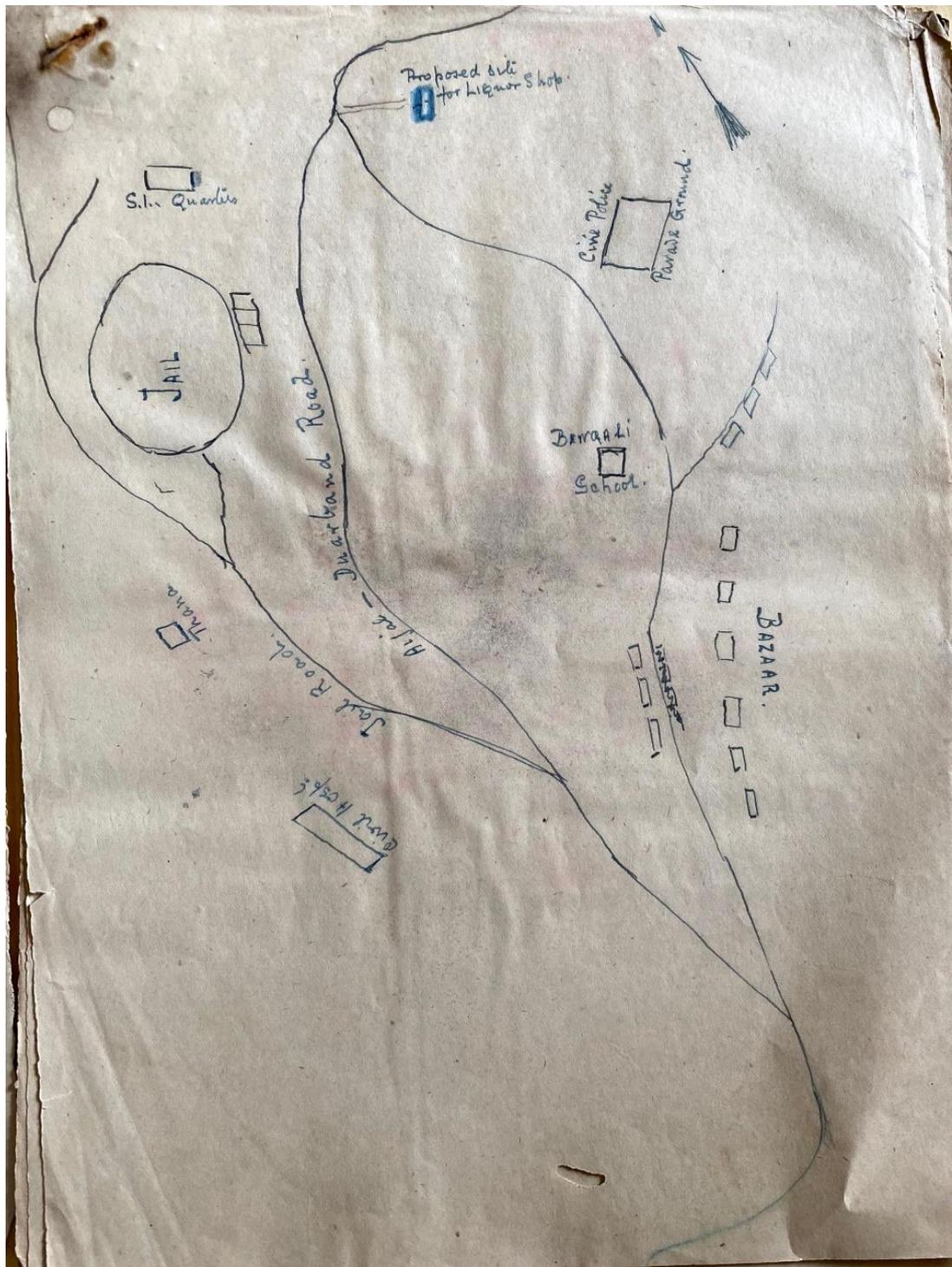
*I approve this site. Do you - look to it?
If not, find another before to make one.
The house should start on construction at once.*

*See for
2/10/13*

*Inform the man.
2/10/13*

Site proposal statement. Source: Record Room, Aizawl District Commissioner Office. Aizawl.

Picture 5: Proposed sketch for the location of the wine shop.



Proposed sketch for the location of the wine shop. Source: Record Room, Aizawl District Commissioner Office. Aizawl.

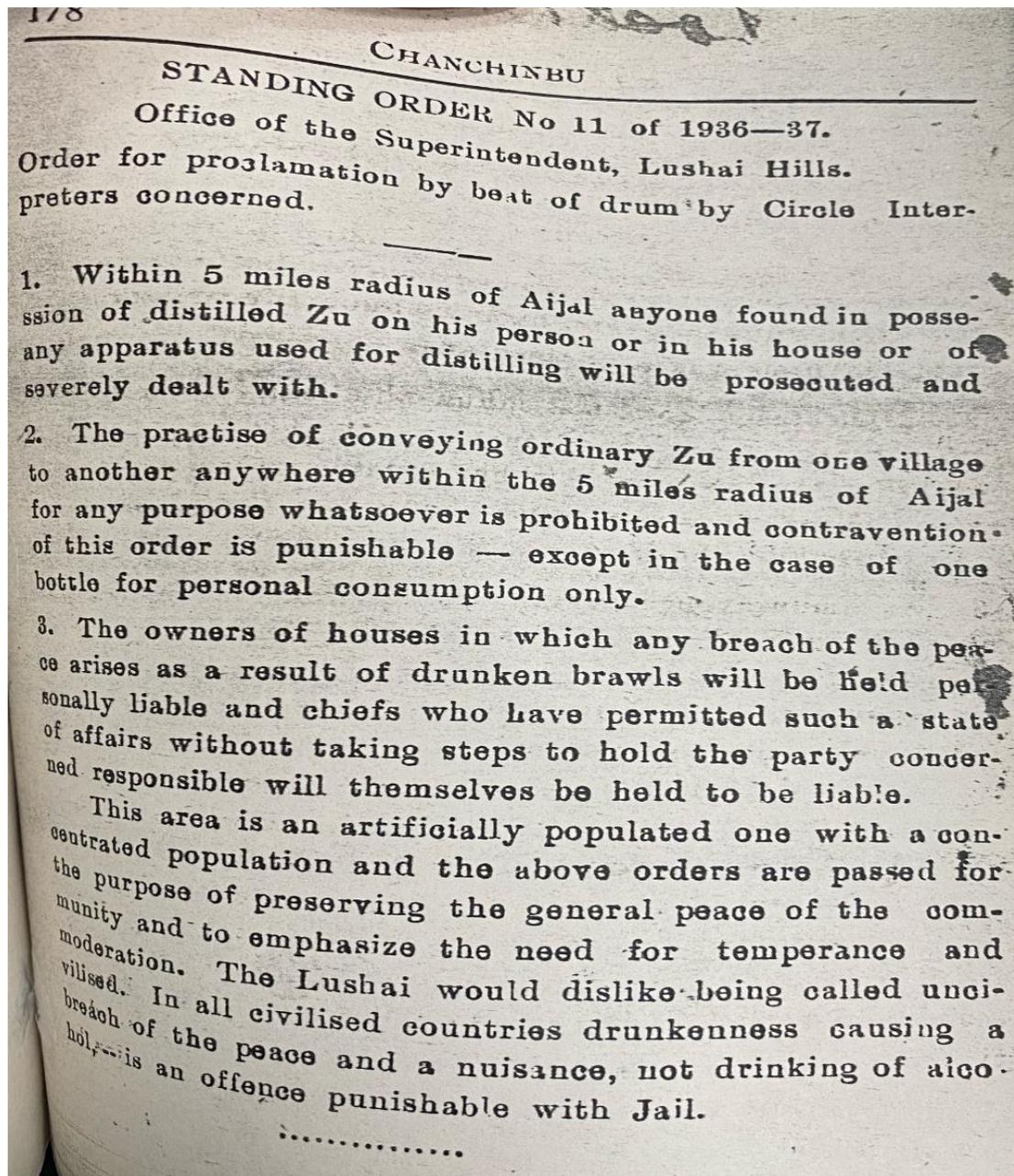
shows conformity with the wishes of the missionaries as it gives instructions for the ban of: possession, manufacture (distilling) and transportation of zu within five mile radius of Aizawl and more. The details of the order as published for peoples information is as seen from the pictures attached below.

Picture 7: Mizo leh Vai Chanchin Bu Front Cover.



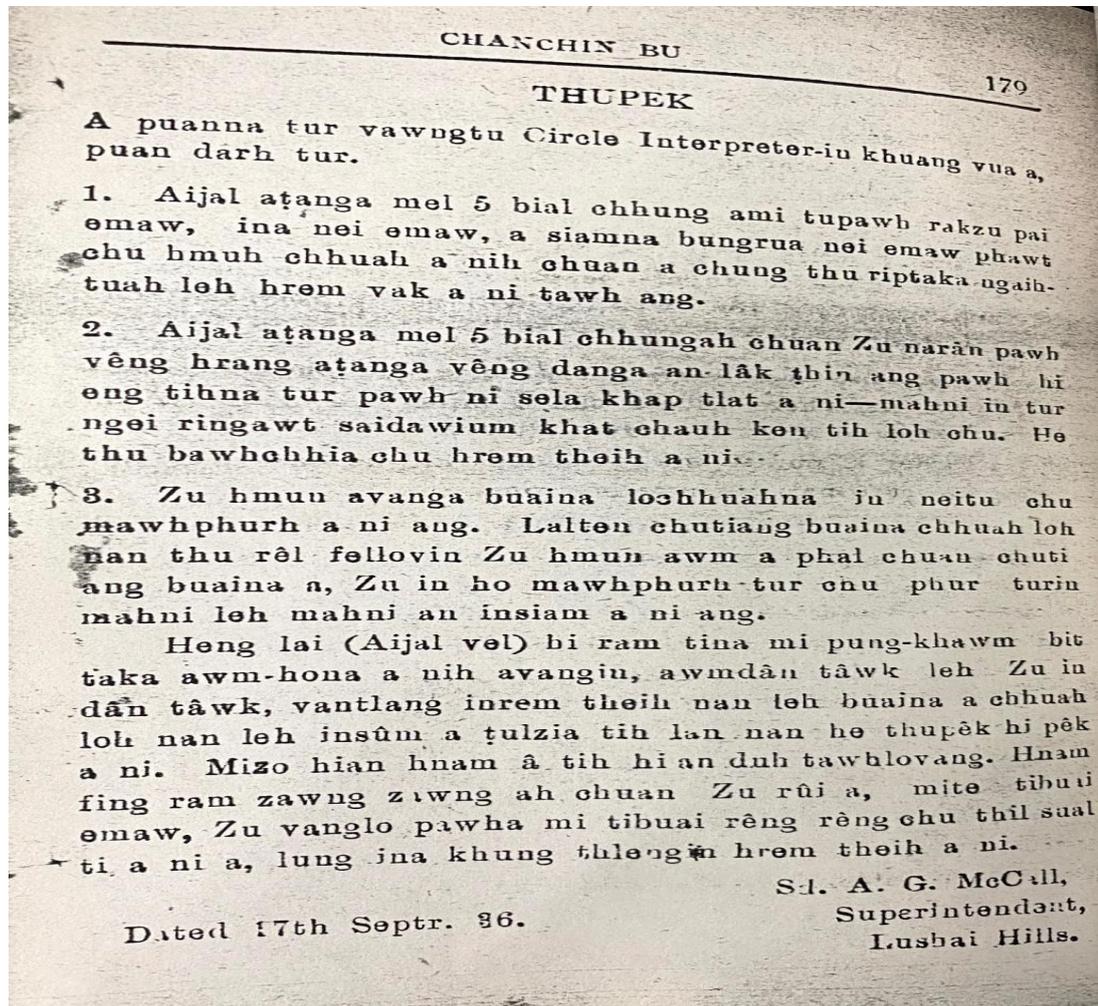
The front page of Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu containing Standing Order No. 11 of 1936 – 37 given by Major. A.G. McCall, Superintendent, Lushai Hills. Issue: October 1936. Sourced from Synod Archives, Mission Veng Aizawl.

Picture 8: English version of Standing Order No. 11 of 1936 – 1937.



Picture 8. Standing Order No. 11 of 1936 – 37 given by Major. A.G. McCall, Superintendent, Lushai Hills published in *Mizo leh Vai Chanchin Bu* (or the *Mizo and Outsider Newspaper*). Sourced from Synod Archives, Mission Veng Aizawl.

Picture 9: Mizo version of the Standing Order No. 11 of 1936 – 37.



Translation of the Standing Order No. 11 of 1936 – 37 given by Major. A.G. McCall, Superintendent, Lushai Hills published in *Mizo leh Vai Chanchin Bu* (or *The Mizo and Outsider Newspaper*). Sourced from Synod Archives, Mission Veng Aizawl.

Such orders are announced by the Circle Interpreter with a prior banging of the drum. The laws were formulated to curb excessive drinking, drunken brawls and for the maintenance of peaceful environment in Aijal (thus referred in the order as ‘artificial populated area’). One can identify the subtle alignment of this order to the social dictates of the churches in restructuring the indigenous society.

The first point prohibits: the making, possession of brewing instruments, possession of ‘distilled zu’ like the Rakzu; the drinks of the Chiefs and his elders. The marker of social hierarchy of the tribes. This can also be indicative of the diminishing position of the Chiefs.

The second point prohibits the transport of 'ordinary zu' or the rice beer be it for any occasion within the stipulated five-mile radius within Aijal except for one bottle to carry for personal consumption. This point contains the movement of the special brew, thereby scaling down an important element which marks the grandure of their celebrations.

The third order stipulates the Chiefs to make proper laws for the maintenance of peace and makes them – the Chief and owner of the house liable to punishment for any outbreak of drunken brawls. This order tries to prohibit drunkenness. It also undermines the customary practices of the Zawlbuk by making the Chiefs and property owners directly liable to punishments for the outbreak of brawls. It disregarded the customary function of the Zawlbuk to discipline drunkards.

The order further warns the Lushais to avoid drunkenness to escape being called 'uncivilised' and made it a crime punishable with 'jailtime' as found in 'civilised countries'. The notion of 'jailtime for drunkenness' would have been a completely alien concept to the locals. It would have certainly instilled fear in them. The Standing Order No. 11 of 1936-1937 can also be regarded as a precursor to the prohibiting laws yet to be introduced in the land.

However, a different publication of the same order i.e., Standing Order No. 11 of 1936-1937 is seen as under VII. General Orders 9(a) in the book titled "The Lushai Hills District Cover" prepared by Major. A.G. McCall himself. In this publication, it is seen that an omission had been made regarding McCall's order. The concluding part of Mc Call's Standing Order published in the Mizo leh Vai Chanchin Bu writes:

"This area is an artificially populated one with a concentrated population and the above orders are passed for the purpose of preserving the general peace of the community and to emphasize the need for temperance and moderation. The Lushai would dislike being called uncivilised. In all civilised countries drunkenness causing a breach of the Peace and a nuisance, not drinking of alcohol is an offence punishable with Jail".²⁸³ (Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu 1936:178)

Whereas VII. General Orders 9(a) as seen in The Lushai Hills District Cover writes: "This area is an artificially populated one with a concentrated population and

²⁸³ See Pictures 7-9 or Appendix III.

the above orders are passed for the purpose of preserving the general peace of the community and to emphasize the need for temperance and moderation. The Lushai would dislike being called uncivilised. In all civilised countries drunkenness causing a breach of the Peace and a nuisance, not drinking of alcohol is an offence punishable with Jail. There is no ban on persons making Lushai rice zu for their personal consumption”.²⁸⁴ (The Lushai Hills District Cover [Reproduced] 1992: 84)

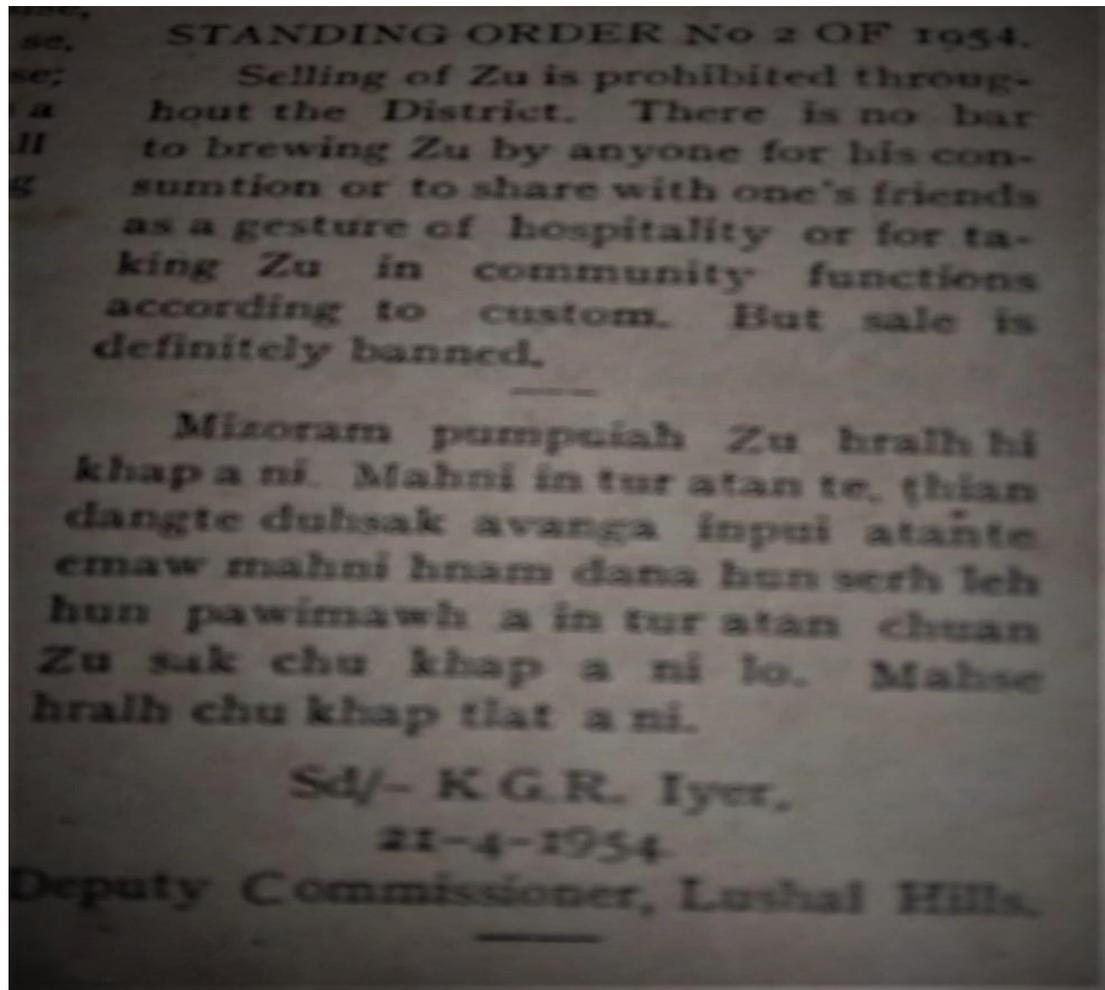
As seen above, publication in Mizo leh Vai Chanchin Bu makes a deliberate omission of the concluding sentence of the order as seen in The Lushai Hills District Cover which stipulates “There is no ban on persons making Lushai rice zu for their personal consumption”.²⁸⁵ (see Appendix III and IV for both orders). This act of omission seem to be likely done from fear of promoting the drink. As it runs counter to the church’s narrative for prohibition. The ‘rice zu’ remained ‘not banned’ as per the official order. Thus, the Officials stance on the rice beer is clear, it remains un-prohibited unlike rakzu, but such supportive content had been cancelled out for public consumption from within the system. Therefore, leaving the indigenous people, the illiterate majority (at the time) consuming the filtered version of the order.

On the 15th March 1954, another official order for the prohibition of liquor was published by the District Council titled Zoram Hriattirna (or Zoram Information). The Standing Order (also published in Mizo language) was issued by K.G.R. Iyer, Deputy Commissioner of the Lushai Hills around February 1954 (according to Zoram Hriattirna). The contents of the prohibition order as translated in Mizo vernacular was published for the general understanding of all indigenous people through the *Zoram Hriattirna*. It ordered the cancellation of permits granted for brewing and sale of liquor for the good of the ethnic race. It prohibits all kinds of liquor: inclusive of all foreign made liquor and country liquor. It states that liquor has negative impact on the society especially on school students. As wished by the leaders of society (excluding the Government leaders) and in agreement with their wishes, from the third day of the issue of this order, all utensils used for brewing and sale licences will be confiscated.

²⁸⁴ See Appendix IV

²⁸⁵ McCall, Major A.G.(1938-1939). *The Lushai Hills District Cover*. [Reproduced by L. Tochwng, I.A.S. Deputy Commissioner (1987-88) in 1992]. Government of Mizoram: Aizawl. pp. 83-84.

Picture 11: Standing Order No. 2 of 1954 issued by K.G.R. Iyer.



Standing Order No. 2 of 1954 issued by K.G.R. Iyer, Deputy Commissioner, Lushai Hills. Dated: 21/4/1954. Source: Record Room, District Commissioner Office (the hard copy of the order could not be found, what remains is only a blurred picture of the order)

However, another document was procured from the Record Room, District Commissioner Office called the Standing Order No. 2 given by K.G.R. Iyer, Deputy Commissioner, Lushai Hills (*see picture above*). This order appears to be published a month after the Zoram Hriattirna publication. The order very simply stipulates in Mizo,

“Selling of Zu is prohibited throughout the District. There is no bar to brewing Zu by anyone for his consumption or to share with one’s friends as a gesture of hospitality or for taking Zu in community functions according to custom. But sale is definitely banned” (*see Picture 11*).

The order though very brief can be seen permitting the people to brew and consume their indigenous drink ‘in private’ and permitted consumption of the drink for occasional customary functions. The official Standing Order barred only the ‘sale of *zu*’ throughout the district. There seem to exist inconsistency with the contents of the order issued by the Deputy Commissioner in both publications. However, the only common factor seen from both the orders was that the officials prohibited sale.

The cases of the official Standing Order No. 11, 1936 and the Standing Order No. 2, 1954, confirm the Government Official stance on indigenous liquor where hints of leniency and conservationist tendency can be traced from official documents prior to their translation much like the 1950 Constitution of India under Sixth Schedule, Article 12B which helps preserve the indigenous drink particularly the ‘non-distilled alcoholic drink’ of the autonomous district councils. The following deduction can be made from inconsistencies exhibited from the two documents:

- a) There had been inconsistencies in the dissemination of Government orders regarding *zu*.
- b) The administration exhibits leniency to the ‘consumption’ of ‘indigenous *zu*’.
- c) The educated indigenous elites as Christians, working for the system had been responsible for the translation. As seen from both documents the editors back then: Makthanga, Editor, *Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu* and Biakluanga, Secretary, Executive Committee, Lushai Hills District Council were known to be both devout Christians.²⁸⁶
- d) The act of omission and commission by the Mizos exhibits unwillingness to preserve the cultural past and promotion of the Mizo Kristian propaganda to promote prohibition. Promotion of the Chirstian agenda of temperance by emphasizing the ‘prohibiting’ aspect of the orders.
- e) It also indicates the rejection of ‘*sorkar dan*’ (the ways of the Government) over their ‘*hnam dan*’ (the ways of the Mizo custom) as their *hnam dan* had come to be identified as the Mizo Kristian²⁸⁷ way.

286 Hluna, Prof. J.V., (retd. Head, Department of History, Pachhunga University College) personal communication, 4/11/2020 & 25/3/2022

287 Mizo Kristian is translated as the Mizo Chirstian

f) The promotion of hnam dan shows attempts to negate the consumption of liquor.

As supportive sections of official's order(s) on indigenous liquor gets lost in translation, filtered for general consumption, the public perception of the narrative on liquor is seen as promoting temperance by both the Church but also by the Government. Such actions on the part of the print media controlled by Mizo Kristian elites (working for the system) can only be sourced from the influence of the Church: both Zosap and the Mizo Kristian hmasate. This intent to negate the drink continues to persist. Therefore, the contemporary Church continue to show demand for more stringent laws against liquor.

However, it can be deduced that both the Mizo Kristian hmasate and the missionaries under the banner of the church had promoted prohibition. The prohibiting laws mitigated by the church served to promote the unified intent of both parties. It can be further deduced that to isolate the lone intent for prohibition of the Mizo Kristian hmasate would help ring true the claim that they had been the source of prohibition. However, the broader picture shows that the promotion of unified intents of both Kristian hmasate and the missionaries had helped percieve the drink as a 'sin', 'un-Christian principle' and a 'source of social evil'. So to identify the church as the source of prohibition would provide the simplest understanding.

The negative perception on liquor promoted by the Church had consequently rubbed heavily on the psyche of the indigenized Mizo Christians. When the missionaries left the hills, their values and work was carried on by the Church they helped establish. The amalgamation of Chirstianity as a very important facet of the Mizo ethnic identity had further helped proliferate liquor prohibition. It is observed that the intent of the indigenized Kohhran hruaitute of the contemporary world for prohibition had come to represent a different intent of their own. i.e., the sustained projection of the Mizo identity as 'Mizoram Kristian ram' or Mizoram land of the Christians, thus, we see the continued promotion of prohibition narrative.

D. Civil Society in Mizoram: Perception on Liquor

Civil society according to the CIVICUS Civil Society Index (CSI) is “The arena, outside of family, the state and the market where people associate to advance common interests”.²⁸⁸ Civil society is also often equated with non-governmental organizations especially advocacy groups committed to public interest such as human rights, health, anti-corruption, women empowerment and so on. Nevertheless, it has a much bigger coverage. It is also inclusive of all the associations and organizations that exists outside state including the traditionally called interest groups, religious organizations, political parties, sports club.²⁸⁹ The Civil society has been an active occupant of the space between an individual and the state, it has on many occasions facilitated, helped implement Government policies, it has also played a pacifying and mediating role in conflicting times, at times it mobilises protest against the Government as well. Civil society in Mizoram find their roots in the church. It is represented by Mizoram Kohhran Hruaitute Committee (MKHC), the Young Mizo Association (YMA), Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP), Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP), Village Defence Party (VDP), Joint Action Committee (JAC) and more. These associations found in the modern society are community based organizations rooted in the moral injunctions dictated by Christian ethics. The underpinning of moral injunctions (of the Mizo Kristian kind) make their relationships seem right and proper to all in the exchange.

It can be observed that Mizo civil society has a religious lineage. Its origin in Christianity certainly does not free it from rituals and also has its roots in their communitarian society which does not actually free it from kin bonds as well. Some may argue that these ties disables individuals to think freely for themselves. Also, the presence of cultural homogeneity through the adopted Christian culture has been the driving force for the modularity of men as expressed by Ernest Gellner in his book “Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and Its Rivals”. Contemporary liberal thinkers

²⁸⁸ Heinrich, Finn. Volkhart. (2004). *Assessing and Strengthening Civil Society Worldwide*. CIVICUS Civil Society Index Series Vol.2, Issue 1. Retrieved from

<http://www.civicus.org/view/media/CSIAssessingnandStrengtheningCivilSocietyWorldwide.pdf>

²⁸⁹ Carothers, Thomas. (Winter 1999-2000). *Think Again: Civil Society*. Retrieved from

<http://www.osf.am/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Carothers-on-Civil-Society.pdf>

on civil society like Ernest Gellner and John Hall expresses the importance of the individual to be unconfined from kinship ties and rituals for individual to pursue his ideas and interests freely.

The key basis to liberal approach to civil society can be seen as freedoms and rights of individuals, where civil society is a space between the state and individuals. It is opined that the state and civil society is opposed to each other. The role of civil society is to check on the state to prevent its monopoly.²⁹⁰ In the case of liquor, differences had been observed in individual thought which at times prove to be in contradiction to the collective thought. Hegel on the other hand believe civil society to be a representation of a 'universal family' by 'drawing people to itself and requiring them to owe everything to it and to do everything by its means'.²⁹¹ The communitarian spirit is shown through the study of liquor in the Mizo society. The enforcement of prohibitionist policy had been a uniting factor for them, the policy bridged the gap between the civil society and the state as the collective thought on liquor remains constant in one thing: it will always be aligned to the prohibitionist stance which was once instilled by the British missionaries: as ardently pursued by the churches and its associated NGOs till date.

1. A belonging to the collective: To Christianity and the Civil Society.

One must understand the socio-cultural identity of an individual to 'the collective' in the Mizo society is firmly engraved in Christianity: to the church, and is also layered by membership to the various community based associations. Their identity as a Mizo Kristian is often followed by their identity belonging to the civil society as represented by the Young Mizo Association (YMA), the Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP), the Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP), the Mizo Upa Pawl (MUP) and more depending on the specified population catered by the associations. The YMA membership is open to all category of the Mizo population, while the MHIP caters to

²⁹⁰ Jailobaeva, Kanykey. (2007). *Civil Society from liberal and communitarian perspectives* Social Research Centre (AUCA). p. 1-5. Retrieved from https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/145085/Kanykei_eng.pdf

²⁹¹ Jones, G. (2001). Hegel and the Economics of Civil Society. In Kaviraj, S., & Khailnani, S. (Ed). *Civil Society: History and Possibilities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 123

Mizo women, the MZP for the Mizo student youths, the MUP for the old age population and many more likewise.

It is often found that the church representatives in their various capacities as chairperson or committee members are again appointed as leaders and members of the secular community associations. Thus, linking their identity to the religious and the secular: the bond of ritual and the bond of kinship. So, there appears to be no divorce of the religious and the secular in this regard. The collective thought of the peoples as represented through these social memberships can be said to be unsecular and community oriented. It provides a greater sense of belonging amidst the peripheral association they feel with the Indian identity, and to go against the thought of the collective is 'not done' as it will be an act of self-alienation. Issues like drunkenness had cause in the past the excommunication of membership from the church for a period of 6 months, cancellation of membership and residential expulsion by the YMA had all taken place on account of selling country liquor as well. Such incidences keep the people in line with the dictates of the civil society. This very nature of their social identity makes mobilization easy, thus making the civil society a very formidable ally and pressure group(s) for the state.

The issue of liquor clearly depicts the nature of the Mizo social identity. It is an established fact that the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition (MLTP) Act had been a failure, but the society through the church and various associations remain ardently opposed to the idea of legalizing liquor. They stand in solidarity for prohibition despite its failure! The need for revision of the failed law had been expressed often times, but change had not been made until 2014. Before delving into the new debate caused by the repeal of the dry law, a better understanding of the nature of civil society organizations and their perception on liquor is presented as follows:

i) The Church:

The church established in Mizoram is a product of put in by the British Missionaries. The gospel seed sown by the missionaries converted the whole tribe to

Christianity within half a century. Majority of the population today (87.16 %) ²⁹² belong to the Christian community in Mizoram. Christians in Mizoram today consists of various denominations, what began with the Presbyterians (Calvinist Methodists) and Baptists now consists of seventy-seven denominations. The largest denomination being the Presbyterian Church ²⁹³ (6,04,514 members, 2017-2018 Statistics Report, and 6,11,241 members in 2019) ²⁹⁴ consisting nearly half the population of Mizoram. The Presbyterian Church has 51 presbyteries, 304 pastorates, 1113 churches, 102 branch churches. Though the land continues to be dominated by the Presbyterian Church of Mizoram and the Baptists Church of Mizoram, the major denominations besides the two are the Salvation Army, United Pentecostal Church (UPC) North East India, United Pentecostal Church (UPC) Mizoram, Roman Catholics and the Seventh Day Adventist. Churches in Mizoram except for the Roman Catholics who remain neutral on the issue have all stood in unison against liquor.

Much of the prohibitionist work had been sourced from the Presbyterian Church dating back to the late 1890's. It had advocated for total prohibition against various political regimes. The most interesting lobby against liquor had been against the Governments Excise Act during Laldenga's Ministry. The Presbyterian Church had played an important role in pressuring the Government to prohibit liquor at the policy level. The works of the Presbyterian Church in their advocacy for temperance will be analysed in the latter part of the chapter. Nine denominations in Mizoram cooperatively formed the Mizoram Kohhran Hruaitute Committee (MKHC) on the 15th June, 1982. ²⁹⁵ The committee is an association of various dominations viz., the Lawngtlai Baptist Church, Baptist Church, Salvation Army, Roman Catholic, United Pentecostal Church, Seventh Day Adventist, Isua Krista Kohhran, Assembly of God and the Presbyterian Church.

²⁹² Mizoram Religion Census 2011. (5th May 2019). Census 2011. Retrieved from <https://www.census2011.co.in/data/religion/state/15-mizoram.html>

²⁹³ Mizoram Presbyterian Kohhran 2018 Synod Bu Vawi 95-na. (2019) *2017-2018 Statistics Report Khaikhawmna*. Aizawl: Presbyterian Church of India. p. 220

²⁹⁴ *Mizoram Kohhran dinhmunte hriat theih chin te*. (March 2019). Aizawl: M.U.P Tlangau

²⁹⁵ Hluna, J.V. (1985). *Church and Political Upheaval in Mizoram*, Mizoram: Mizo History Association. p.123

The MKHC supports the work of the organizations in rooting out liquor and other intoxicants in the society. On the 21st March, 2017, the Surplus Reduction Service (SRS) ceased intoxicants worth Rs. 57,77,500/- and was ceremonially burnt by Rev. Lalzuithanga, Chariman of the MKHC. The burning of the intoxicants was preceded by a short prayer service. In attendance was the Central Young Mizo Association (CYMA) President, Lalbiakzuala. Rev. Lalzuithanga had commented “Our state does not require intoxicants, it will lead to the extinction of the Mizos, given twenty-thirty years from now we might not have youths to further our generation”. This ceremonial burning exhibits the unity of the civil society in their fight against liquor and other intoxicants collectively termed *ruihhlo* (lit. intoxicants) by the people.

ii) Young Mizo Association (YMA):

The Young Mizo Association (YMA) is the largest Non-Government Organization (NGO) in Mizoram with membership figure of 4,46,623 (Annual Report 2020, CYMA). With annual membership fee of rupees five, membership to the association is opened to all from the age of 14 and above. The association has headquarter located in Aizawl. At present, it has 811 Branches, eight Sub-Headquarters and 45 Groups.²⁹⁶ Its branches are located in various places outside the state as well such as Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura. The genesis of the Young Mizo Association (YMA) can be traced to the church, where the formation of an association to unite all Mizos was decided at the residence of Miss Kattie Hughes (known to the Mizos as Pi Zaii) on the 3rd of June and two days later on the 5th June 1935²⁹⁷ the Young Lushai Association (YLA) was unveiled however it was formally inaugurated on the 15th June 1935. The name was coined by Rev. David Edwards, a Presbyterian Missionary but it was later changed to Young Mizo Association (YMA) on the 7th October 1947. Rev. David Edwards reported its formation as a means to uplift the Mizos by the social application of Christian

²⁹⁶ Central YMA Record 2020. Retrieved from <https://centralyma.org/>

²⁹⁷ Ibid., <https://centralyma.org/>

principles as its chief purpose.²⁹⁸ This association was to take the place of the dissipating Zawlbuk system. The aims and objectives pledged to fulfil by each YMA members are as under:

- a. Good use of leisure
- b. Development of the Mizo society
- c. Revere Christian ethics.²⁹⁹

Since its inception, the YMA had stood aligned to the prohibitionist stance of the church. The association submitted a request for prohibition to the then Deputy Commissioner, K.G.R. Iyer in 1950. This was followed by the announcement of prohibition of liquor by the Deputy Commissioner in 1954.³⁰⁰ The association had worked ardently to help enforce the Mizoram Total Prohibition Act (MLTP), 1995. They had adopted the theme 'Ruihhlo Do' a fight against intoxicants from 2004-2008.³⁰¹ Relentless in its pursuit to cleanse the state of all intoxicants, the association established the Supply Reduction Service (SRS) and the Demand Reduction Service (DRS). In a span of one year from 2006-2007 alone the SRS ceased intoxicants worth Rs. 22,59,800/-,³⁰² in 2007-2008 intoxicants worth Rs. 66,00,441/³⁰³- was seized, in 2008-2009 intoxicants worth Rs. 95,53,585/- was seized.³⁰⁴ Addicts have been placed in camping centres and homes by the associations with the hope of transforming lives. It placed 22 addicts in 2006-2007,³⁰⁵ 82 in 2007-2008.³⁰⁶

Though effective in its crusade to reduce supply, harm and demand of intoxicants, it was disbanded on accounts of human rights violations. Actions taken upon the violators of the Mizoram Total Prohibition Act (MLTP) by the SRS comes with its ugly side where human rights violation often occurred. Like the beating of

²⁹⁸ Report of FMPCW 1938-39: 255 as cited in Rohmingmawii, Dr. (2013). Beginning of Associations in Mizoram. In Malsawmdawngliana & Rohmingmawii. (Eds.). *Mizo Narratives: Accounts from Mizoram*. Guwahati: Scientific Book Centre. pp.280-287.

²⁹⁹ Retrieved from <https://centralyma.org/>

³⁰⁰ Lalhlimpaia, Joseph. (Sept. 2007). *Combating Intoxicants*. YMA Aw. P.5

³⁰¹ Hnamte, Lalnundika. (2014). *Prohibition-A Socio-Economic Assessment in Gujarat and Mizoram*. New Delhi: Serials Publication. p. 98

³⁰² October 2006-September 2007 Chhunga Hmalakna Report, Central YMA Supply Reduction Service (SRS)

³⁰³ October 2007-September 2008. Ibid.

³⁰⁴ October 2008-September 2009. Ibid.

³⁰⁵ October 2006-September 2007. Ibid.

³⁰⁶ October 2007-September 2008. Ibid.

known addicts in the community once apprehended. Unfortunately such incidences at times resulted in deaths, houses often destroyed or burnt, expulsion from residence in the community takes place. The regrettable death of C. Lalbiakliana, an alleged drug dealer who had been apprehended by the SRS North Zone in May 2007 was one such example. He had been taken for questioning where he was severely beaten and ultimately passed away succumbing to the pain inflicted on him, his passing had come before the SRS could hand him over to the Excise police.³⁰⁷ Such incidences led to the eventual disbandment of the SRS and DRS. The 63rd YMA General Conference in 2008 resolved not to further adopt and pursue the theme *Ruihhlo Do* (lit. Fight against intoxicants) again. However, it continues to fight the fight in other capacities, all in cooperation with the Government, Church, Police, Excise, local/village Council as it had done before it continues to do so.³⁰⁸ Lalnuntluanga, General Secretary, Central YMA had re-affirmed the prohibitionist stance of the YMA, stating that the association would like for the government to continue enforcing prohibition as they have always stood against anything (be it drugs or liquor) that could destroy the morale of the Mizo people.³⁰⁹

iii) Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP):

The Mizo women's organization or the Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP) was established in 6th July 1974³¹⁰ with headquarter located in Aizawl, the MHIP has 772 branches spread across Mizoram.³¹¹ They aim to uplift the welfare and position of women and children. It stands to bind women together, to create a state of welfare in which every individual is cared for irrespective of caste or creed. The organization has a figure of over 35000 members with open membership from fourteen years and above. They stand in solidarity to be a voice for those whose voice had been suppressed, they provide guidance to those that seek help, depending on the need of the

³⁰⁷ SRS leh C. Lalbiakliana thih dan. (June, 2019). Mizoarchive. Wordpress. Retrieved from <https://mizoarchive.wordpress.com/2019/06/17/srs-leh-c-lalbiakliana-thih-dan/>

³⁰⁸ 2018 YMA Kumpuan 'Ram leh Hman Humhalh' Kaihhraina. P. 3. Retrieved from <http://centralyma.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Kumpuan-Kaihhraina.pdf>

³⁰⁹ Prof, Lalnuntluanga., (General Secretary, Central YMA) telephone communication, 8/10/2020.

³¹⁰ Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (M.H.I.P). Retrieved from <https://mizoram.nic.in/more/mhip.htm>

³¹¹ MHIP Record, 2020.

victims of domestic violence, rape, murder and much more, direction to acquire legal assistance is also provided thorough the social workers employed by the organization. They have pushed for the revision of the archaic customary laws which resulted to the review of the Mizo Marriage Bill, 2013, the Mizo Inheritance Bill, 2013 and the Mizo Divorce Bill 2013 by the State Law Commission.³¹² Their primary focus today has been on the ban of ‘gutkha’ in Mizoram.³¹³ They support the prohibitionist stance of the YMA as commented by Lalthangpuii, present Gen Secretary of the M.H.I.P, “We support prohibitionist work of the YMA, liquor inflicts suffering upon women, when violence is inflicted on a woman by a drunk it becomes our priority. We would rather have liquor unavailable than available.”³¹⁴ Though definitive push for prohibition has not been made by the women organization like the YMA, they do however help pick up the trail of broken pieces left by liquor in the society.

iv) Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP) :

The Mizo Students’ Association or the Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP) the apex students body in Mizoram was established on 27th October 1935 in Shillong by the early educated Mizos. It was initially named Lushai Students Association (LSA) later renamed the Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP) on the 1st September 1946.³¹⁵ It has its General Headquarter located in Aizawl, 12 headquarters located in various places like Serchhip, Biate, Champhai, Dawrlawn, Kolasib, Mamit, Zawlnuam, Saitual, Lunglei and Khawzawl. They also have headquaters located outside the state in places like Manipur, Tripura. It has 47 sub-Headquarters and 85 branches located in different places in India.³¹⁶ With the motto “union is strength” and themed “to serve the Mizo Nation” the association aims to help produce valuable citizen for a greater Mizo Nation.³¹⁷

³¹² Hanghal, Ninglun. (18 June, 2014). *Meet the woman who has been leading Mizo women’s push for lega reforms for 40 years.* The better Indian. Retrieved from <https://www.thebetterindia.com/11629/mizo-women-for-legal-reforms-empowerment-pi-sangkhumi/>

³¹³ *Mizo Women embark on anti-gutkha campaign.* (20th June 2021). WebIndia123. Retrieved from <https://news.webindia123.com/news/articles/india/20100620/1530740.html>

³¹⁴ Lalthangpuii., (General Secretary, M.H.I.P) telephone communication, 2/11/2021.

³¹⁵ *Mizo Zirlai Pawl.* Retrieved from <https://www.mzpmizoram.com/p/about-us.html>

³¹⁶ Sourced from the General Headquarter, MZP.

³¹⁷ For the aims and objectives of the MZP, see Appendix V.

The MZP consists a very active group which mobilizes student groups across Mizoram. It has a very close association to the YMA. It will not be wrong to assume that most association members will consist of the youth populace of the YMA members. Thus, what the YMA does, the MZP supports. They stand united with the YMA on its prohibitionist stance.

Lalnunmawia Pautu, General Secretary, MZP commenting on why the organization does feel the necessity to spread anti-liquor awareness said “Liquor destroys the morale of youths, invites trouble to a family and hampers the studying environment of a student since they are vulnerable dependents of parents. It is a waste of good capital which could otherwise be invested in the development of the student. It also has an effect on the thinking and increases the statistics of HIV patients.”³¹⁸ The MZP in its fight against liquor is not mobilised like the YMA, VDP, JAC or the VC but it does make opportunities to campaign for the spread of awareness of the importance of abstinence from liquor and other intoxicants on the various occasions it organizes to students.

v) Mizoram Upa Pawl (MUP):

The Mizoram Upa Pawl (MUP) or the Mizo Senior Citizens Association was established on the 4th January 1957 by a few government servant pensioners. They strive to stand by their motto that is to “Be a blessing to others”. Membership is open to people above 60 years, any member below 60 years are known as associate members.³¹⁹ The association consist of 64,078 members, with General Headquarters located in Aizawl, eight subsidiary District Headquarters and 584 units which is inclusive of the 13 units located outside Mizoram: ten branches in Tripura, one in Manipur and two located in Meghalaya.³²⁰

They stand united with other organizations in prohibiting liquor, regarding the issue of liquor, R.K Thanga, Vice-President, M.U.P commented that “the association supports the liquor prohibition policy initiated by the Government.” Members have

³¹⁸ Lalnunmawia Pautu., (General Secretary, MZP at MZP Headquarters) personal Interview, 11/2/2021

³¹⁹ For the aims and objectives of the MUP, see Appendix VI.

³²⁰ R.K. Thanga., (Vice-President, Mizo Upa Pawl) telephone interview. 12/11/2021.

commented on the grief they feel having to bury many Mizo youths: fatalities resulting from liquor addiction. They expressed their hope that youths would have ‘more self-control’ when faced with the choice of the liquor drink.

vi) Joint Action Committee (JAC):

The Joint Action Committee (JAC) was birthed in 1991 as a result of the collaborative effort of the Young Mizo Association (YMA), Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP), Mizo Upa Pawl (MUP) etc. to tackle the problem of driving out *misual leh thilsual* (lit. bad people and social evil) such as commercial sex workers, drugs, liquor and other related social problems from the community. They render help to the deprived section of the society as well. The JAC has been established in various localities: urban as well as rural. Their work has been in support of the bigger organizations with the aim of reducing supply, harm and demand of illicit intoxicants. They go on patrols be it day, evening or night fishing for criminals with the hope of making their respective communities safe, and all this they do voluntary basis. They are mobilised on behalf of the civil society to capture illegal drug dealers, liquor sellers, hooligans and more.

The common belief which gives consensus to such actions had been the conception that such people who deal in supplying illicit drugs/liquor are labelled as *ram leh hnam hmelma* or enemy of land and the Mizo people who must be ‘rooted out from society’. For instance, the Mission Vengthlang JAC was established around 2010, under the initiative of the Local Council where members consist of around 15 representatives (sometimes more if deemed necessary) from the YMA, MHIP, MUP and the community. The term of membership to the JAC is usually one year, under extraordinary circumstances (like the Covid pandemic), membership is extended. Though definite days are not allotted for patrolling, they do go on casual patrol duty and at times when tipped off by community members of a possible drug/liquor seller(s), incidences of drunken brawling and such related issues. On ceasing offenders, they refer the issue to the police and hand over the case to the Police. The JAC recently redirected their reference to the respective church denominations the offenders belong to. They are then admitted to homes for rehabilitation by their

respective churches. This is done as requests are often made by family of offenders to help admit the person to a home.³²¹ Thus, the approach of various community JACs may differ in minor ways but the general approach remain the same. They all give their collective effort to driving out and subduing social evils caused by intoxicants.

vii) Village Council:

The formation of the first political party, the Mizo Union in 1946 put into motion changes in power structure. Lushai Hills Autonomous District Council was established in 1952 thus paving the way for the practise of ‘power to the common man’ through the democratic system. This was followed by the establishment of Village Councils by the passage of the Lushai Hills District (Village Councils) Act, 1953. It was subsequently followed by acquisition of the powers of the Village Chiefs in 1954.³²² The establishment of Village Councils (VC) planted the practice of democracy at the grass-root level. Elections to the Village Council (VC) was conducted by polling parties, village after village thus making 16th August 1954 the official day of its establishment.³²³ Today, with 830³²⁴ villages (2011 Census) spread across the land, Mizoram as of 2018-2019 has 805 Village Councils (VC) spread across the state.³²⁵ The VC under chapter IV, point 14 (b) of the Administration of Justice Rules, 1953 has been granted judicial power to settle cases ‘falling within the purview of tribal laws and customs and offences of petty nature, such as petty theft and pilfering, mischief and trespass of petty nature, simple assault and hurt, affront and affray of

³²¹ Rosangzuala., (General Secretary, Mission Vengthlang YMA Branch & Member, Mission Vengthlang JAC) telephone interview, 30/11/2021

³²² The Lushai Hills District (Village Councils) Acts 1953. Retrieved from

<https://lad.mizoram.gov.in/page/the-lushai-hills-district-village-councils-acts-1953.html>

³²³ Lallianchhunga. (July-December 2018). *A Comparative Study of Village Councils in Mizoram and Panchayati Raj Institutions: A Critical Appraisal*. Senhri Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies. Senhri Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies, Vol. 3, No.2. P. 34. Retrieved from

<https://senhrijournal.ac.in/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/A-Comparative-Study-of-Village-Councils-in-Mizoram-and-Panchayati-Raj-Institutions-A-Critical-Appraisal.pdf>

³²⁴ Statistical Handbook Mizoram 2018. Directorate of Economics and Statistics. Government of Mizoram. Retrieved from

<https://des.mizoram.gov.in/uploads/attachments/ff72755ccfa6cb42f9a1a9d9afae758a/pages-134-statistical-handbook-2018.pdf>

³²⁵ Statistical Abstract of Mizoram: 2019, Directorate of Economics & Statistics. Government of Mizoram. P. 229

whatever kind, drunken or disorderly brawling public nuisance'.³²⁶ Those found and caught selling liquor in villages are made to pay a fine and their utensils used for brewing liquor are confiscated and auctioned.³²⁷ Illicit sellers are often given warning and when such warnings fall on deaf ears, they are then handed to the police.

The Village Council of Sialsuk had established the Khawtlang Tangrual Pawl which is an association established as a collaborative initiative of the community to execute the work of ruihhlo do. Their work has resulted in destroying liquor factories, confiscation of utensils which is then auctioned and even expulsion from village. Such case of expulsion had occurred in 2013. When a *zu zuar* or liquor seller is caught, he/she is given the option to be handed over to the police or to pay a fine for bail. The frequented option is to pay fine for bail, the capital then goes to the Village Council fund. Zoremawia³²⁸ commented that execution of ruihhlo do work through organizations like the JAC and VDP can be limiting, a more effective work can be done through the Khawtlang Tangrual Pawl as drastic actions (at times extra constitutional means) can be taken through the association. He mentioned liquor as *hnawk sak* (a menace) to the community which does more harm than good.

viii) Village Defence Parties:

The Village Defence Party came to be established with the formation of the Mizoram Village Defence Organization Rules, 1981. This rule was formed on the basis of the Assam Village Defence Organization Act, 1966.³²⁹ The VDP thus became the Civil Defence Organization created to assist the state Police in the maintenance of law and order and other matters ancillary thereto.³³⁰ Many VDP established had laid

³²⁶ Administration of Justice Rules, 1953. Government of Mizoram. Retrieved from <https://lad.mizoram.gov.in/page/administration-of-justice-rules-1953.html>

³²⁷ Rokamlova, (Former Village Council President, Lengpui Village Council, 1987-1990) telephone interview, 24/11/2021.

³²⁸ Zoremawia., (Former Village Council President, 1999-2002, 2012-2015 & 2015-2020, Sialsuk Village Council) telephone interview, 24/11/2021.

³²⁹ The Mizoram Gazette. Vol. XVII. Issue No. 33. Retrieved from https://mizoramassembly.in/storage/Assembly/Gazette/GN/GZGN17ISS_033.pdf

³³⁰ The Assam Village Defense Organization Act, 1966. Retrieved from https://legislative.assam.gov.in/sites/default/files/swf_utility_folder/departments/legislative_medhassu_in_oid_3/menu/document/The%20Assam%20Village%20Defence%20Organisation%20Act%2C%201966.pdf

dormant and inactive, however, the once passive organization had breathed new life and today there exists a total of 330³³¹ active VDPs functioning in Mizoram (*Table 1 based on 2020 data*) that helped execute policing function in the society.

Table 1. Active VDP Unit in Mizoram as of 2020 (District wise)

Sl. No.	Name of District	No. of Active VDP Unit
1	Lunglei	54
2	Khawzawl	15
3	Serchhip	20
4	Mamit	9
5	Saitual	23
6	Kolasib	24
7	Champhai	27
8	Aizawl	85
9	Lawngtlai	31
10	Saiha	36
11	Hnahthial	6
Total		330

Source: Police Headquarters (PHQ), Khatla. Figure is of 5/8/2020.

Each VDP consists of not less than thirty members that function within their jurisdiction: their respective village area. It is a body established by the state to activate civil society to help root out social evils.

Civil Society in Mizoram has actively waged war against ruihhlo or intoxicants, where liquor (besides drugs) has been a persistent issue, a challenge to all NGOs who in their collective effort wishes to do away with. Civil society is aligned to the dictates of the church especially in matters relating to liquor, where it is perceived as a sin. It is considered a ‘threat’, a ‘source of social evil’ that has claimed lives of many Mizo youths. It is thus clear that the collective perception of the civil

³³¹Sourced from Police Headquarters (PHQ), Khatla, 8/2/2021

society has remained the same, they continue to stand where they once stood i.e., against liquor and for prohibition. The role of fighting the challenge drastically has been executed most recognizably by the YMA who has the backing of all the NGOs in Mizoram. However, the fight at a policy level has been taken up most noticeably by the churches.

ix) *Zu kan duhlo*: A Recurring Theme

Civil society since its activation can be said to be aligned to the Church. Social festivities/gatherings/occasions celebrated by the early Mizos ended with the adoption of the Christian faith. The practices of their tradition mostly associated with singing, dancing and consumption of their special brew came to be considered '*thianglo*' (lit. to refrain from or prohibited). To my understanding, such practices were preached as *thianglo* (lit. to refrain from), the converts for fear that it will evoke nostalgia and cause them to revert to their old culture. The earliest known Prohibition of liquor law was sourced from the Presbyterian Church in 1897. The law forbade the Mizo Christians to drink zu and those found defying the dry law were to be expelled from the village.

The construct of Christian customs can be seen in early writings which dates back to 1912. Teachings such as "Let us not make zu (rice-beer), nor even drink it"³³² figures first in the 'not to do list'. Thus preaching awareness for the need to prioritize abstention from consuming and making zu. The stance of the Church remains the same today, the burden of the fight at the policy level has been taken up by the Churches and enforcement of prohibition lay in the hands of the YMA. These social associations led by the YMA become very important medium for action to enforce prohibition.

The modus operandi of these associations is more or less the same with minor differences located in the interests they represent. One common method adopted by these voluntary organizations like the YMA, VDP, JAC, Khawtlang Nun Siamtha Pawl (KNSP), Khawtlang Tangrual Pawl and the like is they give repeated warnings

³³² Thankunga. (1912). *Kristian Dan Thu*. In Pachuau, Joy. (2014). *Being Mizo Identity and Belonging in North East India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. P. 136-182

to the offender(s). The offender(s) get summoned, are given counselling, if that does not seem to work, a few beatings are given and if they do not seem to change their ways, the eventual handing over of cases to the police takes place. The warnings, counselling and at times beatings they give is termed as *zilh* (lit. to discipline). Associations differ from community to community, some may be quite stern in their dealings while others may not hand out beatings and directly hand over cases to the Police. They become very important intermediary who perform communal policing functions on behalf of civil society thus, elevating the burden of Government Police. Their methods used have been at times questionable as it violates human rights, but nonetheless, many have hailed their efforts and contribution in making their community safer. Interview with the leaders of various civil society in answering the question to the perception of liquor had echoed the same answer *zu kan duhlo* (lit. we don't want zu).

E. Political Parties in Mizoram

Political consciousness was birthed in Mizoram as a result of education introduced by the British in the Lushai Hills. With education came awareness of the political scenario that surrounded them. The need to participate in the affairs of the state was soon felt. Thus, leading to the formation of the first political party in Mizoram, the Mizo Union (MU) on the 9th of April 1946. Initially named the Mizo Commoners Union the name was later changed to Mizo Union for want of inclusivity of both commoners and Chiefs. The Mizo Union dominated the political scenario for a long time. The initiative of establishing a democratic groundwork was done under MacDonald, the then Superintendent of Lushai Hills (1946-1947). This was followed by the formation of the United Mizo Freedom Organization (UMFO) or Zalen Pawl on the 5th July 1947.³³³ Pawi-Lakher Tribal Union (PLTU) was established in the southern part of Mizoram on 25th October, 1949,³³⁴ this was followed by the formation

³³³ Lalrinmawia. (1995). *Mizoram: History and Cultural Identity*. Guwahati: United Publishers. p.109

³³⁴ Dounel, Dr. Jangkhongam. *The Uniqueness of the Erstwhile Pawi-Lakher Regional Council (P.L.R.C)*. p. 2. Retrieved from

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331951393_THE_UNIQUENESS_OF_THE_ERSTWHILE_PAWI-LAKHER_REGIONAL_COUNCIL_PLRC

of the Eastern India Tribal Union (EITU) in 1955.³³⁵ The two political parties were followed by the formation of the Mizoram District Congress Committee (MDCC) on the 11th of April 1961. The MDCC was dissolved and came to be known as the Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) from 16th March, 1972.³³⁶ In the wake of the famine inflicted by mautam or bamboo flowering there was a formation of a very significant forum for relief work viz., the Mizo Cultural Society (MCS) was established in 1959. The name was then changed to Mizo National Famine Front (MNFF) in 1960, this forum eventually morphed into a full-fledged political party known as the Mizo National Front (MNF) on the 22nd October 1961.³³⁷ The Mizo People's Conference (PC) was established on the 17th April, 1975³³⁸ followed by the formation of the Maraland Democratic Front (MDF) on the 25th January, 1996³³⁹ and the Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP) on the 20th March, 1997.³⁴⁰ The political scene had been dominated by the MPCC and the MNF for a long time. The aim of establishing power in the 2018 General Election of Mizoram gave rise to the formulation of minor political parties viz., Bharat Janata Party (BJP), the People's Representation for Identity & Status of Mizoram (PRISM) on 1st August 2016, the Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) established on 15th August, 2017, and the Zoram Thar Party, a party which identifies itself as a party of God. They diversified the political space and provided an alternative option to the two dominant parties: the MPCC and the MNF. Parties like the Mizo Union (MU), Pawi-Lakher Tribal Union (PLTU), Eastern India Tribal Union (EITU), Mizo People's Conference (PC), Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP) having merged with other political parties have simply dissolved.

Prior to the formation of the Union Territory of Mizoram, the Government did not implement proper laws to prohibit liquor. Civil society wanted to do away with the country liquor that was found in abundance. Considered a menace it was fought by

³³⁵ Chaltuahkhuma. (1981). *Political History of Mizoram*. Aizawl: Chaltuahkhuma. p. 97.

³³⁶ Chhuanawma. L.H., Lalthakima., & Lal Lawmzuali. (2015). *Government and Politics of Mizoram*. Guwahati: Scientific Book Centre. p. 173

³³⁷ Zamawia. R. (2021 Revised). *Zofate Zinkawngah Zalenna Mei a Mit Tur a Ni lo*. Aizawl: Zamawia. pp.167-170

³³⁸ P. Lalnithanga, (2005). *Emergence of Mizoram*. Aizawl: Lalnithanga. p.81

³³⁹ Chhuanawma. L.H., Lalthakima., & Lal Lawmzuali. (2015). *Government and Politics of Mizoram*. Guwahati: Scientific Book Centre. p.165

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.* p.163

the civil society in its own capacity to eliminate liquor and all other intoxicants. So, the issue of liquor centered on i) illicit sale and ii) consumption of country liquor. In the mid 1950's civil society empowered by the Standing Order issued by the Deputy Commissioner (*see Picture no.10, p.100 for reference*) measures were taken to prohibit its flow and punishments handed to offenders by the authorities. The temperance movement spearheaded by the churches, YMA, VDP and the VC had given much effort to prohibiting liquor with no statutory law to back up their efforts. Despite the abundance of country liquor, Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) was scarce and within the possession of only the Assam Rifles (AR) and the Border Road Task Force (BRTF) who have been permanently located in Mizoram.³⁴¹ In March 1954, order for the prohibition of liquor was passed by K.G.R. Iyer, Deputy Commissioner on the request of the YMA. However, legislation on liquor law was effected in 1973 by the Mizo Union. The study of the perception of political parties on liquor is made in this section, with a more detailed analysis of the parties who had effected liquor legislations.

i) Mizo Union (MU)

The Mizo Union was formed on the 9th of April 1946 with Pachhunga as the first President and R. Vanlawma its General Secretary. The aims and objectives of the party were formulated by September in its first General Assembly. The party monopolised the political scene for almost two decades and finally merged with the Congress party on the 1st of February, 1974.³⁴² The MU dominated the electoral scene from the days of District Advisory Council (15th April, 1948) to the first Mizoram Union Territory Assembly Election (18th April 1972). Ch. Chhunga then became the first Chief Minister of the Union Territory of Mizoram.³⁴³ His ministry lasted till 1977. It was under his ministry that the Mizoram Excise Bill, 1973 was moved by the Finance Minister, Khawtinkhuma. The Bill was vehemently debated on the proceedings of the Fourth Session of the Mizoram Legislative Assembly (from 25th September, 1973 to

³⁴¹ Lalupa, P., (Ex-MLA, PC Ministry, 27/5/1978 – November 1978, 29/4/1979 – August 1981) personal communication, dated: 23/12/2020.

³⁴² Chhuanawma et.al. op.cit., p.183

³⁴³ Ibid. p. 128.

the 10th October, 1973). The Act had been made in the likeness of the Assam Excise Act. Legislators like Lalrinliana, Zalawma, Lalkunga, J. Thanghuama, Lalsangzuala stood opposed to the bill as it contained ‘sale provision’ of liquor.

Recognition of the needs of the civil society had ironically led the ministry to introduce the Mizoram Excise Bill, 1973. They claimed that their concern had been the formulation of ‘regulating laws that will go unchallenged in the court of law’. However, the bill proposed the sale of liquor which was the primary cause of the debate and opposition. Amidst the turmoil, the Bill was passed on the 1st October, 1973³⁴⁴ and consented by the President of India on the 17th April 1974.³⁴⁵ The Act granted ‘permits for license holders to import and sell liquor’. Thus, providing the legal requirement for the proliferation of liquor in the state. Despite lack of initiative to formulate the Excise Act, 1973, the law they passed supported the ‘regulated flow of liquor’. Therefore, the Mizo Union under Ch. Chhunga can be said to have pro-liquor stance.

ii) Mizoram People’s Conference (PC)

Ch. Chhunga’s ministry was replaced by the Mizoram People’s Conference (PC) party led by Brig. Thenphunga Sailo (or simply known as T. Sailo). The origin of the party can be traced to the Human Rights Committee (HRC) formed on the 14th June 1974. The HRC headed by T. Sailo, a retired Indian Army Officer toured the entire hills of Mizoram. A study of Human Rights violation by the Indian Army was made and the committee drafted a memorandum and submitted the same to the Indian Prime Minister, the opposition Leader of the Lok Sabha and the Lieutenant Governor of Mizoram. This resulted in the significant reduction of crimes committed by the Indian Army and the subsequent popularity of the HRC. This resulted in the conversion of the HRC to a political party called the People’s Conference on the 17th April, 1975 with T. Sailo as the first President and Zairemthanga the General Secretary. The party won the 27th May, 1978 election, their term was cut short as the Presidents rule was

³⁴⁴ Assembly Debates Proceedings. Fourth Session of the Mizoram Legislative Assembly. Fifth Sitting. Dated 1/10/1973

³⁴⁵ The Mizoram Excise Act 1973, The Commissioner of Excise & Taxes Mizoram.

proclaimed for a brief interlude. They formed ministry again from 29th April, 1979, this time they were able to serve full term till 1984.³⁴⁶ T. Sailo in the initial period of his ministry had a prohibitionist stance. He did not encourage sale and consumption of liquor.³⁴⁷ However, after a few years in power, his ministry formulated the Mizoram Excise Rules, 1983. Rules corresponding to the Excise Act, 1973 passed by Ch. Chhunga's ministry. Despite its formulation, the Rules were not formally enforced.

The ministry started strong with pro-prohibitionist stance. But the formulation of the Excise Rules, 1983 makes their pro-prohibitionist stance a little uncertain and questionable. However, a closer look into the rules show that the rules prohibited the illegal brewing of liquor, made the sale and import rather regulated and more stringent. So, the PC party can be said to be slightly tilted towards prohibition.

iii) Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC)

The Mizoram District Congress Committee (MDCC) was formed on the 10th of April 1961 with A. Thanglura as President. The MDCC was formed as ad hoc District Congress Committee under the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC). Dissent and factionalism rendered the party ineffective in the initial stages. However, revival of the party was seen as a necessity to counter the Mizo union. The MDCC was dissolved and came to be known as the Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) since 16th March, 1972. The Mizo Union (MU) merged with the Congress on the 12th January, 1974. The All India Congress Committee (AICC) dissolved the MPCC and appointed an ad hoc Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) on the 24th January, 1974 with Lal Thanhawla as the President and J. Lalsangzuala and Hrangaiia as General Secretaries.³⁴⁸ The Congress for the first-time formed ministry in 1984 with Lal Thanhawla as the Chief Minister. They also formed government from 1984 to 1986. With Peace Settlement under way, the party paved the way for Laldenga, leader of the MNF to form his ministry in 1986 to 1988. The Congress again

³⁴⁶ Sailo, Ngurthankima. *Emergence of People Conference party in Mizoram and its role in the development of Mizoram* in Historical Journal Mizoram. Mizo History Association, Vol. V. Issue I. July 2004 P. 98

³⁴⁷ Lalupa, P., (Ex-MLA, PC Ministry, 27/5/1978 – November 1978, 29/4/1979 – August 1981) personal communication, dated: 23/12/2020

³⁴⁸ Chhuanawma. et al., op.cit., p. 181

formed government in 1988 to 1993, 1993 to 1998, 2008 to 2013 and 2013 to 2018. During its first term in 1984, the Mizoram Excise Rules 1983 was enforced. The ministry was then caught in the crux of peace settlement between the central Government and the Mizo National Front (MNF). The domestic problem of liquor however pursued with the issue of licenses under the Excise Rules 1983.

By 1985, licenses were issued under Excise Rules (which came to be enforced by the publication of Notification No. EXC 101/81/2 Dated, Aizawl, the 8th October, 1984). Licensed dealers began to open shops, imported and sold Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL). Thus marking the beginning of flow of IMFL in Mizoram. It can be said that the theoretical grounds had all been prepared by its predecessors and the Congress took the opportunity to enforce it. The general public were introduced to different kinds of drink as a result. However, licenses which remained valid for a year were not granted further renewal due to immense pressure from the civil society.

During its second ministry formation in 1988, the Mizoram Excise Bill, 1992 was introduced by J. Lalsangzuala and then passed by the house. This move was followed by vehement opposition from the Church which freezed its implementation.³⁴⁹ The ardent demand of the church gave birth to the formulation of the liquor prohibiting law viz., the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition (MLTP) Act, 1995. This law was implemented from February 1997 much to the satisfaction of the civil society. Then again, it was this very ministry under the leadership of the same that the dry law was repealed with the passing of the Mizoram Liquor Prohibition and Control (MLPC) Act, 2014. On the repeal of the dry law, Lal Thanhawla commented, “While being respectful of the wishes of the civil society, the government also has to take into consideration the need of 20% of the people who wants legalization of liquor”.³⁵⁰ The party can be seen as having adopted the prohibitionist stance during its third ministry formation and reverted to anti-prohibitionist stance in its fifth ministry formation.

³⁴⁹The Excise Act of 1992 was not utilized. For more see <https://excise.mizoram.gov.in/page/profile>

³⁵⁰ Thanhawla, Lal., (President of the MPCC, Ex-Chief Minister of Mizoram 1986 to 1988, 1988 to 1993, 1993 to 1998, 2008 to 2013 and 2013 to 2018) personal communication, 22/12/2020

iv) Mizo National Front (MNF)

The origin of the Mizo National Front (MNF) began with a forum for relief work in the wake of the famine inflicted by mautam or bamboo flowering in 1958.³⁵¹ The Government was not quick to take notice of the suffering of the Mizos, thus making it very unpopular. The Mizo Cultural Society (MCS) was established in 1959, which aided the government in providing famine relief work. The Cultural Society became very popular eclipsing the reputation of the Government, the name was changed to Mizo National Famine Front (MNFF) in 1960, this forum eventually morphed into a full-fledged political party known as the Mizo National Front (MNF) on the 22nd October 1961. The first elected leaders were Laldenga as President and R.Vanlawma as Secretary.

The MNF under the leadership of Laldenga revolted against the Government. Lack of empathy from the Central Government gave rise to the idea of forming a Mizoram independent from the Indian Union. The political turmoil caused by the independence movement lasted for two decades spanning from 1966 to 1986. The MNF had been avid advocates of prohibition even while underground. Extreme prohibitionist act was carried out around 1977, illicit sellers of country liquors were often given warning, the continued act of contravention often led to burning of their homes, kidnapping and at times resulted in mortality of illicit liquor sellers.³⁵² Peace Settlement ushered in a new era, the MNF came home as heroes and Laldenga became Chief Minister in 1986. The party's perception on liquor had taken a u turn when Laldenga had failed to initiate prohibition law amidst high expectation. This contributed to his unpopularity and subsequent had him ousting from office. The party once again thrived under the leadership of Zoramthanga and his strong conviction for temperance helped regain the trust of the people. Under his leadership, the party had formed governments from 1998 to 2003, 2003 to 2008 and 2018 till date.

In 2018, his ministry annulled the MLPC Act and initiated the Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition) Act, 2019. Answering to the question of whether his ministry will ever

³⁵¹ Nag, op.cit., p. 249

³⁵² Chuaauthuma, Revd. (2014). Bible, Zu leh Mizote. Guwahati: Bhabani Offset Private Limited. P. 89

legalize liquor, Zoramthanga responded with conviction “absolutely not”.³⁵³ On the prohibitionist act of the MNF from underground he commented, “The prohibitionist initiative resulted in scarcity of liquor during those times. However, not being able to run administration owing to our underground movement led us to East Pakistan. We could not continue to properly enforce it then”. When questioned about the killings of illicit vendors the Chief Minister replied “I have not heard anyone speak of any killings of liquor vendors, if it did happen, one or two might have spoken about it, but in my times, I have not heard of such killings. The shootings that did happen was between us and the ones that sided with the Indian Army, those reporters that reported about us, causing many of our deaths, the ones we considered our enemy and political assassinations happened early on. Such killings eventually ended as it was ardently prohibited by Laldenga. But despite such order, there had been two or three incidences of assassinations which was beyond our control; a stray incident caused by a local commander during those troubled times. However, I personally have not heard of such killings of liquor vendors”.³⁵⁴ Thus, the leader of the MNF cannot seem to recall such ‘incidences of killings of certain illicit vendors by the MNF’, but does not deny that political assassinations had taken place. He also acknowledges the ‘once or twice’ occurrence of ‘stray incidence’ of political assassinations despite prohibition by the leader.

The true stance of political parties on liquor is hard to determine unless they form ministry and actually stand in a position to effect legislation. As seen on the eve of discussing the Mizoram Excise Bill 1973, the bill was vehemently opposed by the Congress legislators who formed the opposition party at the time. However, once in power, their prohibitionist stance had taken a different turn by implementing the Excise Rules 1983 and the passage of Excise Bill, 1992. This law was in reality a revision of the Excise Act of 1973. However, popular demand led to the abandonment of the 1992 law and the implementation of the prohibiting law in 1995. One big concern of the Mizos on liquor has always been the religious question: that it is in

³⁵³ Zoramthanga., (Chief Minister & President of the Mizo National Front. Chief Minister From 1998 to 2008, 2018 till date) personal communication, 9/2/2021

³⁵⁴ Ibid

conflict with the Christian principles. There is big concern that formulation of legalizing law hampers the image of the Christian state and is ‘un-Christian thing to do.’

On the onset, political parties seem to propagate prohibition or either remain silent on the issue until they have been elected. A more conservative approach to liquor has been adopted by political regimes as talks of individual freedom consequently does not really help to win votes in a state where the racial identity is predominantly fixated on Mizo Kristiana. Time has proven true the failure of prohibition policy in the state but civil society insist on its continual enforcement. Civil society has been a very important force for ministries to counter especially with sensitive issue like liquor. The church sanctioned by the collective has been truly uncompromising and relentless in the fight to forming Mizoram as a dry state. As liquor can be an important source for Government to generate income, the issue continues to invite clash between the two.

F. Others perception

The perception of other stakeholders will be presented through statistical analysis of data collected through questionnaire. Samples were collected to represent the perception of various demographics: the rural, urban, gender, age, educational qualification, profession (private business/Government employee), employed and the unemployed. Sample size of 240 had been determined from three districts viz., Aizawl District, Mamit District and Kolasib District. Responses each representing opinion of rural and urban populace had been collected from 144 (24 each from a single area) representing the rural perception from the three districts: a) Aibawk & Sialsuk from Rural Aizawl District, b) Rawpuichhip & Lengpui from Mamit District and c) Lungdai & Zanlawn from Kolasib District. While 96 (24 each from a single area) responses from urban Aizawl localities representing the urban perception had been collected from: a) Durtlang, b) Mission Veng, c) Tanhril and d) College Veng. Field survey was conducted from September to November 2020 where 260 questionnaires had been sent out of which 252 was received, 240 had been selected and scored for analysis.

I) Demographic representation of respondents

The demographic representation of the questionnaire respondents is as mentioned below:

- a) Domicile: Out of the 240 responses, 96 (40%) respondents represented the urban perception and 144 (60%) respondents represented the rural perception.
- b) Gender: 131 (55%) of the respondents were women while 109 (45%) were men
- c) Age: The age demographic of the respondents had been dispersed as 2 (1%) respondents from 17 years below, 67 (28%) from the age between 18-25 years, 54 (23%) from 26-35 years, 52 (22%) from 36-45 years, 37 (15%) from 46-55 years, 17 (7%) from 56-65 years and 11 (5%) from 66 years and above.
- d) Religion/Denomination: All respondents were Christians from various denominations. Respondents had all belonged to the Christian community, where 209 (87%) were Presbyterian, 13 (5%) from Baptist Church, 9 (4%) from the United Pentecostal Church, 3 (1%) were Catholics and 6 (3%) respondents from the Isua Krista Kohhran (IKK).
- e) Education Qualification: 7 (3%) were primary level educated, 15 (6%) were middle school educated, 41 (17%) High School educated, 48 (20%) Higher Secondary School educated, 58 (24%) were Under Graduate, the majority of 70 (29%) were Post Graduates and finally 1 (0.4%) M.Phil qualified respondent.
- f) Occupation status: 55 (23%) respondents were students, 63 (26%) were Government employees, 69 (29%) private employees or engaged in private businesses and 53 (22%) were unemployed.
- g) Vote casted: Respondents exhibited a good sense political participation as majority of 217 (90%) exercised their right to vote in the last General Election of 2018 while a minority of 23 (10%) respondents did not.
- h) Membership to Civil Society: Respondents identified themselves as having membership to various civil society organizations like the Young Mizo Association (YMA), the Church, Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (M.H.I.P), Mizoram Upa Pawl (MUP) and various other NGOs. 185 (77%) of the respondents have membership to the Young Mizo Association (YMA), 191 (80%) respondents have membership to the Church, 51(21%) belonged to the Mizo Hmeichhe

Insuihkhawm Pawl (M.H.I.P), 13 (5%) had membership to the Mizoram Upa Pawl (MUP) and 53 (22%) also identified as having membership to other NGOs. Many indicated having memberships to more than two civil society organization as they were given the option to select more than one options. Majority of the respondents have indicated dual memberships to the YMA and the church 138 (58%).

II) Representation of stakeholder opinions

Responses have been analysed using simple percentages and statistical analysis of data was done using Pearson Correlation Coefficient to establish scientific relations of response statements thereby making the interpretation of data more reliable. Positive correlation of items will lead both items to move in the same direction and negative co-relation is established when items move in the opposite direction, an increase in one will lead to decrease in the other. Demographic correlation analysis was done on responses to questions 1, 3, 6, 12, 22, 27, 32, 39, 40, 42 and 43 with Gender and Domicile variable to statistically analyse the association of variables with the specified response items. Significant correlation was established between: i) Gender and items Q.6, Q.40 and Q.43 (see Tables 1.1 below) and ii) Domicile and items Q.3, Q.12, Q.22, Q.27 and Q.42. (see Tables 1.2 below)

Table: 1.1. Pearson Correlation Coefficient analysis of demographic variable: Gender

		Q1	Q3	Q6	Q12	Q22	Q27	Q32	Q39	Q40	Q42	Q43
Gender	Pearson Correlation	-.121	-.075	-.131*	-.111	-.006	-.075	.070	-.012	-.133*	-.014	.131*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.062	.247	.043	.086	.927	.246	.281	.855	.039	.830	.043

Out of 240 respondents, 131 (55%) were women and 109 (45%) were men. Responses have been coded as 1 – Agree, 2- No Opinion and 3 – Disagree. Gender is coded as Male – 1 and Female – 2. Results of the Pearson Correlation Coefficient analysis on gender variable reveals that:

1. *There is a significant negative correlation ($r = 0.05$) between gender (male and female) and the response statement of Q.6. Do you think that prohibition is the right thing to do for a Christian majority state? There is a significant difference between the responses of male and female at ($p = 0.043$) which shows that more female respondents scored higher on the response statement 103 (78.6%) out of 131 as against men 73 (67%) out of 109. So more female tend to agree that “prohibition is the right thing to do for a Christian majority state”.*
2. *There is a significant negative correlation ($r = 0.05$) between gender and the response statement of Q.40. Are you happy with the reinstatement of the prohibition act? There is a significant difference between the responses of male and female at a ($p = 0.039$) which shows that more female respondent scored higher on the response statement 89 (68%) out of 131 as against men 65 (60%) out 109. So more female tend to agree that “they are happy with the reinstatement of the prohibition act”*
3. *There is a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.05$) between gender and the response statement of Q.43. Do you think that liquor is an issue that should be politicized? There is a significant difference the responses of male and female at a ($p = 0.043$) which shows that more male respondent scored higher on the response statement 12 (11%) out of 109 as against female 6 (5%) out 131. This means that more male tend to agree with the statement that “liquor is an issue that should be politicized”.*

Table: 1.2. Correlation Data Analysis of demographic variable: Domicile

		Q1	Q3	Q6	Q12	Q22	Q27	Q32	Q39	Q40	Q42	Q43
Domicile	Pearson Correlation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.131*	.009
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.064	.039	.216	.040	.000	.001	.868	.294	.081	.043	.890

Out of the 240 responses, 96 (40%) respondents represented urban perception and 144 (60%) respondents represented rural perception. Domicile in Urban and Rural area is

coded as 1 Urban and 2 as Rural. Results of the Pearson Correlation Coefficient analysis on domicile variable reveals that:

1. *There is a significant negative correlation ($r = 0.05$) between domicile and the response statement of Q.3. Do you believe that a person drinking liquor disqualifies a person from going to heaven? There is a significant difference of response between urban and rural responses at a ($p = 0.039$). This shows that rural respondents scored higher than urban respondents. This means that rural respondents tend to agree 65 (45%) out of 144 as against 33 (34%) out of 96 urban respondent. This means that rural respondents tend to agree with the response statement “drinking liquor disqualifies a person from going to heaven”.*
2. *There is a significant negative correlation ($r = 0.05$) between domicile and the response statement of Q.12. Do you think liquor should be prohibited? There is a significant difference of response between urban and rural responses at a ($p = 0.040$). This shows that rural respondents scored higher than urban respondents. This means that rural respondents tend to agree 108 (75%) out of 144 respondents as against 54 (56%) out of 96 urban respondent. This means that rural respondents tend to agree with the response statement that “liquor should be prohibited”.*
3. *There is a significant negative correlation ($r = 0.01$) between domicile and the response statement Q.22. Does the implementation of prohibition make you feel safer? There is a significant difference of response between urban and rural responses at a ($p = 0.000$). This shows that rural respondents scored higher than urban respondents. This means that rural respondents tend to agree 102 (71%) out of 144 respondents as against 41 (43%) out of 96 urban respondents. This means that rural respondents tend to agree with the response statement that “the implementation of prohibition make you feel safer”.*
4. *There is a significant negative correlation ($r = 0.01$) between domicile and the response statement Q.27. Do you think the government should continue with the prohibition policy? There is a significant difference of response between urban and rural responses at a ($p = 0.001$). This shows that rural respondents scored higher than urban respondents. This means that rural respondents tend to agree 110*

(76%) out of 144 respondents as against 53 (55%) out of 96 urban respondents. This means that rural respondents tend to agree with the response statement that “the government should continue with the prohibition policy”.

5. *There is a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.05$) between domicile and the response statement Q.42. Would you vote for a political party with a manifesto which openly campaign to lift the dry law? There is a significant difference of response between urban and rural responses at a ($p = 0.043$). This means that urban respondents tend to agree 10 (10.4%) out of 96 respondents as against 16 (11%) out of 144 rural respondents. This means that urban respondents tend more to agree with the response statement that “they would vote for a political party with a manifesto which openly campaign to lift the dry law”.*

Table: 3.0. “*Drinking alcohol is a sin*”. Do you agree or disagree? (Q1 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
60 (62.5%)	25 (26.0%)	11 (11.5%)	104 (72.2%)	25 (17.4%)	15 (10.4)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

Table: 3.1. Are you in support of total abstinence even from the consumption of beer and wine? (Q11 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
61 (63.5%)	16 (16.7%)	19 (19.8%)	124 (86.1%)	9 (6.3%)	11 (7.6%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

Table: 3.2. Do you think Mizoram will ever be a liquor free state? If not why? (Q 36 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
10 (10.4%)	82 (85.4%)	4 (4.2%)	20 (13.9%)	113 (78.5%)	11 (7.6%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

It had previously been established that Christian missionaries had educated the early Mizos on the meaning of sin thus, eventually leading to censorship of their cultural practices, the re-orientation to right and wrong, good and evil. This included the interpretation of liquor consumption as a sin thus giving abstinence from liquor a greater religious significance. This belief continue to be held by majority of the stakeholders today. It is found that 164 (68%) respondents agreed to the statement drinking liquor is a sin, 50 (21%) disagreed and 26 (11%) presented no opinion (see Table 3.0.). The perception of the people on liquor as a sin is also positively correlated to the advocacy of abstinence from the consumption of beer and wine as well, those who do not consider it a sin do not advocate abstinence from all kinds of liquor including beer and wine as well (see Table 2.0.). It was also found that 185 (77%) of the people believe in total abstinence from all kinds of liquor, while 25 (10%) do not support abstinence from beer and wine and 30 (13%) respondents presented no opinion (see Table 3.1.). Total abstinence advocacy also comes with a faint belief of the minority of 30 (13%) respondents that the state will ever truly be a liquor free state, while the majority of 195 (81%) remain sceptical and 15 (6%) with no opinion (see Table 3.2.).

Table. 2.0. Correlation Responses Table of Q 1 and Q 11.

Correlations			
		Q1	Q11
Q1	Pearson Correlation	1	.241**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	240	240
Q11	Pearson Correlation	.241**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	240	240
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Result of the Pearson Correlation Coefficient reveals that there is a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.01$) between items Q. 1. “Drinking alcohol is a sin”. Do you agree or disagree? and Q. 11. Are you in support of total abstinence even from the consumption of beer and wine? There is a significant difference of response between items Q1 and Q11 responses at a ($p = 0.000$). This means that those who tend to agree with the response statement “Drinking alcohol is a sin” also tend to agree that they “support of total abstinence even from the consumption of beer and wine”³⁵⁵

Table: 3.3. Do you think that prohibition is the right thing to do for a Christian majority state? (Q6 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
64 (66.7%)	24 (25.0%)	8 (8.3%)	112 (77.8%)	25 (17.4%)	7 (4.9%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

On the issue of prohibition, when respondents were asked if it is the right thing to do for a Christian majority state, 176 (73%) of respondents of which more are women agree that is the right thing to do for a Christian majority state like Mizoram, 49 (20 %) disagree while 15 (6%) have no opinion on the matter (see Table 3.3) shows

³⁵⁵ See Table 3.0 and 3.1 for frequency of response.

a significant correlation to their voting determinant which will result in a majority of them not voting for a party with pro-liquor advocacy (see table 2.1.). Thus, the Christian identity continue to remain deeply embedded in the Mizo people and to support such policies equates an un-Christian act.

Table 2.1. Correlation Responses Table of Q 9 and Q 42.

Correlations			
		Q9	Q42
Q9	Pearson Correlation	1	-.273**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	240	240
Q42	Pearson Correlation	-.273**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	240	240
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Significant correlation is established between Q. 9 and Q 42

Result of the Pearson Correlation Coefficient reveals that there is a significant negative correlation ($r = 0.01$) between items Q. 9. Do you believe drinking is morally unacceptable? and Q. 42. Would you vote for a political party with a manifesto which openly campaign to lift the dry law? There is a significant difference of response between item Q.9 and Q.42 responses at a ($p = 0.000$). This means that those who tend to agree with the response statement “Drinking alcohol is a sin” will also tend to disagree with the statement that “will not vote for a political party with a manifesto which openly campaign to lift the dry law”.³⁵⁶

³⁵⁶ See Table 3.5 and 3.6 for frequency of responses.

Table: 3.4. Was the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition (MLTP) Act, 1995 a success?
(Q 25 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
8 (8.3%)	58 (60.4%)	30 (31.3%)	15 (10.4%)	86 (59.7%)	43 (29.9%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

On respondents being asked if they considered the Mizoram Liquor Prohibition Act, 1955 a success or not, minority of respondents 23 (10%) agree it was a success while 144 (60%) acknowledged the policy as a failure 73 (30%) (see Table 3.4.). Despite this majority stakeholders advocated for continued prohibition.

Table 2.2. Correlation Responses Table of Q 25 and Q 27.

Correlations			
		Q25	Q27
Q25	Pearson Correlation	1	.190**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003
	N	240	240
Q27	Pearson Correlation	.190**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	
	N	240	240
** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Significant correlation is established between Q. 25 and Q 27

Result of the Pearson Correlation Coefficient reveals that there is a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.01$) between items Q. 25. In your opinion was the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition (MLTP) Act, 1995 a success? and Q. 27. Do you think the government should continue with the prohibition policy? There is a significant difference of response between items Q25 and Q27 responses at a ($p = 0.003$). This means that those who tend to agree with the response statement “the Mizoram Liquor

Total Prohibition (MLTP) Act, 1995 a success” also tend to agree that they “think the government should continue with the prohibition policy”.³⁵⁷

Table 3.5. Do you believe drinking is morally unacceptable? (Q9 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
79 (82.3%)	9 (9.4%)	8 (8.3%)	133 (92.4%)	5 (3.5%)	6 (4.2%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

Table. 3.6. Would you vote for a political party with a manifesto which openly campaign to lift the dry law? (Q 42 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
10 (10.4%)	41 (42.7%)	45 (46.9%)	16 (11.1%)	86 (59.7%)	42 (29.2%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

Overwhelming majority of 212 (88%) respondents continue to believe that drinking liquor is morally unacceptable, while 14 (6%) disagree to it and 14 (6%) had no opinion regarding the matter (see Table 3.5.). As a result, this belief shows a significant correlation with their opinion of not wanting to vote for a political party which openly advocates for a wet law (see Table 2.1.), where 127(53 %) of the respondents agree to not voting for such a political party, 26 (11%) will vote for such party and 87 (36%) remain undecided in the matter (see Table 3.6.). Thus, it can be regarded that the advocacy of prohibitionist policy can be an important determinant for a party to come to power in Mizoram, however, one has to take into account the 36% of the people who remain undecided on the issue as there can be other various determinants that can lead them to vote for such a political party.

³⁵⁷ See Table 3.4 and 2.24 for frequency of responses

III Demographic based analysis

Correlation of responses question(s) items on the demographic variables gender and domicile can be summarise as under:

- a) Gender: Women tend to agree more that prohibition is the right thing to do for a Christian majority state like Mizoram while men tend to disagree with it. Women also exhibit more happiness with the reinstatement of prohibitionist act in 2019 than men. From this we can assume that women voted more for a non-Congress party in the 2018 election than men pertaining to the issue of liquor. However, more men believe that liquor issue should not be used as a political tool than women (see Table 1.1). As many men believe that liquor should not be an issue we dwell over.
- b) Domicile: It is found that more respondents from rural areas agree that drinking liquor presents itself as an obstacle for an individual to go to heaven as compared to urban respondents, more rural respondents feel the need to prohibit liquor as the implementation of prohibitionist policy makes them feel safer than compared to the urban respondents. As more rural inhabitants feel the need to continue prohibitionist policy more respondents from the rural areas agreed to not voting for a political party which openly advocates legalization of liquor and respondents from the urban areas would not mind voting for such a party (see Table 1.3).

From the analysis of the perceptions of stakeholders, a deduction can be clearly made that the perception regarding liquor remain the same as it did before, majority of the people especially women consider the consumption of all types of liquor beer and wine are perceived as a sin. So, despite the failure of the dry law viz., the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition (MLTP) Act, 1995, people want continued prohibition policy enforced. A clear of polarization of opinion is seen between the urban and rural inhabitants, men and women, the younger generation and the older generation where the latter of each demographics exhibits a more conservative approach to liquor at hand. It can also be deduced that liquor issue can be an electoral determinant which prompts stakeholders to vote for or vote against a political party in an election: where majority of the people would vote for a political party who advocates the dry law.

The chapter locates the tug and pull of power between the arbiters of power and the implications of embracing the new religion. Having established how the prohibition narrative remained controlled by the educated proselytes and how the Christian propaganda of temperance came to prosper, one can understand the reconstruction of a conservatism society with religion at its core, thus the making of Mizo Kristianna. Religion through the Church has become central to the functioning of the contemporary Mizo society. This society led by the Church continues to uphold temperance which demands the enforcement of prohibition thus necessitating political regimes to fall in line with the narrative they had been conditioned to believe.

CHAPTER IV

THE LIQUOR NARRATIVE

This chapter highlights the role played by the Presbyterian Church in lobbying for prohibition. The correspondence between the State and the Church sheds light on the Church's perception and illuminates the push and pull between them for authority. The chapter also throws light on liquor orders and laws from 1972 to 2014 revealing the nature of interaction between state and civil society on the issue. Content analysis of Assembly debates on the varying liquor policies and attitudes is also made which aims to negate or prove true if the issue had been used by political regimes to influence electorates in Mizoram from the Mizoram Excise Act 1973 to the Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition & Control) Act, 2014 and if repeal of the dry law had resulted in differences of opinion among the political regimes as well as the people of Mizoram. It elaborates the circumstances that brought about differences in opinions among the political regimes themselves and between the civil societies in Mizoram.

Churches in Mizoram has an immense influence on the opinion of the people. It has played the role of a mediator between the Government of India and the Mizo National Front (MNF) during the political turmoil brought about by the Mizoram's independence movement in 1966-1986. The largest church viz., the Presbyterian Church and the second largest, the Baptist Church together have actively involved themselves in playing the role of a moral compass. Churches under the banner Mizo Kohhran Hruaitute Committee (MKHC) and the Mizoram People Forum³⁵⁸ (MPF) have further activated their actions in having a say involving all the spheres of socio-economic and political spheres of Mizo life. The Church has penetrated its roots deep into the psyche of people that one could safely assume that 'separation of the Church and the State does not really exist in Mizoram'. The majority finds this acceptable as religion continues to be an important source of identity in post-colonial Mizo society.

³⁵⁸ The Mizoram People Forum (MPF) was formed in 21st June 2006 under the Society Registration Act, 2005 (Act No. 13 of 2005) with the Registration No. MRS-61 of 21.8.2007. It is an association of various Churches and community NGOs in pursuit of good governance, the establishment of a democratic government through free and fair election. For more see Mizoram People Forum Chanchin (2006-2016).(2016) Aizawl: Mizoram People Forum. pp. 1-7

The church provides cohesiveness and homogeneity in mobilizing the people against Government policies such as liquor licensing policies. Both the Presbyterian and the Baptists have done a great amount of work to promote temperance among their church members. The Presbyterians under D.E. Jones had already initiated the rule of expelling and ex-communicating drunken church members. On the other side, the Baptist organized anti-country liquor campaigns that began in 1903 under the initiation of the Mizoram Baptist Church Conference at Sethlun.³⁵⁹ However, the issue has been lobbied vehemently at policy level by the Presbyterian Church and their efforts have been morally supported by the MKHC. The efforts of the Presbyterian Church provide backbone to other denominations and the entire civil society in their united fight against the drink. Thus, the particular analysis has been done on the Presbyterian Church as their efforts best represent the fight at the policy level. Christianity in Mizoram falls under various denominations, the two largest being the Presbyterian and the Baptist. Majority of the population (87.16 %)³⁶⁰ belongs to Christian community in Mizoram, rest of the percentage belong to other religion who forms the minority section like the Muslims, Hindus, Jains, and others. The Mizos have been proud to present the state as a Christian state and hope to be able to preserve the projection of this identity.

A. The Presbyterian Church: An establishment

The largest denomination in Mizoram is the Presbyterian Church³⁶¹ (6,04,514 members, 2017-2018 Statistics Report) which consists of nearly half the population of Mizoram. The Presbyterian Church has 51 presbyteries, 304 pastorates, 1113 churches, 102 branch churches. The administrative setup of the Presbyterian Church known as the Mizoram Synod is via the local church, Pastorate, and Presbyteries, each having their local authority, however, the Synod is the apex authority. The financial

³⁵⁹Lalzawnga. R. (2018). *Interest Articulation and Political Process: A Study of the role of Pressure Groups in Mizoram*. (Doctoral Thesis. Mizoram University. P.96. Retrieved from <http://mzuir.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/123456789/778/1/R.LALZAWNGA,%20Pol.Sc.pdf>.

³⁶⁰Mizoram Religion Census 2011. (5th May 2019). Census 2011. Retrieved from <https://www.census2011.co.in/data/religion/state/15-mizoram.html>

³⁶¹ Mizoram Presbyterian Kohhran 2018 Synod Bu Vawi 95-na. (2019) *2017-2018 Statistics Report Khaikhawmna*. Aizawl: Presbyterian Church of India. p. 220

operation, the personnel matters, the administration, management and the execution of works of the Church are all directly or indirectly supervised and controlled by the Synod. Mizoram Synod has 18 Boards/Committees/ Departments to handle and manage different works of the Synod. Among them, the Synod Executive Committee (SEC) is the highest decision-making body under the Synod and there are 15 Sub-Committees under SEC. The SEC exercises the functions of the Synod in respect of routine matters and disposes matters that cannot be postponed until the next regular meeting of the Synod. Financially, the Mizoram Synod is self-supporting without any foreign funds. Its annual income is around Rs. 243 crores and the main source being the tithe from all the members.³⁶²

The Mizoram Synod runs two hospitals: Synod Hospital and the John Williams Hospital. It also runs a rehabilitation centre viz., the Synod Rescue Home. It also runs a very well-equipped and furnished orphanage home viz., Hmangaihna In. It runs academic institutions such as Aizawl Theological College, Missionary Training College, Synod Higher Secondary School, Presbyterian Girls' School, Presbyterian Bible School, and Presbyterian Hindi Bible School. There are vocational training institutes such as: Synod Multipurpose Training Centre, Mission Development Training Centre and Women Centre. The Mizoram Synod takes initiative in moral reforms and imparts political education and spreads awareness on various contemporary issues. The variety of services it provides for the development of society and community in the state has made it an asset to the Government and also gives it high regards.³⁶³

B. Spearheading the Temperance Movement: The Presbyterian Church

Institutionalization of new mediums of learning and values had resulted in the gradual demise of the old culture. The dissolution of Zawlbuk by 1938 had been one unfortunate consequence. This dissolution helped position churches to be central to the functioning of society. It filled the vacuum as it became the centre of knowledge

³⁶³ Presbyterian Church of India. Mizoram Synod. Retrieved from <https://www.mizoramynod.org/about-us/>

and action supplemented with the establishment of the Young Mizo Association (YMA); an organization that formally took up the role of mobilizing the community in preserving its 'Mizo-ness'.³⁶⁴

Consumption was considered a sin synonymous with reverting to one's tribal tradition: the undoing of one's conversion and change thus, an un-Christian thing to do. This perception continues to be held on by the majority in contemporary Mizo society. The issue of Liquor continue to be a topic of debate in the Christian-dominated state of Mizoram. The decree of the church that taught new converts the implications of being a good Christian (among many other things) predominantly implied abstinence from the consumption of zu. As already mentioned, the earliest known prohibition of liquor was sourced from the church back in 1897 at Mission Veng, Aizawl under the guide of D.E. Jones (Zosaphluia). It clearly indicated the no tolerance policy adopted by the churches in dealing with drunkards. The church forbade habitual drinkers to partake in its affairs. The implementation of such an intolerant attitude became a norm set by the church. This had birthed a mentality which marginalizes liquor consumers and particularly illicit sellers (even in the contemporary society). Thus, liquor has been identified as the source of enormous social evil in the Mizo society. Consequent to all this, liquor had come to have a negative connotation to the early Christian converts.

The first General Assembly (where agenda for the assembly are submitted from various Presbytery)³⁶⁵ of the Presbyterian Church held on April 1910, the decision of Agenda No. 7 reaffirmed "Do not drink liquor, let us teach others not to drink as well, to abstain from the drink as it was so done before).³⁶⁶ It prohibited church members from brewing, selling, and consuming liquor. Strict actions against such was decided by the area's Church Committee. The meeting resolved to expel habitual

³⁶⁴ Note: Mizo-ness is a deep affinity and respect for Mizo traditional cultures, beliefs and practices, manifested in actions and way of life. It makes up the essence of the Mizo, provides a sense of belonging and identity. Here it is written in reference to the virtues and practices taught and upheld by the YMA to preserve and conserve the Mizo culture. It mobilizes the youths with the aim to uphold such values as the practice of altruism called '*tlawmngaihna*', the call of community work called '*YMA hnatlang*', the YMA's practices of mobilizing the youths on happy and sad occasions called '*chhiat ni that ni*' etc.

³⁶⁵ Presbytery are branches of the Presbyterian Church which spreads across the entire Mizoram.

³⁶⁶ Zu leh Mizo Kristianna. (1995). Aizawl: Synod Social Front Committee. p. 1

drinkers from the area like the 1897 prohibiting law.³⁶⁷ It can be seen that the church taught the sinful implication of liquor as it was so heavily intertwined with the cultural past. It preached for abstinence, and thus, expelled members from the Church and community. So the continued work of prohibition can also be said to be sourced from the church, particularly the Presbyterian Church. This continued tradition has given sanctions to social actions like the pelting of illicit liquor seller's house making it uninhabitable to expulsion from locality through the local body, the YMA.

However, it can be observed that the church that once excommunicated members for drinking has become more lenient in its approach. Excommunication of members in the contemporary Mizo world takes place for other reasons such as the elopement of couples which is often interpreted as the misuse of sexual conduct out of wedlock. However, these ex-communication periods applies for six (6) months and are granted entry to roll of the Church on the application of re-entry by those excommunicated, also re-entry is assured in all cases. With modernization and a more liberal approach being adopted by the younger generation, it is seen that the issue generates a more polarized view. However, the communitarian construct of the Mizos which helps promote the "collective perception" stands aligned to the church and those that stand on the polar opposite continue to be the minority.

³⁶⁷ *Zu Chungchanga Mizoram Presbyterin Kohhran Dinmun.* (1995) Aizawl: Mizoram Synod Social Front. p. 1

Picture 12: Aijal Kohhran Thu Remna or The Ruling of Aijal Church

XV
 12. 10. 1912. Inwinni
 1. Ima (Khasia) zu a ruia, Babu
 Sohon Roy leh. Kison Roy in
 a thu an zawt fiaka, "thea
 khat lai anita Kristian ribin
 ka pu tawh lo reng ani" atia
 chutanga. In neites ber in
 shim tum boa sual Kawng
 thlang zawt leh. Thirpha
 chaw lo thea Mission veng
 hnawh chhuah dan a
 aum avangin a chhuah an
 a in thu a chhunglet
 Kristian la aum ten an lual
 thea ang.
 2. Zawng leh Kallbanga nu thu afa
 nen in ngai anga a shawi
 Kawng ti Sohon Roy leh
 a archingon befel shela,
 zilh haw til an nih chuan
 " " vawh she.

Source: Book No. 1, *Aijal Kohhran Thu Remna or The Ruling of Aijal Church*, January 10, 1910-December 1916. The ruling of any issue by the Church was to be effective for one year. The content of the first section of the picture is as explained: On 12/10/1912, the Aijal Church decided to excommunicate and expel Ima (khasia) on the ground that he had been drunk, on closer inspection of his case by Soho Roy and Kison Roy, Ima had confessed that his sojourn with the drink 'has been almost a month and I no longer have the Christian mind set'. Since the owner of the house had decided to side with *sual* or evil without signs of repentance, according to the expulsion law that existed, he was to be expelled from Mission Veng. His house will continue to be inhabited by his Christian family members.

The picture above shows the ruling of Aijal Church against Ima (the subject under question) on the ground of 'sojourn with the drink'. It exhibits the relation people put on drinking and sinfulness as the subject himself believes his faith quite fickle that a month's sojourn with Zu had caused him to reflect on himself as faithless. The Gospel of all-encompassing love of God and forgiveness had certainly not been preached at the moment. Having concluded Ima had decided to side with '*sual*' (sin), a month's sojourn of liquor drink in the privacy of his home had caused his 'expulsion from his home', exiled from his Christian family. The sternness of the order promotes

intolerance, inflicting fear and imposition of their will in the name of church. It also exhibits the pervasiveness of the church in the affairs of the people, where it plays the role of an administrator rather than a Gospel preacher.

The Church acting as a morality vanguard or a moral compass had people aligning themselves to it, giving their consent and surrendering to its dictates. It eventually helps create civil society organizations that the church mobilizes to help enforce its directives. It stands firmly against the free flow of liquor and continues to do so. Rev. Rokhuma, the then Moderator of the Mizoram Synod had commented “the church believed that sale of liquor promoted drinking and addiction is the most destructive force in Mizoram”.³⁶⁸ Having associated liquor as the root cause of various social evils, the Presbyterian Church continued to lobby for the total prohibition of liquor at policy level. The Church (the Presbyterian Church will henceforth be mentioned as the Church from hereon) had prohibited Christians from indulging not only in liquor but also from the consumption of bhang and smoking ganja.³⁶⁹ This law was ordered to be circulated in 1933 in all presbyteries by the Synod Committee (SC).

In 1936, an issue arose in Vanlaiphai, a village situated in the current Serchhip District. An influenza patient was prescribed by Dr. Hrangbuanga a concoction of rakzu and egg. Having wanted to have the same prescription, seven people drank the same concoction on their own accord. The local Church wanted the counsel of the Synod Committee (SC) on how to deal with the situation. The SC then decided on the 3rd March 1936, No. 6 that ‘those who drank the concoction on their own accord without the prescription of the doctor should be regarded as having drunk zu’ and on the 5th April 1936 No. 5 a ruling was further made that ‘if a person not having prescription to consume zu should be excommunicated from the Church’.³⁷⁰ This ruling of the Church can only be summed up as ‘intolerant’ at this juncture.

The Excise Act of 1973 passed by the Mizo Union was done so with the hope of reducing the number of habitual drinkers. Contrary to what policy makers had hoped,

³⁶⁸ MNF Government asked not to issue New Vending Permits?. (30th June 1988). The Assam Tribune

³⁶⁹ *Dan Bu (Law Book) Bung (Chapter) II No. 44*. As seen in Zu leh Mizo Kristianna (Liquor and Mizo Christianity)(1995). Aizawl: Synod Social Front Committee. P. 1

³⁷⁰ Zu leh Mizo Kristianna (Liquor and Mizo Christianity)(1995). Aizawl: Synod Social Front Committee. Pp.1-2

the law (even without the formulation of rules) had increased the number of people habituated to drinking. The 1976 Synod General Assembly (Gen. 32, 1976) urged the Government to prohibit the sale of liquor and the 1978 Synod Executive Committee also made a circular in support of prohibition, the same as it did before. On the 16th February 1977, the Synod Executive Committee (45:7) also ruled to excommunicate members of the Church who were in the habit of brewing, selling, and consuming liquor. Enforcement of the Mizoram Excise Rules in 1984 further left the Church in a dismal state. 1985 saw the Church renew its vigor to vanquish its demon. It had decided to excommunicate members who held licensing permits and sold liquor following the footsteps of what the other churches had also done (Synod Gen. 19, 1985). Synod Assembly in 1985 continued to push the Government for the ban of selling liquor, its representatives had a meeting with the Chief Minister to lobby for prohibition. Their opinion had been communicated to the Government, however, it generated no response from the Government.³⁷¹ The 1987 Synod Assembly deliberated on the issue and stated reasons for its disapproval of the selling of liquor as follows:

1. The legalized sale of liquor liberalizes and increases the number of consumers. It also increases a lot of suffering.
2. The Church regard liquor as one of the most destructive force to our society. It also believes it is inherently linked to drug abuse.
3. Though the Government may make a profit from liquor tax; if a more thorough thought is put into it, we may actually lose a lot of capital from buying the product than the tax profit made by the Government. This loss cannot be corrected from the liquor tax profit made by the Government.³⁷²

In 1987, acting on the decision of the Assembly, the Synod Executive Committee (SEC) started giving out notices to its Church members. It directed members ‘not to apply for liquor licenses and that it will take strict actions against members who renew their licenses and sell liquor’. Campaign posters against liquor were made and put up by the Church. Discontentment arose after their meeting with the Chief Minister

³⁷¹ Secretary Record, 1985-1986, Synod Bu (Synod Book) 1986. p. 91

³⁷² *Zu Chungchanga Mizoram Presbyterian Kohhran Dinmun.* (1995) Aizawl: Mizoram Synod Social Front. p. 4

Laldenga on the 5th April 1988. The Church then posited full pressure on the Government not just for prohibition but to oust them from power. Inaction on the Government's part to make prohibition law prompted the Synod Executive Committee (SEC) to establish a Common Front inclusive of all denominations, organize: a walking demonstration, hunger strike, statewide prayer. The Common Front was also handed the task of organizing a mass meeting at Vanapa Hall. The Church mobilized its entire fleet, vital highlights of the Church's stance (both oral and printed medium) were made regarding a) the dissatisfaction felt on the inaction of Chief Minister Laldenga not fulfilling his end of the bargain and b) the belief that total expenditure related to liquor far outweigh income generated on it by the Excise Department.

Liquor narratives were published in Church circulars such as Kristian Thalai and Synod Newsletter, 10,000 copies of posters were circulated, writings on the actions of the Church in its fight against liquor and writings to educate people on 'harm of liquor consumption' were widely circulated. Request was made to all members not to apply for liquor permits.³⁷³ Zoramthanga the then Education and Finance minister (present Chief Minister from the MNF party) invited Church leaders to discuss with them "the benefits of the Excise Act over the prohibition Act and the difficulty of enforcing prohibition".³⁷⁴ Renewal of licenses planned by the Government by March all came to a halt consequential to the zealous pressure put by the Church.³⁷⁵ It was difficult for Laldenga, the Chief Minister to go against the Church! His unpopularity further ensued, he was voted out of power by eight of his ministers and the state was placed under President's Rule from September 1988 to January 1989. The fall of Laldenga had been interpreted by some as a consequence of his pro-liquor policy and by others a consequence of not having the blessings of the Church. January 1989 saw the dawn of a new Government established by the Congress party under the leadership of Lal Thanhawla. Lack of swift formulation of the dry law and exhibition of a slight liberal

³⁷³ SEC 109:9. (22-25 June 1988). In *Khawtlang Nun Hruaina*. Aizawl: Synod Social Front Committee. pp.7-9

³⁷⁴ SEC 110:111, Reports 1. (Dated: 31st October – 2nd November, 1988). In *Khawtlang Nun Hruaina*. Aizawl: Synod Social Front Committee. p. 9

³⁷⁵ Menon, Ramesh. (Dated: 30th September, 1988). *Mizoram comes under Presidents Rule*. Retrieved from <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/indiascope/story/19880930-mizoram-comes-under-president-rule-797758-1988-09-30>

perception by the new Government ruffled the feathers of the Church once again. Thus, continued the fight to prohibit or not to prohibit.

The crusade to lobby for prohibition had resulted in the frequent correspondence between the Church and the Government since 1991, it petitioned not just for control of country liquor but also for the enforcement of total prohibition law.³⁷⁶ Their request was not granted in 1991³⁷⁷ therefore, they continued to put in requests the next year and the years that followed. The trajectory the Church had mapped out took a U-turn when news hit on the grant of liquor permits to the Armed Forces (1st Bn. MAP) by the Government in 1992. This prompted the Church to make two requests to the Chief Minister viz., i) to revoke the permits granted and ii) the Government to make thorough consideration of the Excise Act and make efforts to curb the increasing flow of liquor and the submission and passing of the Total Prohibition Bill in the next legislative session.³⁷⁸

It continued to push for prohibition but its effort did not come to fruition. Consideration of the issue was procrastinated by the government with the General Election looming right round the corner. The Government in its defense of not having sooner replied to the Church claimed to be ‘doing necessary research on states that had enforced prohibition law’.³⁷⁹ The third State General Election held in 1993 led to the formation of a coalition Government between the Congress and Mizoram Janata Dal (MJD) with Lal Thanhawla as the Chief Minister for the third time.³⁸⁰ The Church resumed its correspondence with the Chief Minister in 1994, refreshing memory of the Congress Government leader, who prior to the election, had spoken of ‘continuance of discussion on prohibition after the election’.³⁸¹ Expression of discontent was made regarding the grant of liquor permits in their correspondence, it further confirmed the stance of the Church as it expressed liquor as ‘a source that

³⁷⁶ See Appendix VIII, Picture 1. Ref. No. MS/GEN-8(ii)/91/3. Dated 29/7/1991

³⁷⁷ Ibid. Picture 2 and 3 for further reference.

³⁷⁸ See Appendix VIII, Picture 4. Ref. No. MS/GEN-8/92/15. Dated: 25/6/92 for further reference.

³⁷⁹ Ibid. Picture 8. Ref. No. CMS. 79/92/212. Dated: 3/12/1993

³⁸⁰ The Mizoram Janata Dal (MJD) was formally known as the Peoples’ Conference Party led by Brig. T. Sailo.

³⁸¹ Op.cit. Appendix, Picture 9. Ref. No. MS/GEN-8/94/82. Dated: 18/5/1994

destroys the morale of the society and the Mizo race'. They once again placed their request for prohibition in Mizoram.³⁸²

Disillusioned by the lack of Government initiative and resurfacing of information for the grant of wine shop permit in local newspapers once again left the Church in a state of deep unrest.³⁸³ The Government's response to the Church regarding was labelled 'not correct' and reassured that 'Total Prohibition Bill under active consideration'.³⁸⁴ The Church swiftly responded, incredulous to the Chief Minister's response, it posited details of the information furnished by newspapers such as Vanglaini, Aizawl Times and Zoeng where these publishing houses stipulated the Government's 'intention to grant liquor permits, that the details is worked by the Law Department'. Such information was quite difficult to fathom as 'untrue' for the public. Mention was also made of their correspondence for prohibition since 1991, the reassurance of the Chief Minister for 'active consideration regarding the matter', J. Lalsangzuala's (the acting Chief Minister) reassurance that the Government's 'lack of intent to grant liquor permits' were all recounted. The letter also assures that want for prohibition was not the lone interest of the Presbyterian Church but the wish of the Mizoram Kohhran Hruaitute Committee (MKHC).³⁸⁵

³⁸² Ibid., Picture 10. Ref. No. MS/GEN-8/95/83. Dated: 28/7/1994

³⁸³ Ibid., Picture 12 & 13. Ref. no. MS/GEN-46/95/65. Dated: 21/8/1995

³⁸⁴ Ibid., Picture 11. Ref. no. CMS. 79/94/56. Dated: 8/8/1994

³⁸⁵ Ibid., Picture 12 & 13. Ref. no. MS/GEN-46/95/65 Dated:21/8/1995

Picture 13: The Vanglaina daily newspaper (14th of August 1995).



The Vanglaina daily newspaper on the 14th of August 1995 titled 'Zu zawrh permit pek a hnai mai thei' (translated as the grant of liquor sale permits might be close by) stipulated that the Excise Department has considered the opinion of various stakeholders and will recommend to the Government the opening of wine shops. It further informs that the Excise Department Consultative Committee on the 11th of August had considered the wish of the Church for prohibition, however, on careful consideration of other opinions had decided to opt for a controlled sale which will be beneficial to Mizoram. If the recommendation would be accepted by the Government, the Consultative Committee would recommend strengthening the Excise Force. It also writes that locally distilled liquor is found unhygienic so is considered unfit to grant permits.

Publications as one cited (see Picture 13) had been the cause of allegation. The wish of the Church for Prohibition Act had been dated since 1989.³⁸⁶ The firmly stands convinced that liquor was the 'source of decay for the Mizo ethnicity and society' (Synod 1994 Gen. No. 48). This conviction is made known to the Chief Minister once correspondence resumed with a continued petition for the formulation of

³⁸⁶SEC 116.29 (Dated: 31st October – 2nd November, 1988). In *Khawtlang Nun Hruaina*. Aizawl: Synod Social Front Committee. p. 10

prohibition.³⁸⁷ In 1995, the Mizoram Synod Social Front published a booklet named “Zu Chungchanga Mizoram Presbyterian Kohhran Dinmun” (translated as The Position of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church on the Issue of Liquor), this booklet stipulates the anti-liquor stance of the Church as:

1. There is no positive mention of liquor in the Bible. It states drunkenness to be a great sin.
2. Liquor is highly intoxicating which distorts senses of the user and lures him towards committing greater sins. It can change an ordinary man into a baser person and is also a gateway towards other intoxicants.
3. Responsible use of liquor is almost impossible since it is a very strong intoxicant. It has become more of a problem in the modern era rather than in our pre-civilized society and is, therefore, a dangerous substance.
4. It is detrimental to the personality and spiritual well-being of the user. Moreover, it has caused the ruination of family, society, and even official matters and also lead to sins such as sexual promiscuity and deviations, violence and murder, and other great offenses. It is one of the most destructive forces against society and culture.

The newspaper publications prompted a circulation response of their own, elucidated through these points. It exhibits the fear and frustration of the Church on inaction of the Government. Towards the end of their second term consequent to the campaign of the Church, the Congress ministry too became unpopular. Right this moment, the opposition party led by the Mizo National Front (MNF) introduced the Mizoram Prohibition of Liquor Bill, 1995, a private bill of the opposition MLA, Lalrinchhana, on the 29th September 1995. The MNF played their liquor politics right by introducing the need of the hour, thereby aligning themselves to the sentiment of the Church. The introduction of the prohibition bill (though rejected) earned them favour of the people and thus began their journey to being recognized as the prohibitionist party despite the rejection of the bill by the house. Two months later, the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition (MLTP) Bill, 1995 was introduced by the

³⁸⁷ Ibid. Picture 13. No. MS/GEN-46/95/65. Dated: 21/8/1995.

Government thus, resulting in the enforcement of the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition (MLTP) Act, 1995. The Church had persevered in its fight to end the flow of liquor which was finally met in 1995 with the passing and enforcement of the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition (MLTP) Act, 1995. M. Lalmanzuala rightly comments, “The very reason that liquor total prohibition existed in our society is because of the request of the Church. The request of the Church was respected by the Government; thus, the law came into being”.³⁸⁸ The enforcement of the dry law signified a great victory for the Church, it helped project the Mizo identity as ‘Mizoram Kristian ram’ a land dry of liquor.

C. Liquor Orders and Laws issued by the Government from 1972 to 2014:

The sale of illicit liquor had been a source of problem in the society prior to the Union Territory period in Mizoram, the Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) had been a rare sight and was possessed by armed personnel only. The main source of problem identified by civil society was regarding ‘sale and consumption of illicit liquor’. Initiation of prohibiting law was regarded the best solution to put an end to such problems. The approach adopted had been to ‘*khap rem*’ which means to prohibit to help eradicate both supply and demand. Thus, the push for the enactment of dry law. Prohibition orders issued by authorities in the post UT period had been mentioned in the previous chapter, while rules and laws found in the post UT period are as mentioned:

I. The Mizoram Excise Act, 1973.

In 1972, Mizoram was upgraded to the status of Union Territory, the first Mizoram Legislative Assembly led by Ch. Chhunga of the Mizo Union passed the Mizoram Excise Bill 1st October, 1973³⁸⁹ and consented by the President of India on the 17th April 1974. The Act was passed to control import, export, transport, manufacture, sale and possession of alcoholic liquor, intoxicating drugs. It also made

³⁸⁸ Lalmanzuala, M. (2000). *Prohibition*. Aizawl: Saphlenga, Zarkawt. p. 40

³⁸⁹ Proceedings of the Fourth Session of the Mizoram Legislative Assembly, Fifth Sitting. Dated 1/10/1973

provision for the imposition of excise duty and matters concerned with it.³⁹⁰ It came to be called the Mizoram Excise Act, 1973.

The Act under chapter II established the Excise Department in Mizoram charged under the Deputy Commissioner for the collection of excise revenue. Chapter III contains regulation rules for import, export and transport of intoxicants on payment of duty. Section 11 sub-clause (a) and (b) stipulates clause for enforcement of import and export of any intoxicants by the administration.

Chapter IV regulates the manufacture, possession, and sale of charas (Cannabis Resin). Section 15 prohibits the manufacture or cultivation (of cannabis) of all intoxicants, bottling of liquor for sale, construction and possession of materials, utensils for distillery or brewery unless sanctioned by the Administrator. The Act under Section 17 sub-section 1 and 2 stipulates quantity for the possession of intoxicants. However, sub-section 3 empowers administrator to prohibit by notification the possession of intoxicants throughout the whole territory to which the Act applies. The most opposed section of the Act, Section 18 stipulates provisions of the grant of license for the sale of intoxicants issued by the Collector or the Excise Commissioner. Chapter V provides for the collection of duties and fees on any excisable article manufactured or imported to the Union Territory.

Chapter VI deals with licenses, permits and passes. Section 28 also subjects the grant and suspension of licenses, permits, passes by authority. Chapter VII contains a lengthy provision for the prevention, detection and Investigation of offences by the Excise Commissioner or a Collector or any Excise or police officer and a Magistrate not below such rank for inspection. This clause had caused concern in the legislative debates as it does not empower civil society to carry out such function. Chapter XI contains general provision related to the Act.³⁹¹ Based on this Act, the Mizoram Excise Rules was formulated which came to be known as the Mizoram Excise Rules 1983 which was enforced on the 10th October, 1984 by Lal Thanhawla led Congress ministry.

³⁹⁰ The Mizoram Excise Act No. 7 of 1974. (22/5/1974).The Mizoram Gazette. Vol. III Aizawl: Authority.

³⁹¹ *The Mizoram Excise Act 1973. Act No. 7 of 1974.* Mizoram: Commissioner of Excise and Taxes Mizoram.

II. The Mizoram Excise Act 1992

Mizoram was granted statehood on the 20th February 1987. The Congress during its second ministry formation in 1988, introduced the Mizoram Excise Bill 1992 by J. Lalsangzuala, the then Minister of Finance³⁹² on the 17th March 1992 and was passed on the 18th March 1992. The Excise Act 1992 consists a total of ten chapters. The Act can be considered a revised extension of the Excise Act 1973. Rates had been revised and new provisions for the mobilization of social organizations like the Village Councils, the YMA and the MHIP was added under chapter VIII section 46. The addition of correction of errors was made in chapter II section 8 which was not present in the previous Excise Act. Addition of section 18 in chapter IV was made which prohibits the possession of intoxicant not obtained from a licensed vendor. Also the same chapter added section 25 and 26. Section 25 prohibits the employment of children under 18 years by licensed vendors and section 26 also enabled the Commissioner to declare dry days. A new provision was also added which empowers the Commissioner to take grants under departmental management or transfer of license under Chapter 7. Section 92 of chapter X stipulates the repeal of Excise Act 1973 (Act No. 7 of 1974) from the commencement of the Act of 1992. This Act was assented by the Governor on the 18th of November 1992. However, the Mizoram Excise Act 1992 was not enforced as a consequence of pressure from civil society. It eventually came to be replaced by the Mizoram Liquor Prohibition (MLTP) Act 1995.

III. The Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act 1995

The most awaited law, the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act 1995 came to be assented by P.R. Kyndiah, Governor of Mizoram on the 31st of January 1996. The prohibition Act was enforced from the 20th February 1997. The law came to be enforced throughout the land except the three autonomous districts: Lai, Mara and Chakma Autonomous District Councils. The MLTP Act consists of six (6) chapters.

³⁹² J. Lalsangzuala was also the Minister in charge of Planning, Excise & Taxation, Trade & Commerce and Industries retrieved from <https://mizoramassembly.in/storage/assemblies/July2020/8vt72CYXaC3O1JvUK4Qc.pdf>

Chapter I contains various definitions regarding the Act. Chapter II detailed the establishment of the Prohibition Commissioner and assistants to carry out the provision of the Act. The designated officers appointed under the Excise Act were respectively known as Commissioner of Prohibition, Deputy Commissioner of Prohibition, Assistant Commissioner of Prohibition, Superintendent of Prohibition, Prohibition Officer, Inspector of Prohibition and Sub-Inspector of Prohibition. It also contained details of the functions of the Collector, delegation of powers from the state Government to the Commissioner and subordinates which included officers of the police and other departments.

Chapter III contained the prohibiting provisions of the Act. It prohibited manufacture, transport, import, export or possession and consumption of liquor. It also contained provisions of penalties for contravention of the law. The former led to imprisonment for a term extended to five years but not less than three months and a fine extendable to ten thousand rupees but not less than one thousand. It also contained provisions for the prohibition and punishment for the following; the publication of advertisements of liquor, the alteration of denatured spirit, denatured spirituous preparation, for issuing prescription for liquor except by Registered Medical practitioner, possession of denatured spirituous preparation in excess of prescribed limit, sale of denatured spirit and consumption of liquor by certain permit holders.

Chapter IV contained provisions of grant of licenses and permits under section 29 identified as: a) sovereign or head of a foreign country, b) ambassadors, diplomatic envoy or Consul, Trade, Commerce or other representatives of a foreign country, c) member of staff appointed by or serving under any person specified under a) & b) provided that such a member is a national of a foreign country, e) consort of persons specified in a) & b) or c) or any relation dependent upon him, f) any foreign national employed by or engaged in any firm or any other concern in Mizoram. Section 30 also grants permission of import of liquor to armed forces for purchase of liquor from canteen stores depot (India), for sale and consumption in their messes and canteens. Section 31 grants permits to any person above twenty-one (21) years the use or consumption of liquor for the improvement of his health or if it provides ailment and section 32 (1) grants permit on prescription from Registered Medical Practitioner. It

also stipulates conditions for cancel of license or permit and other penal provisions. Chapter VI contained the miscellaneous provisions related to the Act.

This MLTP Act was amended by the MNF ministry in 2007 and came to be known as the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition (Amendment) Act, 2007, assented by the Governor of Mizoram on the 5th April, 2007. The amendment ensured a provision for the manufacture, possession, sale, and consumption of wine. Following this amendment, the Mizoram Excise & Narcotics (Wine) Rules, 2008 was made for licensing and production of winery in Mizoram.

IV. The Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition and Control) Act, 2014

The MLTP Act was followed by the liberalizing law known as the Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition and Control) Act, 2014 assented by the Governor on the 11th July 2014. The Act was formulated to prohibit and control the production, manufacture, possession, transport, export, purchase, sale and consumption of intoxicating liquor. It also made provisions for the imposition of excise duty. The Act contained ten (10) chapters, similar to the MLTP Act, the MLPC Act was enforced in the entire state of Mizoram except the three autonomous districts: Lai, Mara and Chakma Autonomous District Councils.

Chapter II contained details of manufacture, possession and sale of liquor. It also stipulated the power of the Commissioner to declare dry days and allowed for the temporary close of shops during riots or unlawful assembly on the directive of District Magistrate. Chapter III listed details of import, export and transport of intoxicating liquor while chapter IV provided for details for the grant of licenses, permits and passes. Chapter V describes the mode of duty levied on excisable articles. Chapter VI provided a section for the Commissioner to take over departmental management or transfer unexpired portion of management in case of contravention of the provision of the Act by license and permit holders. Chapter VII described details of prevention, detection, investigation and trail of offences and procedure. The Act made a person convicted of offences liable to punishable for a term of three years or more imprisonment.

Chapter VIII also contained provisions for prohibitions, offences and penalties without license, permits or pass. Those found trespassing the law of illegal transport, sale, manufacture and use or possession of materials to manufacture liquor are made liable to imprisonment for a term not less than six months extendable to five years accompanied with a fine of not less than five thousand rupees extendable to ten thousand rupees under section 43 (1). Illegal consumption of liquor was also made punishable with imprisonment for a term of not less than a month extendable to two years and a fine not less than one thousand rupees extendable to five thousand rupees under section 43 (2). It also contained other provisions for penalty in relation to the Act. Chapter IX provided for the establishment, control, appeal and revision by the administration and chapter X contained miscellaneous provisions related to the Act like the power of the Government to make rules for the purpose of carrying out the Act.

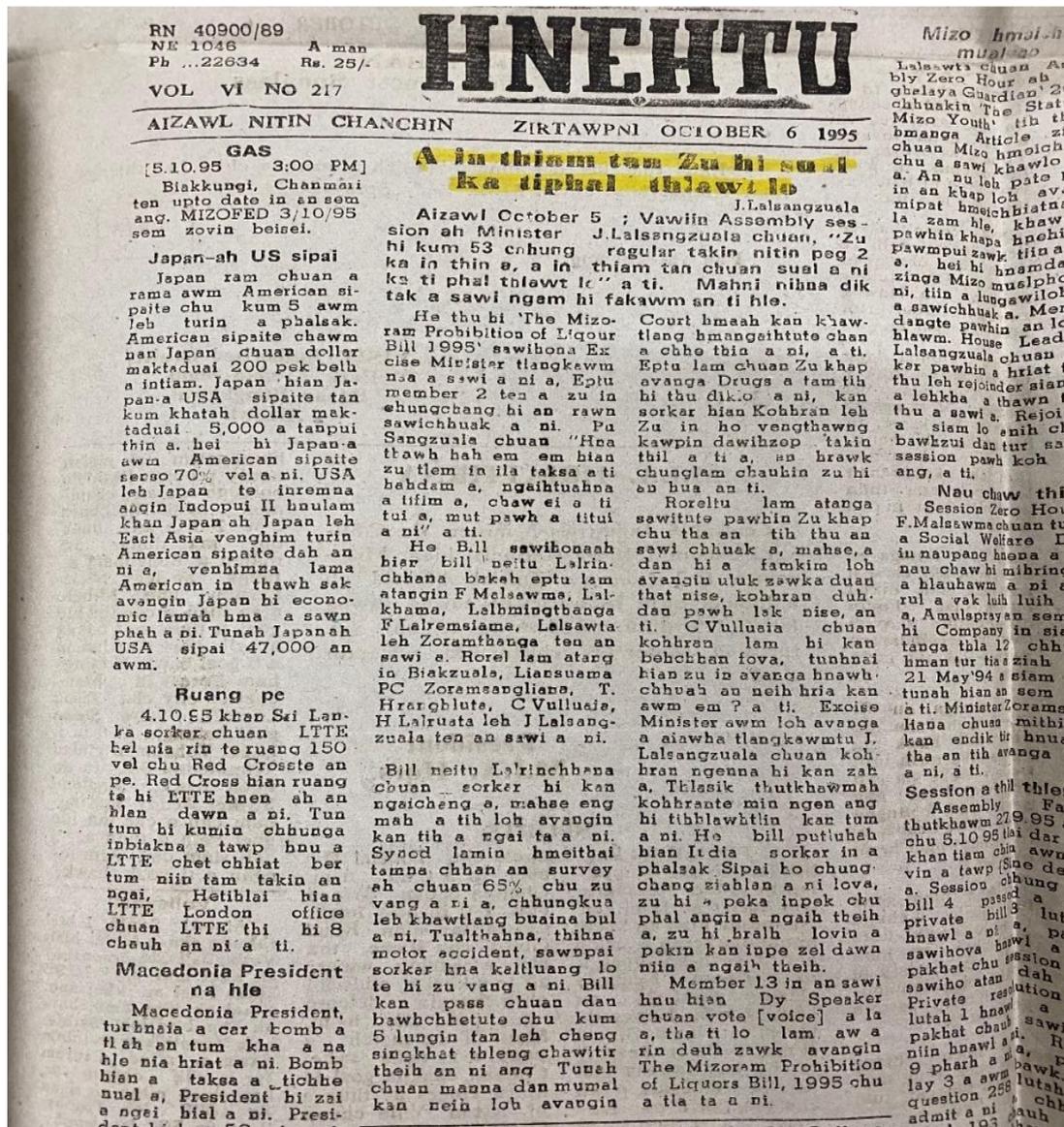
D. Summarizing the Acts.

The Mizoram Excise Act was formulated in the light of the Assam Excise Act 1910, it received backlash from the public as formulation of a prohibiting law was expected from their representatives. The making and consumption of liquor had been a common feature in the early Mizo society through and through. Prior to the placement of indigenous people in a position of law makers, it is understood that formulation of prohibition law had been often been requested to officials by the Church led civil society. An apt example had been the request put in by the YMA to the Deputy Commissioner, K.G.R. Iyer in 1950 and the resultant sale prohibition law in 1954. Once situated in a position of law makers themselves in 1972, it would not be wrong to assume the expectant outcome from their elect viz., the Mizo Union representatives. The formulation of a law contrary to their interest had surely brought about a 'disconnect' between the two. An analysis can be made that even though the Excise Act contained prohibition clause under chapter III, section 11, the existence of licensed sale clause under chapter IV, section 18 dominated the liquor narrative leading the Mizoram Excise Act to be notoriously known and interpreted as the sale law. The exclusivity of enforcing powers granted to Government agents under section

32 was also criticised and demand was made for inclusivity to activate social organizations as enforcing agency. Lack of enforcement of the law put a rest to the discord until the formulation of the Mizoram Excise Rules in 1983 and its enforcement on the 10th October, 1984 by Lal Thanhawla led Congress ministry.

The swift introduction and passing of the Excise Act 1992, had taken the people by surprise. This too had been criticised however, lack of enforcement of the law once again laid to rest the conflicting issue. However, the opposition bill titled, the Mizoram Prohibition on Liquor Bill 1995 stirred quite a debate in the Assembly House which prompted the Finance Minister J. Lalsangzuala to express his unfiltered opinion on liquor which became the subject of contention. His frank admission on the floor of Assembly House received mixed sentiments; championed for his honesty by some and for the others a scandalous admission. His frank admission of “unwillingness to accept liquor as a sin for those who moderately consume was apt as he himself admitted to be habituated to drinking two pegs every night which helps him relax his body, giving him clarity of thought, good appetite and a good sleep” was the contention of discussions and often lauded as a representation of a counter narrative to the marginalized liquor consumers. It no doubt rattled the cages of Church leaders.

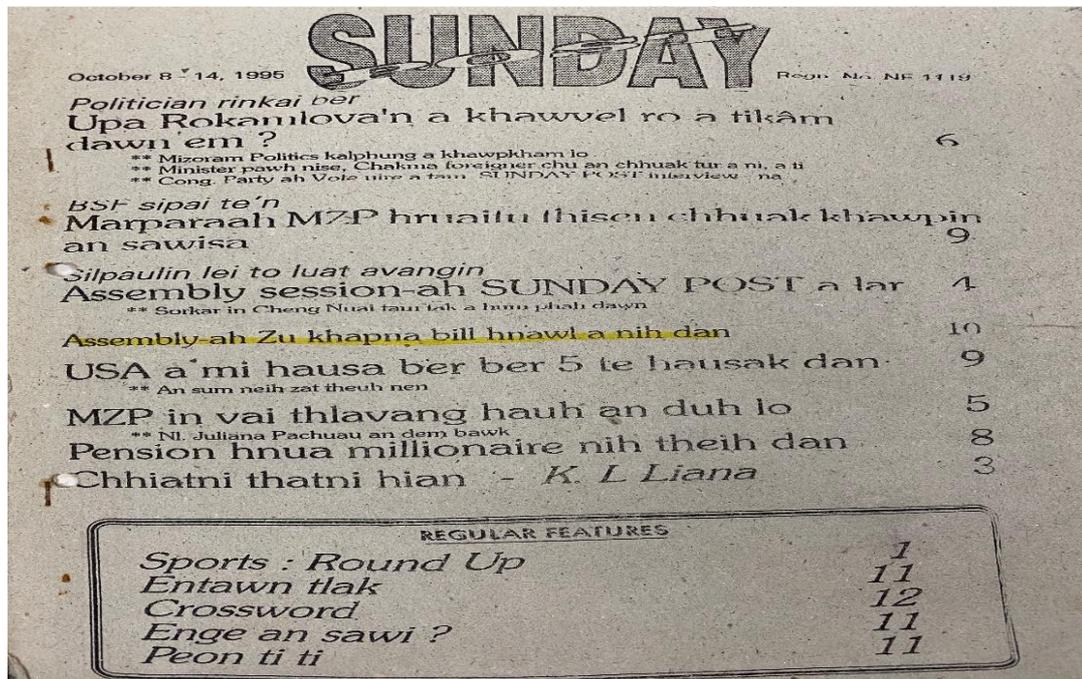
Picture 14: *Hnehtu* daily newspaper (6th of October 1995)



Picture 14: *Hnehtu* daily newspaper on the 6th of October 1995 titled 'A in thiam tan Zu hi sual ka tiphaw thlawt lo' (translated as 'For those that moderately drink zu, I refuse to accept it a sin') reviewed the Assembly discussion on the Mizoram Prohibition on Liquor Bill 1995 and lauded the honesty of Minister J. Lalsangzuala.

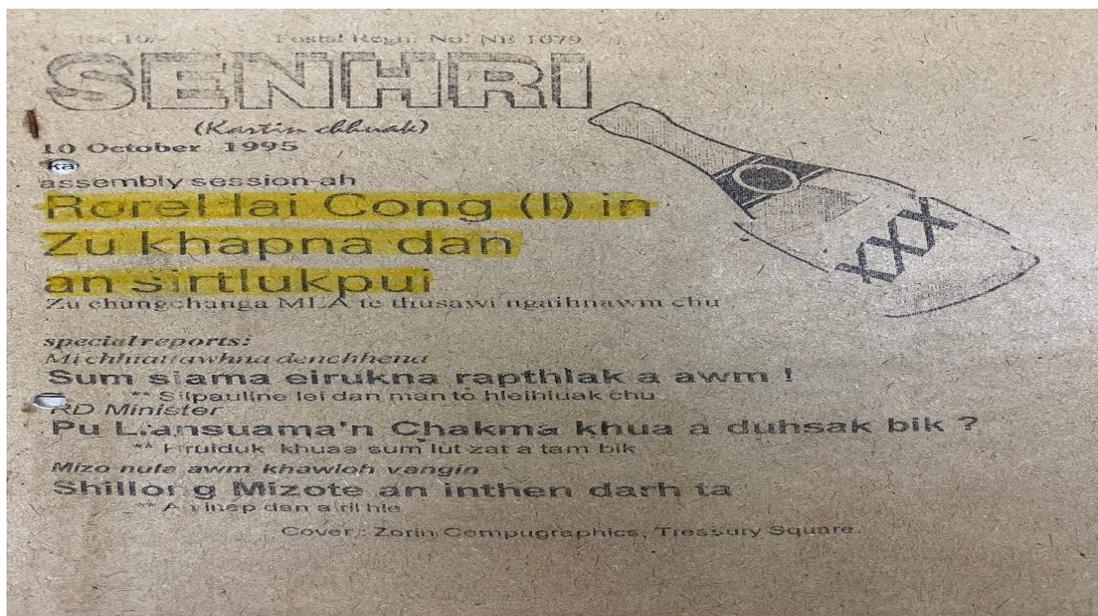
However, despite introduction of the prohibiting law (after having rejected the opposition bill for liquor prohibition) by the Congress, the damage had been done for having rejected the opposition bill. The highly publicised issue had been interpreted by media outlets differently. Some interpreted the move of the ministry in a different light which provided negative publicity for the ministry as seen from the news outlets below (see Pictures 15 & 16)

Picture 15: The Sunday Post (14th of October 1995)



The Sunday Post on the 14th of October 1995 had published a review of their own regarding the opposition Bill – the Mizoram Prohibition on Liquor Bill 1995, titled as “Assembly ah zu khapna bill hnawl a nih dan” translated as “How the liquor prohibition law came to be rejected”.

Picture 16: The Senhri (10th of October 1995).



The Senhri on the 10th of October 1995 had published their review titled as “Rorel lai Cong (I) in zu khapna dan an sirtlukpui” translated as ‘The ruling Congress (I) disapproves prohibition law’.

The passing and enforcement of the monumental law, the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act 1995 which prohibited the manufacture, transport, import, export or possession and consumption of liquor brought calmness to the relations between the Government and civil society. However, the provision of exemptions for procurement made under chapter IV section 29 was criticised by the opposition party at the assembly debates. Nonetheless, the Church led civil society settled for the law, it had appeased the disgruntled population. However, for the Congress ministry, the damage had been done, they had lost the trust of the people and ultimately led to their replacement and rise of the MNF consequent to the well strategized liquor political game played by the MNF.

Enforcement of the dry law for 17 years had seen its failure: demand continued to exist and so did illicit supply. However, the sudden appearance of intent to promote legalizing law by the Congress ministry awakened the slumbering giant once again. It met with vehement opposition from the other end. The most opposed section of the legalizing law had been chapter II which provided details for the manufacture, possession and sale of liquor. This act of the Government caused the mobilization of Church led civil society to once again react against it, and once again resulted in the undoing of the Congress in 2018. From the analysis of liquor laws in Mizoram, it can be deduced that liquor law which aimed for anything less than prohibition awakens the giant and its allies in the Mizo society. It certainly jolts the Church led civil society up which arms itself to react and undo pro-liquor stance of the Government.

E. The Political Narrative of changing attitudes on Liquor

Liquor has been a persistent topic which evokes interesting debates in the legislature, it causes ministries to find themselves standing at a cross-road wanting to take a different path rather than being subjected to push and pull of the Church led civil society. Ministries have often tried to present pragmatic rationale to move beyond prohibition law. However, these attempts have always caused them their popularity and resultant resentment by the people. Content analysis of Assembly debates on the varying liquor policies is made which aims to negate or prove true if the issue had been used by political regimes to influence electorates in Mizoram from the Mizoram

Excise Act 1973 to the Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition & Control) Act, 2014

On the other side, prohibition campaigns have always received favour of the electorates as it appeals to the religious orientation of the Mizos. Comments have often been made by statesmen that the ‘appeal for prohibition is expected of the Church and is what they should be doing’ being the supposed vanguard of the morality of the people. The issue has often sparked friction between the two, as the Church along with the civil society takes an uncompromising stance against the wet law. It is observed that the actual stance of political parties on liquor can be determined only when it stands in a position of power to make policies. The political narrative of political regimes on liquor is as discussed below based on content analysis of legislative debates on liquor laws spanning from the time of ministry formation in the Union Territory period to the time of its legalization under statehood till 2014.

1. The Mizoram Excise Bill 1973: The Mizo Union and the Congress

The first Legislative Assembly under the Union Territory of Mizoram in 1972 had a majority of 24 elected legislators from the Mizo Union party with the minor 6 opposing members from the Congress party along with three nominated members.³⁹³ Thus, culminating to a total of 33 legislators in the Mizoram Legislative Assembly. The Mizoram Excise Bill was introduced on the fourth session of the Assembly by Khawtinkhuma, the then Finance Minister and was discussed on the 25th September 1973 and then again on the 10th October 1973. The statement of objectives and reason provided for the bill had been a) to generate revenue and b) to control consumption of liquor. The bill had been supported on various grounds by the movers, they believed ‘the bill had been misinterpreted as a legalizing law and would rather it be interpreted as a prohibiting law’. Favour of the bill had been adequately orated by Mizo Union legislators such as R. Zoliana, Sangkhuma, C. Lalruata, Chawngkunga, K. Sangchhum, Hrangiaia, Lalhmingthanga, Saitlawma, R. Thangliana, Ngurdawla, Ch. Saprawnga, R. Dotinaia, Vanalahruaia, Hrangvela, K.L Rochama, Saptawni and Khawtinkhuma.

³⁹³ Mizoram 1972. Retrieved from <https://eci.gov.in/files/file/3654-mizoram-1972/>

R. Zoliana commented on the necessity of a law that prohibited the sale of liquor in Mizoram, that the Excise bill was a prohibiting law that prohibited not just liquor but other intoxicants like drugs, marijuana, Lysergic Acid Diethylamide (LSD) and others.

Sangkhuma expressed his apprehension that the bill would increase the availability of liquor that would have a negative effect on society and tarnish the reputation of the state. He cautioned for a guarded use of the law. He further commented that the passing of the Excise bill would lead to their unpopularity thereby losing support of the public. He was against generating revenue from liquor and suggested for a very limited supply of liquor quantity. His condition for supporting the law was if the Government would give assurance that the law would be utilized cautiously and positively.

While C. Lalruata positively raved about the initiative of the Government as he believed that passing of the bill was necessary to provide a legal backing to: a) the prohibitionist acts of both the social organizations and b) the Government when challenged in the Court of Law. He expressed the persistent existence of liquor and its related problems: past, present and future. That people habituated to drinking would always exist as long as society existed. Thus he rendered full support to the bill as it would enable the Government to control and profit from it.

Chawngkunga was critical of the social construct based on Christianity, he found the opposition hypocritical as the bill had been claimed to be opposed to Christian principles. Despite the canopy of Christian values which dominates the narrative, he expresses his frustrated observation of the situation as “The Mizos live a lie, there are those that excessively drink liquor despite the want of being a good Christian, those that secretly drink liquor despite the wish to become a Pastor. Let the bill be passed, the act will be dropped, those that want to drink will drink and those that does not will not”. Having once actively participated to ending liquor, he further argues that prohibitionist acts discriminate the rich and the poor, actions against poor widowed illicit brewers had been taken, their utensils smashed broken and auctioned despite their wailing pleas, while the rich illicit brewers and sellers thrived. He supported the bill as he believed it would reduce illicit brewing, give importance to the discretion of

Village Councils, Agencies and individuals if they put in requests for not granting sale permits within their areas.

K. Sangchhum in support of the bill had explained that there remained no specific reason for the public to be in turmoil as the bill did not contain a clause that stipulated 'the public should drink liquor nor does it state the public should not to drink liquor'. He also supported taxing excisable materials and suggested to inflate the rate of liquor which will automatically control consumption. He further suggested to restrict grant of sale permit by allowing only those who will sincerely carried out the trade which would bring order to the consumption habit of people.

Hrangaia was also in agreement to passing the bill, that it would help control the menacing drinking practices faced by their contemporary society and help revert to the good old traditional practices of drinking custom followed by the Mizo forefathers.

Lalhmingthanga was also in support of controlling the price of liquor and expressed the need to act in conformity with the law thereby necessitating the need to pass the law. Saitlawma was in agreement with Lalhmingthanga as he believed that the passing of the bill would be a 'relief' to the various challenges faced regarding liquor and was in full support as it not only provides for regulated sale but also would prevent anyone to operate above the law.

R. Thangliana was also all in for the Bill as he believed it would generate employment with the creation of the Excise Department. Ch. Saprawnga and R. Dotinaia supported the bill on the grounds similar to C. Lalruata that it would provide legal backing to the prohibitionist act of the Government. Ch. Saprawnga further advocated for the greater mobilization of social organizations like the Village Council.

Vanlalhruaia presented his opinion on Christianity and the legalizing law. He opined that despite the label of a Christian state, the state remained abundant on liquor brewed by poverty stricken widows as a means to sustain a living and the ever-existent count on those habituated to drinking. To this he reasoned a consequence of not having an Excise Act. He believed it was impossible to really do away with liquor in society but it was possible to make a law which prohibits illicit brewing, control import and export and allow licensed sale of liquor. He also supported making the purchase of liquor legit and deflated pricing. On passing the bill, he suggested to collecting public

opinion from various places to help determine if people wanted sale of liquor in their area, if their response would be 'no' the sale would require further justification. He also went to the extent of expressing his belief that the opposition too supported their view and were opposed to the bill for it was an act prompted by default.

Hrangvela argued in support of the bill as it would bring order to the chaotic scenario presented due to lack of excise law.

Saptawni, the only women legislator also spoke in favour of the bill with the initiation of limited supply of liquor by the government accompanied by a very well enforced law.

Khawtinkhuma provided the closing argument for the bill, he believed that the Excise Act would make possible to limit the illicit proliferation of liquor, that formation of a prohibition law would be meaningless without excise rule to punish contraveners. The Act would hold contraveners accountable for their actions not just for the manufacture, sale and peddling liquor but also other intoxicating substances mentioned under the bill. Regarding the objective of generating revenue, he believed it would sit well with the Government not to even generate a single percent of revenue. In response to the accusation of grant of permits alleged by opposition, he responded that there had been no grant of licenses but rather 'temporary permits granted under no existing regulating law'. He further argued, temporary permit holders did not sell liquor, even if they did sell liquor, those not holding permits did sell illicit liquor, a result of lack of regulating law thereby justifying the necessity of passing the Excise bill which to him would control and regulate flow of liquor.

The bill on the other hand was vehemently opposed by the opposition members like Zalawma, Lalkunga, J. Thanghuama and Lalsangzuala. The bill had been opposed mainly on religious grounds, permitting the legal sale and consumption of liquor was believed to be averse to the Christian principle. Objective of the Government to generate income from excisable articles was also criticised and suggestion to find an alternate source of income was also made.

The introduction of such a bill according to Zalawma was comparable to 'multiplying the enemy' which would lead to the deterioration of human morale thus creating 'hell'. He further refuted the bill by pointing out that the social requirement

was not a liquor legalizing Act but rather a curtailment Act. He had also suggested that if the bill was to be passed, permit should be given to everyone not just a few so that would lessen the profit margin thus automatically discouraging and reducing the sale of liquor. He had also questioned the ministry on why permit had already been granted to a 'certain four/five people' prior to the consideration of the bill, let alone once legalized what the Government was going to do about it? He believed that unlike the aged Americans and British civilizations who could control and hold their drink, the introduction of such was too early for the young Mizos.

Lalkunga also pointed out the questioned raised by Zalawma, where prior to the passing of the bill licensed why sellers existed. To this prior grant of permit he labelled it a 'shame' and a 'violation of the House privilege' thus making the consideration of the bill a 'difficult one'. He urged members to reject the bill as such 'rejection' will 'positively reflect' on the 'image of the state'; the projection of the 'practicing Christian'. He further commented that the passing of the bill would be a great shame for those who ardently worked to spread the gospel and a great shame for a legislator to stand in a pulpit after. He suggested voting for the bill should be done in a secret ballot thus making it clear on their liquor stance as 'who is for and who is not'.

J. Thanghuama criticised the projected four to five lakhs targeted income of the bill. He compared it to not even amounting to the profit made by a P.W.D contractor and pointed out that 'the state can even do without it' and that it was a 'shame' to sell liquor. He also criticized the employment generation section through the bill as hiring people to work in the department will only 'create more corrupt personnel'. He expresses his scepticism that anyone would ever be punished by the law and grant of permit would only generate corruption. He also argued that passing of the bill would only increase a person's chance of drinking if made available and suggested to take public opinion of the Church and social organizations on the matter. He urged that his fellow legislators should contemplate the future had the bill was passed and commented that 'Mizoram is better off as a dry area'.

Lalsangzuala argued that the Mizo society had tried its very best to eliminate liquor to the point of having those habituated to the drink drinking in secrecy. The legalization of liquor would make them 'unashamed' to drink out in the open, that

despite the aim of the bill to control consumption, it would be impossible to control drunkenness. He refutes the optimistic belief of ‘effectively utilizing the bill’ presented by Saitlawma, Mizo Union legislator thus expressing the ‘lack of hope he feels on the effective utility of the bill while they even fail to effectively utilize the Good Book of God’. He also questioned legalizing move while they (the Mizo Union) were on the verge of merging with the Congress. He feared that after their merger, the legalizing liquor law would become the legacy of the Congress party as had been the case presented in mainland India. The colonial British Empire had habituated the people to drinking, the National Congress party despite their prohibitionist belief and attempts to promote dryness had to inherit the colonial legacy of providing liquor to the people, thus, rendering any prohibitionist attempts on their part a failure. He assumed that no community would ever welcome the idea of locating a licensed seller in their locality. He concluded, ‘the bill will allow for the sale, consumption, manufacture, import and export of liquor, thus it is a legalizing law not a prohibiting law’ that its passing would only ‘help strengthen liquor, the enemy’.

However, Mizo Union legislator Lalrinliana could not find himself agreeing to the move of his partymen as he believed the Government would ‘fail’ to fulfil its objectives to prohibit and control flow of liquor. He expressed his hope that the bill would not be passed as he equated its passage to doing the ‘bidding of the devil’. Ngurdawla too was also quite hesitant to support the bill as he commented on the intention of party to initiate liquor bill was not elucidated during the election campaigns and made suggestion for more time to consider the bill.

The bill was passed on the 10th of October 1973, true to the opinion of Vanlalhraia, the Congress party came to support the Excise Act after the merger and formation of the Congress ministry. The Congress and the Mizo Union merged on 12th January 1974, thus confirming the fear of Lalsangzuala, the legalizing law became the legacy of Congress party as often expressed by many. The Mizo Union ministry prior to their merger came to be labelled by many as the Congress ministry, thus making the Excise Act 1973 the legacy of the Congress party. The Legislative Assembly debate between the Mizo Union and the Congress on issue of the Mizoram Excise Bill can be recognized as the beginning of liquor as an issue raised in political forum

polarizing public opinion towards political regimes representing their interests on liquor. The opposition of the proposed bill was concentrated more on the moral side of liquor legalization which questioned the movers' commitment to their Christian religion. It can be seen from the debates that the 'moral question' as posed by religious consideration had put a pause in the reasoning of the bill. Legislators of the Mizo Union had come to consider the Excise bill as a solution to control and regulate the manufacture, sale, import and export of liquor to a state plagued by the free flow of illicit country liquor despite eradication efforts of social organizations (to which most legislators would have been active members of).

The part of bill that came under fire was chapter III and IV which allowed the import, export, transport, manufacture, possession and sale of liquor to license and permit holders. The focus of debate had been on the moral question on liquor itself, despite the good intentions of prohibiting illicit brewing other intoxicating substances. An analysis can be made that the debate clearly emoted the mainstream belief on liquor, which can be traced to the colonial construct of its perception as 'a sin'. The indigenised Christian perception on liquor continued to hold a more toxic perception towards it, as to them it is after all associated to all social evils and allowing the free flow of the 'enemy' was comparable to allowing the 'devil' to roam about freely on the streets of Mizoram.

Justifications made by the movers had been so done in cognisance of the presence of abundant illicitly brewed liquor in the state. The considered solution had been to tax and sell liquor which would automatically help control consumption through the established Excise Department. It had aimed to legally sell to end illicit brewing, giving it a legal backing to control the perceived nuances associated to liquor. Legislators who all belonged to various churches themselves would definitely feel the burden of making such laws as it would be interpreted by many as a test of one's faith, to the extent of polarizing people's opinion of their legislators as a 'good Christian' and a 'bad Christian'. Any political party that seem to find reasons to legalize liquor often find themselves becoming 'unpopular' among the public.

1.A. Enforcing the Excise Rules, 1983

The People's Conference (PC) came to form a ministry under the leadership of Brig. T. Sailo. His ministry in the beginning staunchly campaigned against liquor. Rev. Chauthuama writes, "Immediately after the formation of the PC party, they vehemently campaigned to prohibit liquor. This was so done for the public to side with them and to oppose the Congress ministry. Their efforts eventually led to the defeat of the Congress. Their prohibitionist efforts was successful to a certain extent, but among the party leaders, there remain some who were habituated to the occasional drink. Their prohibitionist stance too slowly came to weaken."³⁹⁴ True to the words of the good Reverend, no licenses were granted in the initial period of their ministry. However, the Mizoram Excise Rules, 1983 came to be formulated by the end of their ministry. The Rules were enforced by the next ministry formed by the Congress on the 10th October 1984 as T. Sailo and his party lost the election in May 1984. Thus, Lal Thanhawla and his ministry handed out permits and licenses with enforcement of the Rules from the 3rd December, 1984. Consequently, 1010 retailer licenses were handed out, 10 wine shops and 4 bars were established³⁹⁵. Four (4) wine shops were opened in Lunglei, with 2 whole sellers located in Aizawl³⁹⁶ namely the RTP Bonded Warehouse and the Eastern Syndicate.³⁹⁷

His ministry was short lived as a consequence of the Peace Accord signed between the Government of India and the Mizo National Front (MNF) on the 30th June, 1986, thus, bringing to an end two decades of political turmoil and the home coming of the MNF heroes. Signing of the Accord led to the formation of an Interim Government which resulted in the reshuffling of ministry with Lal Thanhawla making way for Laldenga, leader of the MNF to occupy the Chief Minister's office with him as the Deputy Chief Minister. Thus, forming a coalition Government between the Congress and the MNF until the next conduct of election. With grant of statehood on 20th February 1987, Mizoram graduated from Union Territory to a full-fledged state fresh

³⁹⁴ Chauthuama, Revd. (2014). *Bible, Zu leh Mizote*. Guwahati: Bhabani Offset Private Limited. p. 86

³⁹⁵ MLTP Act Study Group chhana lutkim: Hlawhtlingti lo pawl 6; Hlawhtling ti pawl 2. (29th May, 2011). Zozam Times.

³⁹⁶ Lalzirliana. R. Assembly Debates Proceedings on The Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition & Control) Bill 2014. Seventh Legislative Assembly. Dated: 10/7/2014.

³⁹⁷ Sourced from the Excise & Narcotics Department, Government of Mizoram.

election to the first state Legislative Assembly was held which resulted in the MNF forming the first state Government. The Mizo National Front (MNF) while underground (1966-1986) emphatically campaigned against liquor as mentioned in the previous chapter. MNF acted as a symbol of Mizo sub-nationalism and their political ideology based on self-determination.³⁹⁸ Championed by the people for their motto 'For God and Country', expectations were high for the changes they believed they stood for and were expected to affect once they came to power. They were expected to usher in prohibitionist policy. However, once in a position of power their over ground politics appeared to take a different narrative.

Malsawmdawngliana writes, “The war waged by the MNF against liquor from below the ground was still fresh in the minds of the public. The Chief Minister Laldenga publicly announced that he would consent public opinion on the policy to be adopted on the issue of permit for sale of liquor. On 16th April 1988 prominent social leaders, Village Council members of Aizawl town, representatives of the Young Mizo Association (YMA) and Mizo Hmeichhia Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP) were invited to discuss in the issue of Liquor at Vanapa Hall. The invitees attended with the expectation that Zu (liquor) will be restricted by any means. On the contrary, the Chief Minister stressed on the need to obey law and order. The meeting resulted in general frustration and grumbling reaction of the audience, unhappy with Laldenga the crowd departed. The MNF circulated a Letter to the Parents No V of 1988. The pamphlet showed that they had collected views and opinions from some 3000 people with regard to the issue of permit for the sale of liquor. Their survey showed that majority of the people wanted a rigorous control be exercised on liquor instead of resorting to its prohibition. The church leaders met the Chief Minister in relation to the question on liquor and the government accused the church leaders on encroaching upon the jurisdiction of the Government. The ideology for which they were championed “For God and the Country” started deteriorating with the authoritarian attitude of their leader. The church leaders having left with no option gave up negotiating on the issue, leaving the matter to the will of God. When the MNF Ministry fell, the Church leaders

³⁹⁸ Nunthara, C., (1996). *Mizoram: Society and Polity*. New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company. p. 218

characterized the event as “an answer by God to the prayers of the Church on the liquor issue.”³⁹⁹

It appears that Laldenga gravely disappointed the people who eagerly awaited his return. The political path of followed by Laldenga over ground as interpreted by Malsawmdangliana as ‘authoritarian’ could otherwise be seen as intended to demarcate jurisdiction with the intention of establishing an absolute rule. The issue of liquor clearly developed schism between the *Hnam pa* (Father of the people) and his people. His ministry continued with the sale of liquor till the 31st of March 1988, though emphatically denied by the party.⁴⁰⁰ Laldenga was infamously quoted on his opinion, "Zu is neither our enemy, nor our friend, it is only a thing. Whether it becomes our friend or foe depends on how we relate ourselves to it". His very passive comment and non-complying attitude to the demand for prohibition from the Church caused him to fall from the ‘good graces’ of the Church.

The Church then launched a full campaign against his ministry. In November 1988, the Synod Church leaders on invitation extended by Zoramthanga (who was then the Finance Minister under Laldenga’s ministry) had a meeting at his office where it was reported the minister spoke of ‘the advantages of the Excise Act over Prohibition Act. He also stressed the difficulty of formulating prohibition Act’ to which the Church leaders responded they ‘will settle only for prohibition.’⁴⁰¹ No longer regarded as the peoples’ champion, a brief interlude of only 19 months, Laldenga ministry was tested on the floor of the house. His party exhibited cracks where eight of his legislative members resigned from their position, shortly after, MNF (D), D which stood for democracy came to be established with the intension of forming a coalition government with the Congress.⁴⁰² Laldenga eventually lost power which resulted in the promulgation of Presidents Rule Mizoram from the 8th

³⁹⁹Malsawmdawngliana. (Nov 14-Jan 2015). *Understanding Power: The Overground Politics of MNF* in Shoryabhumi. Vol 2, Issue 4, Raigad. ISSN: 2319-720X. p. 27

⁴⁰⁰Hluna, Dr. J.V. (14/12/1995). Assembly Debates Proceedings on Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Bill 1995. Third Legislative Assembly.

⁴⁰¹SEC 110:111, *Repots I, Oct. 31-Nov. 2. 1988.* (1995). Zu leh Mizo Kristianna (Liquor and Mizo Christianity) Aizawl: Synod Social Front Committee. p 8.

⁴⁰²Menon, Ramesh. (30th September, 1988). *Mizoram comes under Presidents Rule.* India Today Retrieved from <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/indiascope/story/19880930-mizoram-comes-under-president-rule-797758-1988-09-30>

September 1988 to 23rd January 1989.⁴⁰³ Regarding the fall of Laldenga from grace and power, Lal Thanhawla back then had commented “Laldenga doesn’t have the church’s blessings”.⁴⁰⁴ The Church and the people had turned their back on the persona they once celebrated and it certainly was an inglorious exit.

During this tumultuous time, the Congress had campaigned to end the flow of liquor in the state following the General Election of January 1989. Once again it resulted in the formation of Congress ministry. True to their campaign agenda, licences were all cancelled. But there was uncertainty with no prohibition law, liquor continued to be easily available despite the non-issuance of permits and licenses. The Church continued to press hard for stringent measures against it. The Congress government did not enforce total prohibition immediately, instead, the Mizoram Excise Act 1992 was introduced in the Assembly House with the intent of controlling the flow and consumption liquor.

2. The Mizoram Excise Bill 1992: The Congress and the MNF

The Second Legislative Assembly, 1989 was dominated by 24 Congress legislators with the opposition formed by 12 Mizo National Front (MNF) legislators. Two (2) MNF (D) and 1 P.C. legislative members forming the minority of the forty (40) housed Assembly.⁴⁰⁵ The tenth session of the Second Mizoram State Legislative Assembly, on the fifth sitting, dated 17th March 1992, J. Lalsangzuala, Finance Minister introduced the Mizoram Excise Bill, 1992 and was considered the following day. The write up of the bill was praised by most legislators but the intent of the bill came under severe criticism from the opposition. The introduction of the bill came as a surprise to the opposition as the hope and promises rendered to the people was ‘repeal’ of the Excise Act. The Congress justified the passing of the bill on the grounds as mentioned below:

P.C. Zoramsangliana hailed the bill for the inclusion of provision to promulgate Dry Day by the Commissioner which was lacking in the previous Excise Act 1973.

⁴⁰³ Chief Minister of Mizoram. Retrieved from <https://mizoram.nic.in/gov/cm.htm>

⁴⁰⁴ Menon, op.cit.

⁴⁰⁵ Mizoram Legislature. Retrieved from <https://mizoramassembly.in/storage/assemblies/July2020/8vt72CYXaC3O1JvUK4Qc.pdf>

He believed that the bill would help lawfully drive out and punish perpetrators of social evils. He claimed to have been initially shocked to see provisions made for the grant of liquor sale permits but recognized it a necessity for the supply of armed forces present in Mizoram. He suggested that liquor should be supplied not only to officers but should also provide quota for local constable and havildars as well. However, he requested the concerned minister to give assurance that liquor would not be sold to the common man. He was in support of the collection of revenue from excisable articles as revenue generated would be utilized for enabling the state to promote social welfare.

T.C. Pachhunga argued that the sole purpose of the bill was not the grant of licenses and appraised the good work of the Excise Department in generating income. He believed that the bill was more wholesome and would be more beneficial to the enforcement of prohibition.

Vanlalngena lamented the MNF too had utilized the Excise Law 1973, established wine shops during their ministry in 1987. To quote him on his comment on policy matters he retorted, “what the Congress believe is good and necessary we bravely implement and we repeal if necessary”. On the subject of the bill including social organizations in the fight against social evils he stated their inclusivity as ‘fulfilling their wishes’ as it would provide them legal backing.

Liansuama equally charged the opposition of hypocrisy as they too ‘wanted the law’ as they did not do away with the Excise Act when while in power. He also mentioned that introduction of the new bill should not come as a surprise as ‘the Constitution of India itself is often amended and the Bible often revised’. He also made a point that despite provision for the grant of permits, provision for cancellation of sale had also been made as well. Thus, contemplated ‘the bill should not be charged only as the liquor legalizing bill’. He further highlighted the fulfilment of election campaign promises made by the Congress by having ‘cancelled all licenses in 1989 as promised’.

MNF legislators like H. Rammawi, Lalrinchhana, Lalrawnliana, Rualchhina, R. Romawia, K. Vanlalauva, Aichhinga, R. Lalthangliana and Zoramthanga opposed passing of the bill on various grounds. Necessity of such a bill was questioned with the presence of Mizoram Excise Act 1973. The objection points are highlighted briefly

below:

H. Rammawi questioned why the bill was not called an amendment bill? He charged the Congress for wanting to further revive grant of permits and license for sale of liquor despite their previous claim of 'establishing a Christian Government'. He even went to express the need to proclaim the Legislative House a 'dry area'.

Lalrinchhana questioned the motive of the bill to bind social organizations to work in cooperation with and report to authorities. He also questioned necessity of the proposed bill as the recurring narrative of all political parties including the current party in power had been 'to undo the Government policy to sell liquor'.

Lalrawnlana allegedly accused the Government of including provisions for grant of permits and licenses as 'promoting their self-serving interest'. The alibi for provision of liquor permits to armed forces was 'a guise to make liquor easily available for themselves'. The initiation of the bill had gone against their election manifesto where they stipulated they would implement prohibition. He also stipulated that liquor would be within the reach of only the affluent and out of reach for the common laborious man thus, making the inclusion for permit provision unnecessary. He opposed the passing of the bill as it would be more suitable for a Christian state to prohibit rather than to liberalize.

Rualchhina had stated that during the year 1987-88, issue of liquor permits had been a very controversial and problematic issue that society wanted to do away with. He questioned the ironical intent of the Government on why it wishes to make provision for granting permits and licenses when the stipulated reason was to control liquor?

R. Romawia wanted to stall the passing of the bill as he requested for more time to consider and study the bill. He urged the ministry not pass the bill in haste as consideration of such important issue required more time.

K. Vanlalauva argued that the passing of the bill would be against the wishes of society and Churches. That making the drink unavailable for anyone was the best solution. He further argued that despite consideration made for prohibition and control, inclusion of provisions for the grant of liquor licenses to his opinion should be 'absolutely prohibited'.

Aichhinga opposed the bill on the same lines as K. Vanalauva, he proposed passing the bill without the inclusion of chapter VI, devoid of provisions for ‘grant of licences, permits and passes.’

R. Lalthangliana was opposed to the idea of generating revenue from liquor and suggested to put more effort to generating revenue from lottery. He advocated for the rejection of the bill as an exhibition of Christianity in the Legislature.

Zoramthanga, leader of the opposition termed the bill as a cause for a ‘king-sized headache’ and questioned if the law would be too big a burden to effectively implement. He also suggested to drop the provision for the grant of licenses and permits. He further suggested to consult social organizations for the binding role they had been imposed to play as an enforcement agency.

Mover of the bill, J. Lalsangzuala finally addressed the house as he pointed out that the bill could be interpreted both as a prohibition law as well as a liberalizing law. He justified the presence of the Army, B.S.F, C.R.P, B.R.T.F in the state necessitated the existence of liquor permits and prohibiting their drink goes ‘beyond their’ jurisdiction. The collection of revenue from their drink could generate an annual estimated revenue amounting to six lakhs thus, necessitating implementation of the law. On the issue of law enabling social evil, he refuted ‘the law was formulated to prevent people from falling into the clutches of evil’. And on the issue of objections presented on religious considerations, as all Christians belong to a certain denomination, he questioned the purpose of the church ‘was it not supposed to be the one in charge of controlling the morality of the people?’.

The debates clearly show that the opposition party had been surprised with the introduction of the Excise bill and found themselves unable to comply with the grant of permits, licenses and permits provision of the bill as elucidated in chapter VI. Their objection also continued the previous narrative of rejection under religious lines. A glance at the Assembly debates also determined the opposition had expected repeal of the Excise Act 1973 but was thrown off guard with the introduction of the Excise Bill 1992 instead. They were unable to present strong objecting points to the bill except for the underlined narrative of objection from the Christian perspective and the need for time to consider the bill. It is also observed that the Congress leaders who once

vehemently objected the Excise Bill 1973 had come to occupy mover position. This clearly exhibits the changing attitude of party men following post-merger with the Mizo Union.

The MNF too exhibited change of attitude under Laldenga's leadership, having vehemently enforced prohibition from underground and they seemed quite complacent with the state of liquor policy they found themselves inheriting over ground. They too had not exhibited any intention to formulate prohibition law. Now once again, they find themselves objecting the bill from the opposition bench, this explains the reluctance of presenting strong points of objection from their end. The bill was passed the very same day it was debated on the 1st April 1992. As stipulated in the bill under section 92 of chapter X, the commencement of the Excise Act, 1992 automatically repealed the Excise Act 1973. The Act of 1992 was assented by the Governor on the 18th of November 1992. Towards the end of their second term, the Congress became unpopular and lost the trust of the people as the Church continued to lobby for prohibition. However, the Mizoram Excise Act 1992 was not enforced with election looming right around the corner and the continued lobby for prohibition persisted. Circumstances eventually birthed the replacement of the 1992 Act by a prohibition law. The Church hung on to the words of the Chief Minister as he promised to continue to work with them to formulate prohibition law after the third state General Election of 1993 'irrespective of whether they continued to hold power or not'. As the Congress continued to form ministry, the Church continued to push for the fulfilment of their agenda as well. They closely monitored the move of the Government. The pressure from both Church and opposition party led Chief Minister Lal Thanhawla to finally yield to have prohibition enforced (much to the pleasure of the Church) viz., the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition (MLTP) Act 1995.

3. The Mizoram Prohibition of Liquors Bill, 1995: The Congress and the MNF.

Election to the third Mizoram State Legislative Assembly held on the 30th November 1993 once again resulted in a win for the Congress party. The Legislature consisted of a majority of 21 Congress legislators, 9 MNF legislators and 10

Independent legislators.⁴⁰⁶ The genesis of the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition (MLTP) Act, 1995 can be traced to the Church as it continually pushed for the formulation of ‘Total Prohibition Bill’ since 1991 at ministerial level.

The bill for prohibition was first introduced by the opposition member Lalrinchhana, listed as a personal business of legislator on the 29th September, 1995. The introduction of Mizoram Prohibition of Liquor Bill, 1995 evoked another debate in the Assembly on liquor policy issue. The MNF prior to the election campaigned for the enforcement of prohibition which they were determined to fulfil even from the opposition bench. Opposition members who spoke in favour of the bill were Lalrinchhana, F. Malsawma, Lalkhama, F. Lalremsiama, Lalsawta, Zoramthanga and also supported by Independent legislator Lalhmingthanga.

Lalrinchhana argued for the intent of his bill as it aimed to prohibit ‘import, export, transport, manufacture, sale, possession, keep and consumption of alcoholic liquor within the territory of the state of Mizoram’. The bill stated contraveners liable to punishment with imprisonment for a term extendable to five years with a fine up to Rs. 10,000/- or both. The bill also proclaimed repeal of the Mizoram Excise Act 1973 pertaining to ‘liquor’. He pointed out that ‘liquor was considered a source of greatest evil by all. A fact which the Government itself refused to accept’. He further supported his argument with the findings of the study made by the Mizoram Presbyterian Church and the Salvation Army⁴⁰⁷ as the major cause of problems tackled by social organizations in the state had been identified as liquor. He further identified liquor as the source of inefficiency of Government workers, deteriorating health of youths, shameful acts of girls on the streets, of adultery, rape and killings, thus, necessitating the passing of the bill as it was the ‘need of the hour’. He appealed to the sentiment of all legislators, to keeping aside the origin of the bill and vote to passing it.

F. Malsawma spoke of the Governments issue of permits from 1984 to 1988 and the experience of times as ‘unfavourable’. He also mentioned the experiences of

⁴⁰⁶ Mizoram Legislators retrieved from

<https://mizoramassembly.in/storage/assemblies/July2020/JKgtH29ArnCQ8Xq7dw3y.pdf>

⁴⁰⁷ He stated the source of increasing number of widows in the state according to the research done by the Mizoram Presbyterian Church was liquor; as they found 65% deaths of a husband was caused by liquor. The findings of the Salvation Army also located liquor to be the major cause of divorce among Mizo couples.

Tamil Nadu and Thailand as places with abundant liquor as a gateway to the rise of drug abuse and sexual misconducts. He argued that the issue of generating revenue should also take into consideration the amount of revenue that will be spent outside the state; on medications as health deteriorates and as families disintegrate. He compares such source of revenue to a 'cracked pot which cannot really hold on to anything it contains'.

Lalkhama argued flawlessly for the bill citing examples from history which drove home the destructiveness of liquor. He stated it was now the time to 'establish a new order' beginning with the passing of the bill. As it has always been the intention of every drunkard to 'drink for the sake of being drunk' it was deemed necessary to do away with liquor.

F. Lalremsiama read out the letter he had sent to Hrangthanga Colney, Minister i/c Excise Department on the matter concerning false information circulated and published by editors of newspapers regarding the Excise Department Consultative Committee to which two MNF legislators, F. Malsawma and F. Lalremsiama were a member of. False information on the wish of the committee for wanting to legalize liquor had been circulated where discussion had been for prohibition. He had requested for the minister to take action in finding the source of the leaked false information.

Lalsawta accused the treasury bench of objecting the bill on the grounds of being carelessly written as an 'excuse' as to the want of continued sale of liquor.

Zoramthanga, leader of the opposition party believed that the resultant initiation of prohibition would amount to 'saving many souls and lives'. He observed that the continued sale of liquor would only give rise to the percentile of existent social evils such as number of killings, adultery and robbery despite enforcement of prohibiting laws. Addressing the unconstitutional claim of the bill extending to all of Mizoram, he clarified, 'the bill also makes a provision for the Governor to issue a directive by public notification that acts of legislature in the State of Mizoram not extended to the autonomous districts or autonomous regions or district on region or any part thereof to exception on modification'. He also makes a point that the introduction of prohibiting law in the House was so done out of respect for a) the

wishes of churches and social organizations and b) 'inaction' of Government to introduce prohibition. The opposition had taken upon itself the duty to initiate what had not been initiated by the Government.

Independent legislator Lalhmingthanga spoke in favour of passing the bill as he himself had submitted Private Resolution dated the 12th September 1995. His resolution stipulated for 'the Government (at the earliest) should consider and enforce Total Prohibition'. Responding to the objection of the bill from the treasury bench on the ground of 'required revision to introduce total prohibition' he retorted, though lacking the prefix 'total' the bill had conclusively prohibited intoxicants in totality as seen from sections like section 1 sub-clause 3, section 3 and Section 4. He proposed for initial passing of the bill, making amendments as required in times to come. He pointed out the need of the hour was to 'ring the bell of liberation' by passing the bill as 'liquor is the cause of burden and un-freedom for many women as many men remain shackled to the chains of liquor'.

The ruling party members such as Lalbiakzuala, Liansuama, P.C. Zoramsangliana, T. Hranghluta, C. Vulluaia, H. Lalruata, J. Lalsangzuala defended their position by pointing out the shortcomings of the bill as presented below:

Lalbiakzuala spoke of the disputable character of people as 'supporting prohibition as a collective, all for prohibition as a member of the Church, YMA but wanting a drink as an individual'. He opposed the bill on the ground that it was impracticable for enforcement as it could be 'a law that society find strenuous to adhere to' necessitating consideration for a better prohibitionist law from the Government.

Liansuama advocated for 'restricted sale rather than prohibition'. However, he pointed out that people remain incapable of holding their drink thus, necessitating the need for prohibition. But he rejected the bill on the ground similar to Lalbiakzuala and commented it had been hastily and shabbily written that even on its immediate passing, the bill would require immediate amendment prior to its implementation.

P.C. Zoramsangliana expressed his wish that the bill under consideration was for 'Total Prohibition'. He also expressed the need for the bill as liquor had caused rise in number of orphans, accidents, robbery and various other social evils. The cause

for the Central YMA to operate on the theme 'khwatlang nun siamthat' or literally translated as 'to reform society' had also been liquor. However, he pointed out the bill did not contain provisions for enforcing agencies to check illicit brewing, warrant of arrest, liquor provisions for dignitaries, ambassadors, tourists, diplomatic envoys and more. He thus, suggested the mover to withdraw his bill so that a better and more inclusive bill would be presented at the earliest session by the ministry.

T. Hranghluta pointed out short comings of the bill as 'being formulated against the spirit of the Constitution as it could not be extended to the Autonomous District Councils (ADC)'. So, like his party men he suggested for the bill to be revised and be introduced in the next session by the Government.

C. Vulluaia suggested revival of the Mizoram Excise Act 1973. He argued that there was truth in interpreting it (as it mostly had been interpreted) as, 'the legalizing law' but there was also truth in interpreting the bill as a 'prohibiting law'. He goes on justifying the old law as a prohibiting law as it stringently regulates the sale to permit holders and placement of stern punishments for contraveners. Amidst the talk of pressure from the churches, he questioned 'if any action had been taken by the church, if it had recently excommunicated any drunkard from its roll?' He expressed his wish for all to exercise freedom of speech, have a free discussion and consider the revived utility of the old Excise law.

H. Lalruata questioned the intension of the opposition party for introducing the bill as he charged their previous conviction that "Zu is neither our enemy, nor our friend, it is only a thing. Whether it becomes our friend or foe depends on how we relate ourselves to it". On the question of accommodating the wishes of the Church the previous leaders (MNF under Laldenga) had dismissed their wishes with the saying "Continue with your work in sustaining the spiritual needs of the people, do your work and we will do ours." He also spoke of the vehement prohibition enforced by the opposition from the underground which was far different from the reality of their over ground play of power politics and charged the opposition of only trying to 'create trouble for the present ministry with their sudden change of heart by introducing the bill'.

J. Lalsangzuala was vocal about his support of the drink as he claimed to have been 'regularly drinking for the past 53 years' and 'cannot simply allow himself to label liquor as it is often made out to be; as something bad.' He further described his drinking habit as 'never exceeding two pegs a day that too diluted with water'. He further narrates, "After a hard days' work, a drink of two pegs calm down the physical, mental stress and promotes a good night sleep'. He asserts the sincerity of the Government in considering prohibition as reflected in the Cabinet Meeting minute on the 22nd September. He also pointed out that the law for prohibition existed under the Mizoram Excise Act 1992 and objects the proposed bill on the ground of being 'defective as it does not highlight the authority to carry out the Warrant of Arrest, does not make exemption provision for military services, para military forces'. He speaks of states that enforced prohibition like Orissa and Assam had 'also made exemptions for foreigners, tourists, non-resident Indians, company, corporation, institutions, industrialists, approved star hotels'. He requested the mover to withdraw his bill as 'Prohibition bill it will shortly be formulated by the ministry'.

This debate clearly exhibits the utility of liquor issue as a political tool, whipped by the opposition party leaving the ruling regime fumbling for criticism on the proposed bill. MNF Legislator, Lalrinchhana did not withdraw his bill and was rejected by the House. The bill can be regarded as a direct challenge to the ruling party to initiate prohibition. This move of the MNF can only be seen as a brilliant political play played to manipulate the sentiment of the public, incriminating the ruling Congress by putting them in a compromising situation on their liquor policy. The opposition party wasted no opportunity to redeem their unpopular reputation under Laldenga and came out swinging with the introduction of their Prohibition bill. The move of the opposition prompted an immediate response with the introduction of the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Bill, 1995 by the ruling Congress two months later.

4. The Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Bill, 1995: The Congress and the MNF.

The Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Bill, 1995 was introduced on the First Sitting of the third Legislative Assembly dated 13th December 1995 by Hrangthanga Colney who later became Minister in charge of transport and Sericulture since October

1996. It was further discussed on the Second Sitting on the 14th December 1995. The bill was unanimously passed on the Second Sitting and came to be enforced on the 20th February, 1997. Movers of the Total Prohibition Bill like Hrangthanga Colney, C.L. Ruala, Saikapthianga, P.C. Zoramsangliana, F. Lalzuala, H. Lalruata, T. Hrangluta, S.T. Rualyapa, Lal Thanhawla presented their points as highlighted below:

Hrangthanga Colney introduced the bill highlighting the various features which he characterised as ‘very strict, formulated for the good of the people’. He spoke of the financial implication of the bill, shortage of men to execute the bill and the creation of rules and outposts in the future. He had also brought to the attention of the House the enforcement would require recruitment of around two hundred soldiers and a budget allocation of over one crore ten lakhs for the enhancement of the Excise Department. Illicit liquor ‘if found will be destroyed along with the confiscation of utensils used for brewing’. However, the bill had made exemptions for acquiring liquor on certain grounds and IMFL confiscated will not be destroyed in totality but safely stored by authority to be acquired by permit holders. The bill also contained provisions for various punishments like the Post Information which resulted in imprisonment of contraveners for six months.

C.L. Ruala stated his surprise on ‘how people were not as drunk as they were expected to be’. He also spoke of his apprehension in implementing prohibition as it seems to be ‘a failure’ in places where it had been enforced. He feared the same fate would befall the prohibition bill. He was in agreement with Ch. Saprawnga who believed ‘people required time to be sensitized to liquor in order to adopt a proper drink habit which would eventually take place with the grant of permits and licences’. C. L. Ruala identified the problem could lie rather on ‘prohibiting ourselves too much’. As for the prohibiting law not extending to the Autonomous District Councils, he commented ‘one cannot force feed prohibition to the Council regions as the Constitutional does not permit’ but hoped ‘the regional leaders in their good intention would respectively pass the bill as well’. Also regarding medical prescription of liquor he provided an explanation ‘on why liquor is prescribed as a medicine’ based on the testimony of the Cardiologist who testified on behalf of the permit holders (whose permits were issued by the Rama Rao Government in Andhra Pradesh and thereby

cancelled by the succeeding Government) who had gone to court in Andhra Pradesh. He proposed for the bill to be passed as it was 'better formulated' than the previous bill introduced.

Saikapthianga appraised the Total Prohibition Bill as being 'far better in every way' than the five-paged bill introduced in the monsoon session. On the issue of medical prescription raised by the opposition, he reasoned 'there will be none with the intention to forcing a doctor to prescribe liquor' therefore advocated for the bill to be passed.

P.C. Zoramsangliana praised the Total Prohibition Bill as 'having accommodated the missing links to the previous bill introduced in the monsoon session'. He believed the bill would 'bring peace to society and its people'.

F. Lalzuala regarded the materialization of prohibition as resembling a 'miracle' that it would unite the people further. He expressed the need for all to 'keep aside political power game' and cooperate for the success of the prohibition law.

H. Lalruata spoke of his past experience as a church elder who submitted a memorandum for prohibition on behalf of the church to the Interim Government and how their submitted memorandum remained muted on the subject. He also spoke of his experience as a minister under the MNF ministry and his disillusionment on the subject matter. He expressed his 'delight' on how the leaders of that Government who once stood for the sale of liquor, would not discuss the issue, had now changed course, promoting the cause of the Church and social organizations. He also expressed his fear on the implementation of the prohibition law, he commented, 'since the law had been birthed as a result of the pressure of the Church and social organization, it would be their 'duty' to 'lend a helping hand' to the Government for the success of the law'. He further included the opposition party to cooperate, keeping aside the urge to point fingers and contribute to the success of prohibition.

T. Hrangluta clarified the issue of 'applicability' of the law to the Autonomous District Councils as stipulated in the Sixth Schedule 12B. The law would be applicable to the District Councils by a) giving the respective District Councils 'notification' to apply the law as written in the latter part of the Sixth Schedule 12B, b) by 'notification' given by the Governor or c) directive from the President of India to not apply to the

respective areas. He further stipulated the bill had been carefully drafted as compared to the 'meaningless five paged bill' introduced in the monsoon session.

S.T. Rualyapa assured the House that there would be 'no trouble' in the enforcement of the prohibition law and if there was, it could be addressed by the Government with a provision made through official gazette. He also spoke of how applicability of law in the District Councils should remain the purview of the Council leaders as he believed they too will want to implement a 'good law'.

Lal Thanhawla admitted to how the Government by liberalizing liquor in the past did not see their intended result they expected as it backfired, as easy availability provided an introduction to youths, outlet shops shamefully resulting in a huge line up. He further stated enforcement of stern law births 'escape rules' as seen from experience, contraveners have people like 'muster roll' to serve 'jail time' on their behalf. The enforcement of prohibition faced shortage of personnel from the Excise Department, Judicial Magistrates, Doctors thus, necessitating the cooperation and mobilization of social organizations, executive magistrates and doctors. He explained, despite the anticipation, financial involvement might delay effecting the law as it required the establishment of 250 posts would necessitate revenue of 10 lakhs. The expectation of people resulted in the addition of 'total' with the aim to appeasing their sentiments, despite the claim of the impossibility of an absolute 'total prohibition' according to law experts. On the matter of exemptions, he stated provision of liquor as a 'right' of the armed forces, not to mention provisions required for Ex-Servicemen not reflected in the bill as well. He asked for the cooperation of political regimes, social organizations and Churches for the success of prohibition.

The introduction of the bill was well received by all but discrepancies found in the bill had been highlighted by the opposition legislators viz., Lalsawta, Lalrinchhana, R. Tlanghmingthanga, Lalkhama, F. Malsawma, F. Lalremsiama, R. Lalthangliana, Zoramthanga all of which are highlighted as under:

Lalsawta commented, introduction of the bill appeased the 'conscience of the people' which far surpasses the interest of the 40 membered House, who, 'if given its way may not result in the materialization of the bill'. He supported passing of the bill despite the mover's claim of financial problem, shortage of men to execute the bill

and not having rules. He also mentioned the necessity of finding a solution to the provision of Sixth Schedule, Paragraph 12B⁴⁰⁸ as it could be a contributing factor to the failure of Prohibition in the state. However, he criticised the bill as having too much ‘exemption clauses’ making its essence similar to the law already in use with the name changed to ‘prohibition’. He further iterated the law introduced by Lalrinchhana as ‘far better’ and more ‘total’ in its prohibition essence. He also mentioned the bill had a ‘draconian essence’ as it allowed authorities to enter houses, seize, detain and arrest under section fifty but was in support of the bill.

Lalrinchhana pointed out why the bill had not mentioned restriction for a person below twenty-one years as it had been formulated only for twenty-one years and above. He further pointed out the apprehension he felt as a) the bill assumed a person arrested immediately ‘guilty’ as against the practice of ‘innocent until proven guilty’, b) makes various exemptions as it would only ‘dilute’ the prohibiting intent of the bill.

R. Tlanghmingthanga refuted the claim of J.V. Hluna regarding the continuation of liquor sale till 31st of March 1988 by the MNF ministry as ‘having discontinued the sale with the expiry of permits granted under the previous Congress ministry’. He expressed his belief that the bill had ‘short comings owing to the various exceptions for the grant of permits’.

Lalkhama refuted the bill did not stand up to its name as ‘it did not really aim to prohibit owing to the exceptions given and the law not extending to the Autonomous District Councils’. He also spoke against the prescription of liquor by medical practitioners and forced entry upon suspicion as mentioned by Lalsawta.

⁴⁰⁸ Sixth Schedule 12B stipulates - Application of Acts of Parliament and of the Legislature of the State of Mizoram to autonomous districts and autonomous regions in the State of Mizoram.— Notwithstanding anything in this Constitution,— (a) no Act of the Legislature of the State of Mizoram in respect of any of the matters specified in paragraph 3 of this Schedule as matters with respect to which a District Council or a Regional Council may make laws, and no Act of the Legislature of the State of Mizoram prohibiting or restricting the consumption of any non-distilled alcoholic liquor shall apply to any autonomous district or autonomous region in that State unless, in either case, the District Council for such district or having jurisdiction over such region, by public notification, so directs, and the District Council, in giving such direction with respect to any Act, may direct that the Act shall, in its application to such district or region or any part thereof, have effect subject to such exceptions or modifications as it thinks fit. Retrieved from <https://meacms.mea.gov.in/Images/pdf1/S6.pdf>

F. Malsawma spoke of the many exceptions made depriving it of fulfilling the ‘total prohibition’ objective of the bill. He also made a point similar to Lalrinchhana on the issue of conviction, in consideration of a teenager who is thus ‘convicted’ would not be able to seek Government employment with a conviction record. He requested for the provision to be changed to ‘detention’ with consideration of such repercussions. He also rejected the financial memorandum put forward by the minister in charge on the ground to him reflects ‘biasedness’. On the issue of the Autonomous District Councils he opined the ‘Government should request the leaders to pass the bill in their respective regions’. Like others, he also felt the need to be cautious of the clause made for prescription of liquor by medical practitioner for ailments.

F. Lalremsiama, raised concern same as his party men regarding the a) non-applicability of the law in the Autonomous District Councils, b) the age bar set to 21 under section 8 (1), prescription of liquor for ailments under section 15 (1), c) the punishment clause mentioned in section 22 which stipulates the fine for contravening section 21 as amounting to five hundred rupees not less than two hundred rupees or with both as ‘too less an amount’, d) the definition of ‘Armed Forces’ as too wide and found it unnecessary to make laws accommodating them, e) the displacement of authority who could issue warrant of arrest as it should correctly reflect only the Court Magistrate, not others as mentioned in the bill, f) too much ‘power’ granted to the Commissioner of Prohibition as it reserved very little authority for the Government, g) section 35 (2) which ‘allowed the disposal of any liquor denatured spirit stock possessed by a person without any license or permit on the order of the Commissioner’ showed inadequacy of how the bill was formulated.

R. Lalthangliana to the accusation of T. Hrangluta responded, ‘the quality of a bill does not lie in the number of pages but rather on the contents’. He objected to section which allowed consumption of liquor on prescription by Medical Practitioner on the ground that it is something which is ‘not done’. He also pushed for quick implementation of the law.

Opposition leader Zoramthanga pointed out the many exceptions given by the bill would surely lead to those parties to shout out ‘Bravo, bravo, I am exempted’. He gave importance to a) making the law effective as early as possible, b) requesting the

leaders of Autonomous District Councils to adopt the law, c) to erase section 69 which permits the Government to suspend the law as he reasoned 'legislation should be annulled by legislation itself', d) the prescription of liquor by all registered medical practitioner clause should be limited, he suggested the recommendation should be further approved by the State Council and the District Prohibition Council, e) treatment centre should be established for those, f) providing an alternative means of livelihood to those habituated to illicit brewing.

Independent legislator H. Thangkima, J.V. Hluna and Lalhmingthanga also presented their view as highlighted below:

H. Thangkima expressed his apprehension in enforcement of prohibition as he anticipated 'problems' but none the less could be 'overcome' if they unitedly worked together. He advised the ministry to be 'conscious' in its implementation and to set the date for its enforcement as soon as possible.

J. V. Hluna termed the introduction of the bill as 'historic'. He had spoken of the historical development of the liquor law from 1973, where he had mentioned 26 permits were granted for the sale of liquor in 1976 under the Mizoram Excise Law 1973. With the formulation of supporting Rules on the 10th October 1984, the Excise Act liberalized liquor, introduced drinking to school students and girls who were not accustomed to drinking. He also pointed out that the 'Interim Government continued with the sale until 31st March 1987 and the new MNF ministry continued with the sale till the 31st March 1988'. He also went on to highlight, 'from 1987 – 1995 a total of amount 645 lakhs Excise duty had been generated, with 80 lakhs generated from fines alone. With revenue generated from the Excise Act, the state was able to generate 6% of the 10% the Central Government expected the state to generate. The repeal of the law would provide great shortage of revenue for the state with the required headache of 110 lakhs for the enforcement of the law as stipulated in the Financial Memorandum'. Despite all the implications of enforcement, like H. Thangkima advised the Government to consciously enforce the law.

Lalhmingthanga commented the passing of the bill would make a 'record' and would be a 'landmark'. He was in support of passing the bill but put in a request for a careful consideration while formulating rules. He also commented on his belief in

‘positive action of society as an implementing agency while most failure stems from the Governments’ inaction itself’.

Mover of the bill, Hrangthanga Colney made clarifications to the doubts and questions posed by the opposition. His response had been, a) pertaining to the sixth schedule, all liquor transported within the area of Mizoram could be confiscated if permits were not granted, b) on the issue of warrant of arrest, the bill empowered Sub-Inspector on emergency matters as the authorizing party since the actual authority, the Superintendent of Excise would not be present in every post, c) the age limited to twenty-one (21) and above had been based on the age set according to the Prohibition Offender Act, not the adult franchise age bar, d) regarding the definition of the Armed forces, the para-military forces had been recently added to the Armed Forces category by the Supreme Court,⁴⁰⁹ e) pertaining to section 69, which permitted the Government to suspend the law he informed changes would be legislated but suspension would be effected by the Government but further details would be formulated by the Prohibition Council. He invited all to support the bill and vote for its passing.

The House unanimously passed the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Bill 1995 on the 14th December 1995. Legislators welcomed it, positively appraised its introduction and were united with their intention to pass the bill. However, as seen from the above debate, the debated had centred on ‘whose bill is better formulated’. Also certain provisions of the bill had been criticised such as section 50 which allowed for power of entry, search, seizure and arrest as it was debated as having a draconian essence. Section 8 which stipulated punishment for 21 years and below who had also been previously convicted was recommended for reconsideration in anticipation of the repercussions it would cause for their future. Sections 29 to 32 which stipulated exemptions for the provision of permits to various personnel, particularly the point on prescription of liquor by all registered medical practitioners came under heavy fire from the opposition as such prescription was contended as ‘controversial’. Particular cause of eye sore was regarding Sixth Schedule, section 12B which the opposition felt

⁴⁰⁹ F. Malsawma further informed the House that temporary inclusion was made as the C.R.P Forces like the Armed Forces had been deployed to places like Jammu & Kashmir and Arunachal Pradesh for a specific purpose.

necessary was on making the law applicable to the Autonomous District Councils. It can be seen from the debates, the governing Congress party pulled out all stops to accommodate various provisions in the bill they presented and the opposing MNF party certainly did their homework in studying the bill for the sole purpose of questioning the intent of the bill. It is clearly presented from the debates that the state had no shortage on the flow of illicit liquor; 'its brewers' and 'its drinkers' despite the tremendous efforts of the Excise, Police and social organizations to end their relationship.

The Church in Mizoram play a paternalistic role in the Mizo society and social organizations exhibit clear sign of following its lead, putting tremendous pressure on the Government to help curb and end the liquor flow. However, this pressure from the Church 'is expected and what they are supposed to do' commented Lal Thanhawla. He further commented on the resultant MLTP Act as 'not just bending to the pressure of the Church but rather a result of giving recognition and share of power between state and social organizations'.

The Assembly debates clearly reflect conflict of interests of the material and the spiritual realm; of freedom to enforce policy as one thinks will serve a wider interest as opposed to what is more ethical; of a liberal approach as against a conservative one; of the Government as against the civil society. Opposing parties often play the role of presenting the interest of the church and civil society, their stance on prohibition cannot be truly determined unless they stand in the position of effecting policies. It truly had been the battle of the 'wills' representing push and pull for years which finally accommodated the interest of civil society in the form of the 'total prohibition law'.

Under the MLPT Act, licenses were handed out to security forces namely, 457 Field Ambulance, 39 AR, Head Quarter CE Project Pushpak, Headquarter 24th BRTF Seling, Tlangnuam, DIG Headquarters, BSF Durtlang, 173 BSF Headquarters Mizoram Range, AR Khatla, 40 AR, 96 BSF, 142 Battalion BSF, 4th AR Serchhip, CIJW School Kolasib, Vairengte. By 2014, there were a total of 12 permit holders, 214 civilians were granted permits on the ground of medical prescription and a total

of 2162 Ex-Servicemen were granted permits as well.⁴¹⁰ The MLPT rules were formulated in 1996 which constituted the State Prohibition Council and the District Prohibition Committee. The work of the Council and Committee was to closely monitor the enforcement of the prohibiting law and study its impact and accordingly make recommendations to the Government. The prohibiting law did come with its set of loopholes which were addressed through various amendments. Amendment to the principal Act, MLTP Act was effected four times namely in 1999, 2007, 2011 and 2013.

4. A. The Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition (Amendment) Act, 1999

The Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition (Amendment) Bill, 1999 was introduced and passed by Tawnluia under the MNF ministry on the Fourth Legislative Assembly on the 24th March 1999 and assented by the Governor on the 12th April, 1999. The Amendment made the substitutions, changes and insertions to the Principal Act such as - the exclusion of officers of the Police Department and other departments from the subjection of control by the Commissioner, disqualification of a person convicted of an offence under the MLTP Act to be released on probation of good conduct or after admonition under section 360 of the CCP, 1973 unless the person is an infirm, old age or under eighteen years of age, making the Government the prescribing authority on who in the Excise or Police Officer will perform the entry search, seizure and arrest function, makes the first-class Magistrate the sole authority to issue warrant of arrest, insertion of the section 55-A which empowers not just the Government Officers, Village Council members and Village Defence Party members but also private person or persons to cause arrest of any offences under the Act, insertion of section 58-A which provided details for an accused to be released on bail or grounds for an accused not to be released on bail depending of the application of the Prosecutor and makes a detailed provision for the establishment of Prohibition Committees in every District, sub-Division, Block, Village or area, for such period as it may consider appropriate, consisting of officials and non-officials posted or residing

⁴¹⁰Lalzirliana. R. Assembly Debates Proceedings on The Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition & Control) Bill 2014. Seventh Legislative Assembly. Dated: 10/7/2014.

in such District, Sub-Division, Block, Village or area, as prescribed by the Government. The amendment made certain functional changes to the Principal Act of 1995 as a consequence of functional problems that had come to light after the two years of enforcement of the principal Act.

4. B. The Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition (Amendment) Act, 2007

The Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition (Amendment) Act, 2007 was again introduced and passed on the 3rd April, 2007 on the Fifth Legislative Assembly by Lalzama of the MNF ministry. The Amendment received the assent of the Governor on the 5th April, 2007. The most notable changes effected to the Principal Act had been – the insertion of 26-A which made general provisions for “License for manufacture etc. of wine”. On prior approval of the Government, the Commissioner or other officer authorised by the Commissioner, it allowed the “manufacture, wholesale and retail, transport and export of wine”. Insertion of 26B was further made which allows for the provision for manufacture, possession, sale, consumption, etc., of wine. New clause (cc) which provides for cancellation and renewal procedure and conditions of license for the purpose of regulating manufacture, possession, sale, transport of wine and grant under section 70 (2).

The Amendment paved the way for the establishment of winery in Mizoram. The Mizoram Excise & Narcotics (Wine) Rules, 2008 was, therefore, made under section 70(2) with the insertion of a new clause (cc) of the Principal Act of the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1995. The reasons behind such amendment as stated by the mover of the bill was ‘done so in support of permanent farming in the land which required the Government to find outlets or markets for the sale of farmers produce’. Hnahlan village produced Bangalore Blue variety grapes which was sour for sole consumption but was ideal specimen for producing sacramental wine according to the assessment report of J.V. Mohan Rao’s Show Wallet Company. Wine had been placed under the category of a ‘food item’ which was processed and produced under the control of the Government.

The Amendment was so done to ‘benefit farmers’. The Hindustan Times writes, “To pave the way for the manufacture of wine, the stringent dry law in force since

February 20, 1997 was relaxed by an amendment made in the Prohibition Act, April 2007, allowing up to 16 per cent of alcohol in it.”⁴¹¹ Under the Mizoram Excise & Narcotics (Wine) Rules, 2008, winery licenses were granted to Champhai Grape Grower society and Hnahlan Grape Grower Society. Legislators found themselves all united in passing the amendment proposal of MNF Minister, Lalzama. However, the manufacture, sale and consumption of ‘Hnahlan Grape Wine’ evoked apprehension from the Church with the nagging fear that it would eventually lead to the ‘end of MLTP Act’. Their fears came true when the Congress ministry in its second term lifted the dry law and legalized the sale of liquor through the passage of the Mizoram Liquor Prohibition and Control (MLPC) Act 2014 despite vehement protest from the Church. This legalizing liquor policy once again sparked debates and mobilised the Church to fulfil its duty to lead a crusade against the policy.

4. C. The Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition (Amendment) Act, 2011

On the Sixth Legislative Assembly, the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition (Amendment) Act, 2011 was introduced by J.H. Rothuama of the Congress Government under the Congress ministry. It was passed on the 28th July, 2011 and assented by the Governor on the 1st August, 2011. The changes effected by the Amendment had been the insertion of ‘apple’, ‘ginger’, ‘passion fruit’, ‘peach’ and ‘pear’ respectively under section 2(1).

This Amendment was made with the hope of utilizing the winery machine set up in Champhai and Hnahla. It aimed to make wine from other fruits cultivated by farmers viz., apple, ginger, passion fruit, peach and pear. The movers reasoned ‘the bill aims to utilize the winery machine as it is actively used for two months and sits idle for the rest ten as it will be beneficial for the farmers’. There had been no objection on the amendment proposal, the house had been very cohesive in deciding to make the amendment.

⁴¹¹ Wine to be produced in dry Mizoram. (2010, July 18). *Hindustan Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india/wine-to-be-produced-in-dry-mizoram/story-YzTr4L6YB3EZZ492kfQuzN.html>

4. D. The Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition (Amendment) Act, 2013

The Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition (Amendment) Bill, 2013 was introduced by J.H. Rothuama and passed on the 23rd July, 2013 in the Sixth Legislative Assembly under the Congress ministry. It was assented by the Governor on the 23rd July, 2013. The bill makes functional changes such as allowing the appointment of an Officer or Class One Officers in the Excise & Narcotics Department and the Police Department as expert for the purpose of analysis or examination of alcoholic liquor by the State Government under section 5. Analysis or examination of alcoholic liquor was previously done by the Forensic Department. The mounting number of cases to examine resulted in slow execution of work thereby, necessitated change of examining authority to Officers in the Excise & Narcotics Department and the Police Department to promote efficiency. The amendment also made provision for separate determination for justifying a 'known' and 'unknown' use of house, room, enclosure, space, vessel, compound, place or premises to vehicle by the owner or occupier who 'actually is a party to' or can 'prove he actually did not have any knowledge of' the commission made him 'a party to' or 'not a party to' the offence under section 24. It further annuls the need for complaints made by Officer-in-charge of an Excise Station or Police for cognizance of offence by the Court. It empowers the Officer of the Excise Department and Police to submit report under section 173 of the CCP for cognizance of offence under section 58.

The 2013 Amendment was made to make the prohibition law more efficient and effective in its implementation. However, the next move of the Government rocked the state as their effort took a U-turn from the path of prohibition to the introduction of The Mizoram Liquor Prohibition and Control (MLPC) Bill, 2014.

5. The Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition & Control) Bill, 2014: The Congress and the MNF.

The Seventh Legislative Assembly consisted of an absolute majority with 34 Congress legislators and the opposition formed by 5 MNF and 1 MPC legislators. Seventeen years after its enforcement, relevance and effectiveness of the MLTP Act came under question leading to a search for an alternative law. The search for solution

led to a break from the narrative of temperance which came as a shock to the very institutions who dominated the narrative: the Church led social organizations. Proposal for a new law stirred the people awake from their state of complacency thus, evoking a new debate which took them straight back to the old conflict. The bill was introduced on the Third Sitting by the Home Minister, R. Lalzirliana dated the 10th July, 2014. It evoked vehement objection from the opposition and equally vehement defence from the movers of the bill. The Congress legislators ardently spoke to promote their Bill well knowing the objection and backlash it would receive from the opposition and civil society. Legislators who resonated their bill were viz., R. Lalzirliana, Zodingluanga, K. Lalrinthanga, K.S. Thanga, Vanlalawmpuii Chawngthu, R. Romawia, Lalrinmawia Ralte, R. Vanalavena, Lalsawta, Joseph Lalhlimpaia, John Rotluangliana, John Siamkunga, C. Nunglianchunga, Lalrobiaka, P.C. Lalthanliana, T. Sangkunga, Dr. B. D. Chakma, H. Zothangliana, Lal Thanhawla. Their narrative will be briefly presented below to help better understand intentions and opinions of political regimes:

Mover of the Bill, R. Lalzirliana spoke of the history of Excise Act, 1973 and Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act 1995, he basically spelled out the failure of both laws in controlling consumption and curbing the flow of liquor caused by shortage of personnel to enforce law, convicted offenders serving short prison sentences and lack of space for imprisonment. He stated the varied findings of the MLTP Study Group where ‘most social organizations perceived prohibition as a failure while there were some who believed in its success as well’, on careful examination of the report of the Study Group, the State Prohibition Council recommended for the formulation of a ‘better and a more successful law’ owing to the failure of prohibition law. The cause of failure he presented were:

a) Despite the joint effort of the YMA and the VDP in conducting ‘checks’, liquor continued to proliferate so did those habituated to drinking. Places like Rangvamual and Phunchawng continue to be hotspot for illicit drinking.

b) Failure of prohibition is marked by the establishment of wine shops at state borders like Virengte, Myanmar and Zokhawthar. Nearby states like Silchar and

Assam had established factories resulting in ‘invasion’ of the state with bottles marked ‘for sale in Assam only’, ‘for sale in Meghalaya only’ and ‘for sale in Tripura only’.

Despite confiscation of many liquor bottles by the Excise & Narcotics, many transporting vehicles managed to slip through thus, evading the law. The apparent failure of prohibition necessitated need to change the law. He introduced the bill as a ‘prohibiting law that will prohibit possession, manufacture, transport, import, export, sale consumption of liquor and its related issues’. Description of various provisions of the bill was also made by the minister. He stressed on various components of prohibition and the punishment for contravention of the law which justified the legalization as it also aimed to stringently control and regulate. He believed that the law would help provide an alternative healthier liquor drink than the ones found at the black market.

Zodingluanga supported the Bill as he believed it would ‘give access to a healthier drink for those habituated to drinking under proper regulation’. He believed that the law was so formulated ‘to save lives of youths who had suffered for seventeen years under prohibition’, that the bill ‘aimed not to generate income from liquor revenue but to promote a better alternative to the failing MLTP Act, which despite rigorous efforts of Government and NGOs continued to fail, the new law would be more progressive and contribute to development of the state’. He even went to quote the philosophy of Laldenga on liquor on his stance on secularism, thus inviting the support of the opposition party to pass the bill following the philosophy of their founder president.

K. Lalrinthanga stated ‘prohibition did not put an end to liquor, for any illicit liquor confiscated and utensils destroyed, illicit brewers brewed more to cover their loss’. He spoke of his observations that a) sons of illicit liquor sellers consciously choose to refrain from drinking themselves, their business approach to it result in making ends meet to provide for their family. b) The consumption of liquor more noticeable for its smell leads people to taking drugs as an alternative to escape being noticed, thus increasing the number of drug abusers. If ever a choice was to be made, families of drug abusers would wish for them to be content with drinking liquor rather than having them do drugs. He expressed his support for the bill as it contained strong

provisions of control and regulations which would directly create awareness to respect one's surroundings. He believed 'it is better to drink under regulation than to live a deceptive life'.

K.S. Thanga supported the bill as he reasoned with the importance of exercising ones' 'free will either to drink or to refrain from'. He pointed out 'the bill was made in consideration of providing a better, healthier drink at a cheaper rate for those that who cannot do without'. He urged people 'not to simply criticize the bill, not to subjugate others for thinking and choosing differently like 'Talibanism' does and respect one's freedom to choose for oneself as reflected in the Indian Constitution. The intended aim of prohibition had remained unsuccessful with the state being surrounded by wine shops located at the neighbouring borders of Burma, Damchhora, Bagha, Dholai, Lailapur, Cachar, Kanhmun and Vairengte' He cited the 'American experience' as it saw the rise of Al Capone owing to their Prohibition law in 1920-1933, smugglers like him became the greatest beneficiary of prohibition thus, leading the leaders of United States to conclude, 'You cannot legislate on people's moral and human behaviour'. To their conclusion, he had been 'in agreement and felt the need for the narrative to acknowledge this hundred-year old realization of the American legislators'. He also spoke of the 'need to reflect on differing conception on the making and being a good Christian as taught by the Missionaries; where the Naga Christians believe 'sin' lies in the consumption of betel nut and the smoking of a cigarette and the normalization of drinking liquor, while the Mizos believe in the reverse'. He supported the passing of the bill as it 'aimed not just to sell liquor but also punish contraveners'.

Vanlalawmpuii Chawngthu, the only woman legislator supported passing the bill with a request put in for the opposing legislators 'to have an open mind'.

R. Romawia considered the existence of liquor a 'necessary evil', that society cannot entirely rid of thus, necessitating the need to regulate and control, provisions for which are adequately contained in the bill. He commented '34% of the entire bill consisted of regulation and prohibition', the grant of permits would enable the identification of anyone habituated to drinking thus making it easy to fish out the 'target group' for 'counselling the gospel in order to make them willingly surrender

their permits and licenses'. The bill had been formulated with the intention to find a solution, 'a way out' to solving the problem to the liquor issue.

Lalrinmawia Ralte believed the bill evoked need for 'reality check which makes it amply clear the fact that the game of prohibition had been lost 17 – 0'. On Lalthanliana paraphrasing the Bible, 'Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbours', he commented there had been increasing number of 'him who gives drink to his neighbours and quality of the drink gets poorer and poorer'. He spoke of the workings of human mind and its 'want and urge' for the drink rendered any form of prohibition unsuccessful. He mentioned out of 190 countries only 15 have enforced Total Prohibition, those being the Muslim countries like Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brunei, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Mauritania, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Qatar, Yamen, and the UAE for their Quran clearly states for the enforcement of prohibition. In countries like Bangladesh, Pakistan, Iran liquor permit is granted to 'religious minorities' that 'no countries except for Saudi Arabia would claim to have successfully enforced prohibition'. States in India like Gujarat, Lakshadweep, UP, Manipur, Nagaland and Mizoram enforce total prohibition, but 'Mizoram had never been mentioned as the drink being unavailable', mention is made of the local drink as a 'fatally toxic blend of methyl spirit and vinyl' and 'to check the brand as you are about to make a purchase and be prepared to pay a very high price for it'. He further informed the House the Excise Department in 17 years of implementing the MLTP Act had managed to confiscate substantial amount of liquor thus, marking the clear failure of prohibition leading him to render his full support in passing the bill.⁴¹²

T.T. Zothansanga made a point in responding to Lalrinawma had mentioned 'prohibiting law had failed not only under the Congress ministry but also under ten years of implementation under the MNF ministry'. He commented, 'the hope had been the law would rid the land of its social evils and strengthen spirituality, but prohibition

⁴¹² He further informed the House the Excise Department in 17 years of implementing the MLTP Act had managed to confiscate more than 4,90,000 IMLF bottles worth 22. 63 crores; beer and local liquors worth 13 crores; 14 lakhs worth tins of illicit brewed liquor; 51704 people had been arrested among which 46901 cases had been registered, which implied 3041 people get arrested every year with 2758 registered chases.

did not deliver peoples expectation’ and believes that the MLPC Bill was formulated with the same intent as the MLTP Act but with a makeover taking a different approach.

R. Vanalavena rejected the point made by K. Beichhua regarding his argument that the MLPC Act had been a source causing complication of sexual inhibition. To this he commented ‘the problem of such had been an identified problem under the prohibition Act. It is a weakness one cannot seem to conquer’. He felt the need to ‘encourage youths to willingly make conscious choice to refrain from drinking despite its availability’.

Lalsawta expressed apprehension of being wrongly labelled as ‘the assembly of thirty-two liquor loving people’ as he claimed it ‘cannot be furthest from the truth’. Liquor to him, ‘is not good, so there should be no attempt to advertise it in a positive light, neither shall it be used to negatively advertise using the Bible’. He asserted the need of the Government and the people to give their best effort in making the law a success; he also encouraged individuals to have courage to take action ‘to report on drunkards’; encouraged the Church ‘not to condemn but to teach a sinner the Gospel thus, steering the person back to God. Sin being a design of God, work of the Church is to teach its people how to live and spiritually thrive amidst sin’. He felt the ‘need to teach children not to drink despite its availability, as one does not choose the location of a child’s place for further education depending on whether the place has liquor available or not – places like Bangalore, Delhi, Washington and many more has liquor available. It would be better to teach our children not to drink despite availability in such places’. He also condemned the ‘sly tactic of manipulation using the Church as a front’.

Joseph Lalhlimpaia reiterated the prohibiting feature of the bill. He believed that it should not be seen only as a liquor sale law ‘for under the MLTP Act there remained 12 permit holders as who sold liquor for the past seventeen years’. He felt it was unfair to paraphrase certain sections of the Bible to object the bill, like the Bible clearly states ‘what God has joined together, man must not separate’, however, people keep getting divorced in recognition of such shortcomings of Church members, congregations have ‘made laws for provision to get married and provision for divorce’. Likewise, he clarified the ‘bill had not been formulated with the intention to rouse the

irritation of the Church, it had been formulated in recognition of the shortcomings of man' and to this he stipulated 'the need to make laws that are attainable'. He also informed the House that in 2006, the Ministry of Law and Justice Legislative Department made a new law called the Food Safety and Standard Act, 2006 under the law, alcoholic drinks had been categorised under 'food items'. He also answered to the question of the MPC legislator Lalthanliana by informing the House of the destitute situation of state finances, the 'requirement had been the need to generate income however ways the Government can, it is not wisest to wish for the Government to be poor than rich from selling liquor'.

John Rotluangliana believed the bill was not only a legalizing law but a control law and its formulation 'compelled by circumstances as per the need of the society'. He believed it was 'wrong to be intolerant of a person habituated to drinking simply because the other does not need the drink' so, was in agreement with the need to pass the bill.

John Siamkunga conversely stated that 'increasing deaths among youths had been the result of total prohibition, it has caused youths to embrace intoxicants causing untimely deaths thus leading parents to bury their young ones. The prohibiting law enforced for seventeen years had failed, consideration given to the future of our youths, the required alternative had been presented in the form of the MLPC Act'. He stated the 'people should be able to place their trust on the Government. Advancement in technology, the popular use of telephones would render the law more successful, as it would enable people to cause arrest of anyone intoxicated. A report can be made of a drunk driver causing his arrest'. He also pointed out that the 'world's most responsible Government, the United States of American sells liquor but knows how to responsibly conduct themselves around the drink'. He believes that the 'control law could sensibly function in the Christian state'.

C. Nunglianchunga spoke on behalf of the Sixth Scheduled areas, the Autonomous District Councils as seventeen years prohibition law was not applicable in their areas. For the knowledge of the House he commented, 'the non-application of the prohibiting law did not lead to degeneration of their respective areas, liquor did not excessively flow in their regions, drunkards did not roam around the streets, nor

was there sexual misconducts'. He further pleads in support of the proposed bill that it 'was formulated in consideration of those who cannot do without liquor and for the provision of a healthier option for consumption'. He also stated his 'fear that the law would cause friction with the Church and such was not what they desired. In the Tuichawng area, the land inhabited by Chakma and the Kawl tribes (the people of Burmese descent) liquor is found in abundance and people freely consume. On social occasions, the cry of child is put to an end with the gulp of liquor, the liberalization of liquor does not lead to people killing each other not result in the proliferation of AIDS'.

Lalrobiaka commented on how people 'negatively misconstrued the bill, it remained the same just devoid of the total part'. He commented on the 'need to have an understanding of the desires of youths and accommodate them'. He believed 'prohibition generates interest to try out something simply because it had been prohibited'. However, he advised to be cautious in formulating rules to the clause 'Illegal possession in small quantity for personal consumption of any intoxicating liquor' as stipulated in chapter VIII section 44. He also commented on the limitation of suit and prosecution stipulated under chapter X section 80. Here he spoke of the need for authority to be cautious in the exercise of the law. He narrated the 10 problems caused by total prohibition according to experts as: a) Disregard of the law, b) decline of religious faith, c) increase of organized crime, d) increase in corruption among law enforcement and Court-system, e) the Police and Court being overburdened with work, f) Financial, emotional and moral problems, g) causes physical harm, h) cause to drink without limit or a proper habit, i) consumption of tobacco and related substances and j) causes families to break up. To these he identified as 'problems caused by total prohibition are the problems of families and country'.

P.C. Lalthanliana believed the 'approach to the issue of intoxicants vary from association to association. In response to the problem, the Church leaders would organize crusade and camping; the YMA leaders would organize night duty, contraveners caught would be handed to the Police. Thus, the law had been made with a vision for the next twenty years with the hope it would be better for the people. The law would be no different from the total prohibition law, as sale and purchase of liquor

would be given only to those with granted permits. Had the law not performed well, the Government would repeal it the next two years’.

T. Sangkunga expressed his bewilderment with liquor as it seems to find a following from place to place. The check of Upper Bazar during the times would lead its following to go to Rangvamual, the check of Rangvamual would lead its following to go elsewhere as it was believed, ‘the longer the distance you check, the more places they would settle’. The Church had shown its dislike of the law however, the collision of these wishes shows difference in approach on how to control it. He spoke of how the experimental law would be enforced for the remaining years of their term that being four (4) years and it would be replaced by a better law had it not worked out.

B. D. Chakma informed the House before the MLTP Act 252 cases of alcohol related liver disease existed, the cases increased to 500 after prohibition. On alcohol related mental diseases, there had been 482 cases before prohibition from 1988-1996; 2002-2003, 2010-2011 showed rise in number of cases to 1686. To him cases like AIDS, Hepatitis B, C are not caused by alcohol but rather caused by ‘less knowledge about the self’.

H. Zothangliana on the issue of support for ‘total prohibition’ as compared to the introduction of the MLPC Bill he quoted Shakespeare, “All the world’s a stage” and also dubbed it as ‘hypocrisy’, a show of having high moral standard where there remained none to actually show. He believed the ‘need to check drinkers as too much focus was placed on sellers and considers the new law will take-care of such people; the bill would control both seller and drinkers’.

Chief Minister and leader of the House, Lal Thanhawla expressed his opinion ‘all people strived to do good deeds especially a person of faith but can rarely be fulfilled in totality thus, leading to find the next best thing. The distribution of things like condoms and syringes to contain the spread of AIDS, is not the best solution but neither the worst solution. The same goes for the liquor bill’. He stated, formation of the bill ‘did not intend to pick a fight with anyone nor will they fight anyone’. He also stated ‘the Government has good working relation with the Church and wishes for the Church to support them. The bill had not been formulated out of disobedience of the wishes of the Church, it had been an initiative of the Government which is the

considered good for the people, if not, the law will be repealed. It will be courageously implemented and observed'. He related his bafflement that maybe God did not interfere in such issues, 'in 1995 the wishes of the Church was accommodated and enforced in 1997. However, promoting the will of God did not help the Congress form another ministry in the 1998 election, in fact we all had been discarded'. He felt, a) the need for believers to reflect if it was right to ask for God to interfere and help micro manage the minute details of our lives, b) the law will provide healthier liquor to all concerned; all concerned here being members of congregations, sons of the soil, may even be Church elders who in secrecy require the drink, c) to learn to be 'intolerant' of people habituated to drinking, drunkards do not lose their consciousness as he believes they are in a comical state. The need here is to learn to be a race intolerant of drunkards and the need to be aware of the harmfulness of liquor especially for Church members, d) the need to learn to separate the material and the spiritual. He wished a) the law would bring about development in the standard of conduct around liquor following the footsteps of the older races who had already cultivated dignified custom to the drink and b) the law would be the making of a race unbothered by liquor.

MNF legislators like K. Sangthuama, Lalrinawma, Dr. K. Beichhua, Lalruatkima, Vanlalzawma and MPC legislator Lalthanliana vehemently objected the bill.

K. Sangthuama made clarifications to the claim regarding the MNF permitting the sale of liquor, he refuted with his statement, 'the Government handed out liquor permits from the 10th October, 1984 which was discontinued on the 31st March, 1988.....people remained misinformed about it, the permits that were given in 1984 by the Government came to an end on the 31st March 1988, the grant of permits was discontinued since then.' On the issue of legal proceedings written in chapter X, section 79 (1) and (2) and 80 (1) and (2) of the bill he asked for clarification from mover of the bill. He also questioned if sections 79 and 80 protected law enforcement agencies such as Excise and Police rather too much. Having said this, he stood for continued implementation of the MLTP Act and requested the Government to take into consideration ardent requests of Church and NGOs for prohibition. He believed implementation of new law would imply two things: a) increased quantity of liquor

and b) increased number of drinkers. There would be frequent sightings of drunkards on the streets and increased number of social problems. He stood convinced on the success of the MLTP Act and suggested the strengthening of forces to implement the law instead of abandoning it. On the thought of providing healthier liquor for drink, he responded ‘the consumption of healthier liquor causes more deaths than those who consume denatured liquor.’ He was against sale of liquor as it is a) a source of problems in families and in the society, b) will lead more youths to drink liquor, c) causes immorality, d) is ends marriages thus leading to divorce, e) it increases the number of widows in society, f) causes many people to be imprisoned, g) the cause of most accidents and h) killings. He also highlighted from studies made in places like Karnataka (for every 10 rupees spent 16 rupees is spent on treatments) , London (Rupees 286 crore is spent on treatments related to liquor induced ailments), USA (2011, Minnesota Department Health study showed the expenditure spent to be 17 times more than what was spent on liquor) he highlights his point that the ‘cost of drink far outweigh the capital spent on cost of medical treatments and of study done in Bangalore also showed on every sale of 10 litres of IMFL and Beer, 12 litres of local liquor is also sold’. Thus, he found no sense in legalizing liquor for the solution did not lie in doing away with the MLTP Act.

Lalrinawma objected the legalizing bill thus stated it was ‘unnecessary to promote it in a positive light’. He stated ‘liquor only gives misery to those that love it and at ones’ moment of end it leads one to see the devil and not heaven’. On the legislators talk about the failure of MLTP Act, he remarked them as ‘publicizing failure of the very law they made’ and he ‘doubts the success of the bill’ for which the opposition are invited to help pass. He further questioned motives of the majority in discarding the old MLTP law. If it had been discarded on the ground of its failure, he stated its implication that ‘people have failed to implement the writings of the Bible and many laws, like the law that prohibits murder, stealing, robbery and more’. If it was the case, he felt the ‘necessity to rewrite the entire Indian Penal Code (IPC)’. He urged to accommodate the wishes of the people in the spirit of true democracy and not pass the bill.

K. Beichhua objected the replacement of MLTP with MLPC Act. The reasons for objection as stated by him were: a) legalization of liquor is not the policy of the MNF, the state as often referred to by the ministry as 'race of beggars' it would reflect poorly if the state is reduced to a race of beggars, liquor drinkers, liquor manufacturers, liquor addicts', b) the prohibiting law did not fail enforcement did, the Government failed. Strengthening the enforcement of law and order would yield a different result, c) liberalizing the law would result in complication of sexual inhibition, if youths drink, it would lead to inability to control sexual conducts thus increasing the statistics of sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C, Hepatitis B, d) the cause of death for children of most affluent families is the consumption of 'good liquor' not 'denatured liquor like rakzu'. Deaths caused by internal bleeding, cirrhosis and the like ailments are the result of excessive consumption of the so called good liquor as opposed to the popular belief of being caused by the consumption of local liquor, e) it would affect the work culture of people with the reduction of work efficiency. He further stated the 'need to respect the wishes of the Church and the NGOs as God himself would not directly suggest to either pass or not pass the bill, the voice of the Church is the voice of God'.

Lalruatkima requested the mover to withdraw the bill and take into consideration the council of the Church. He reported the findings of the Synod Social Front in its study done in 2011 where 329 died from liquor abuse, 147 from drug abuse in 1990-1996; period prior to the use of total prohibition. This he compared it to the number of 223 deaths from liquor abuse and 93 deaths from drug abuse in 2004-2010 in the period of prohibition. He further reported the prohibition in Gujarat had brought about development in the health sector particularly gave rise to infant mortality rate. He believed that the 'sin-tax' accrued from sale of liquor would far outweigh expenditure on its associated problems in the next ten (10) years. Like K. Beichhua, he suggested to strengthen the enforcement agency instead of repealing the old law. He asserted his belief that the 'bill if voted on a Sunday School would certainly not be passed' and that the 'wishes of the Church should be respected'.

Leader of the opposition Vanlalzawma informed the House his points for refuting the bill: a) Mizos as a race do not know how to limit or control liquor

consumption, b) the financial memorandum for the bill stated no requirement for its enforcement. If the enforcing agency is intended to be used in its current state for control, he questioned ‘will the law not fail to control without developing or strengthening the current Enforcing Agency?’, c) if the bill aimed to generate 30 crores annually, a daily sale of liquor worth 820000 would be required, that indicates rise of quantity of liquor availability and thus the rise of number of drinkers and drunks, d) the making of the bill was equivalent to saying ‘there is rise in murder, let me make a proper murder law’, e) the Church is against it, it has organized two mass prayers for rejection of the bill and the MKHC had also voiced disapproval of the bill. ‘Their rejection and dislike of the bill as shown in the posters they have pasted on the walls should evoke further thought to it’. He requested the House time for further consideration of the bill.

MPC legislator Lalthanliana spoke of the financial memorandum which expected to generate an estimate of 30 crores from taxing the sale of liquor. He questioned ‘would it not be better to remain poor than rich from the sale of liquor?’. He also felt the comparisons presented with other states was also ‘unfitting’, ruling it out on the basis of ‘non-Christian’ orientation. He sets apart the path of a Christian state like Mizoram different to theirs thus, making the sale of liquor ‘not possible’. He further states ‘I have never seen anyone who has truly mastered the art of drinking..... and the sale would not make the problem go away’. He urged the House not to pass the bill as ‘it would only create more problems than it did before’. He stated the ‘solution to problem of the drink lies in the Gospel and so is the solution for drug addicts and all other problems. The Bible had never once advocated the goodness of the drink instead it teaches to refrain from it’. He refuted from supporting the bill as he quipped, “Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbours”.⁴¹³

Excise Minister and mover of the bill, R. Lalzirliana concluded the debate as he answered the queries of opposition members as such: a) to the issue of the bill not reflecting any amount on the financial memorandum raised by Vanlalzawma, the exhaustive problem faced before by the enforcing agencies to go searching in the

⁴¹³ As it is so stated in the Bible. Habakkuk 2:15.

periphery would not be required anymore as legal consumption would bring buyers to the centre. Duties in the peripheral areas would be occasionally done as per requirement, b) on the explanation called by K. Sangthuama regarding section 79 and 80 of chapter X, the minister stated ‘the protection given to enforcing agencies had also been in use under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (ND&PS) Act also under the MLTP Act. It is a requirement if people expect effective work done on their end, thus, empowering the respective enforcing agencies had been a vital component of the bill’. He stated ‘the law would promote the cause of farmers with the making of liquor, wine and beer from their agricultural produces. The law aimed not just for the free flow of liquor but to stringently control it as well, the failure of the law would lead to its repeal by the ministry’.

The law was passed unanimously while the opposition staged a walk out before voting. On the initiation of the opposition leader, Vanlalzawma politely stated they would walk out as the ‘opposition could not be a party to passing the bill’. The bill was passed by absolute majority the very same day it was introduced and assented by the Governor on 11th July, 2014. The law became effective from 15th January, 2015. The law had been positively appraised by the Congress Legislators especially the punishment clause made for forced community work under section 42. The law remained inapplicable to the Autonomous District Councils.

The debate between the Congress and the MNF led opposition had been dominated by the ruling Congress. The opposition heavily outnumbered could only watch helplessly the undoing of the dry law. The movers had justified their need for liberalization as:

- a) An alternative solution to the failed prohibition law, the law would be an experiment (for the remaining term of the Congress ministry) which on failure will be repealed and replaced by a different law. The never-ending presence and problem of liquor despite enforcement of total prohibition had resulted in the ministry to think of an alternative law, an alternative approach to the problem.
- b) As stated by Lal Thanhawla in the debate, ‘even the most uncivilized tribe possess a drink of their own; the Jarawas of the Andaman & Nicobar have their liquor drink, to be a tribe too bothered by liquor is shameful’. The ministry intend to promote

tolerance; to sensitize people to liquor with its presence, not be bothered by its presence for those not habituated to drinking and to be able to cultivate a civilized manner/habit of drinking to those habituated to drinking.

- c) To provide an alternative healthier liquor drink than those found in illicit market as the liquor quality found in the black market had been the cause of fatality of those consuming it. The addition of cleaning substances like 'Robin' in the local brewing causes the drink to have an extra kick but when consumed causes paralysis of the legs, followed by enlarged liver and ultimately death as mentioned by C. Nunglianchunga. The need to correct this wrong by providing a healthier alternative had been their goal.
- d) It aimed to provide a drink at a cheaper rate than the black market. 'Liquor acquired on the other side with a payment made of just Rs. 200/- which is sold at a rate of Rs. 500/600/- in the black market. Under the control law, the expenditure will accrue to Rs. 200/- not more than they have been required to pay for' as mentioned by K.S. Thanga. The law had been formulated in consideration of those who cannot do without liquor, providing a healthier and cheaper rate for the minority had been taken into consideration.
- e) Generation of revenue though stated as not the primary objective of the law, was expected to generate an income of 30 crores. The revenue could be utilized for development as generating income had been a dire need of the state in consideration of poor financial condition.

Introduction of the bill certainly required courage amidst vehement opposition displayed by the Church prior to consideration of the bill. The movers vehemently reasoned their stance with the attempt to dominate the narrative. From quoting philosophical reasoning's to research findings, relaying personal experiences to Biblical reasoning, they had tried very hard to dispell the prohibition narrative by highlighting the failure of prohibition law not just in the state of Mizoram but anywhere else with the prohibiting law in force. The debate can also be interpreted as a show of power, an assertion of authority by the ruling despite the claim of Lal Thanhawla as not intending to inflict any hurt or pose a challenge to the Church. His comment regarding the mass prayers organized by the Church prior to the legislative discussion as 'communal prayer is good but when our prayers are not communal, it

brings little progress. The Bible tells us we must pray towards a communal desire, and therefore, what we pray for must be of one accord. Therefore, it is necessary sometimes to separate matters of the spirit and of religion with that of worldly concerns' wounded the sentiment of many despite justifying the promotion of the bill as 'not intending to go against the wishes of the Church but rather doing and promoting needs of the state as recommended by the leaders'. He believed the bill would help reform society and life of the Church. The centeredness and the authoritativeness of the Church on the liquor issue can still be identified from the debates. The opposition seeking to uplift the wishes of the Church in their argument had been condemned by Lalsawta as he identified it as a "sly tactic of manipulation using the Church as a front".

Movers and opposers certainly had been very well prepared for their debate. Like the commentary of K.S. Thanga regarding differential conception of Christianity as taught by the Missionaries differing from place to place, elucidated in the case of smoking and the chewing of betel nut between the Naga and Mizo Christians had been thought provoking. It can be seen from the debate, the Congress had taken a big leap of faith by introducing such a law which runs counter to the belief and interest of Church and Social organizations. Their reasoning had provided various insight to their approach on liquor; a more liberal approach with the intent to change the perception and habits of the people can only be summed up as anti-thetical to the construct of the Mizo Kristianna or Mizo Christianity. The introduction of the bill was a 'big gamble' which put their reputation on the line and one that unfortunately did not pay off. However, it can certainly be seen as an attempt to break free from the mould of conservatism propagated by the Church and also as an attempt to separate the power of Church and state.

The debates clearly shows the changing positions political parties make depending on whether they are in a position to effect legislation or not. Political Party's ulterior policy towards liquor often remain hidden from sight thus, not reflected in their respective manifestos. However, the opposite, the claim for prohibition is often reflected in election campaigns and seem to help promote their cause as liquor remain identified as the most notorious intoxicating substance by the Church lead civil

society. 1973 saw the Congress oppose the Excise Bill but had been the ones to enforce the Act in 1984. The MNF stance on liquor while underground had proved to be different from their over ground policy which had rather been quite tolerant. This too had contributed to the unpopularity of Laldenga and finally led to his inglorious exit from power.

The continued push of the Church for prohibition had resulted in making the liquor issue a hot topic for debate and action for the opposing MNF party in 1995, this can be interpreted as an opportunist move of the opposition to unearth the Congress ministry's motive and discredit their rule. On introducing the Prohibition Bill by the opposing MNF party, R. Tlanghmingthanga, Treasurer and MLA, MNF party of the commented 'We wanted to know the true stance of the Government, they portray a picture of not wanting to sell liquor while wanting to actually sell. If liquor is to be banned let there be total prohibition, if this is not what they intend to do, let them legalize it, grant permits and freely sell liquor. We wanted to know where they actually stand'.⁴¹⁴ The issue of liquor had helped expose, promote or hamper reputations in the state. It is an issue which leads to finger pointing on the past liquor policies of political regimes. Despite its pro-liquor sentiment promoted, the MNF too had introduced an amendment to legalizing bill with the enforcement of the Mizoram Excise & Narcotics (Wine) Rules, 2008. This had caused concern on the Church leaders as it filled them with apprehension that such a law would eventually lead to a legalizing law.

The politics surrounding repeal of the dry law had clearly set the polarizing stance of the two main political parties. The enforcement of this act solidified the anti-prohibitionist stance of the Congress and the pro-prohibitionist position of the MNF party in Mizoram. Perception of stakeholder solidifies this belief as 157 (65%) of the respondents related the MNF party to being 'pro-prohibitionist', 12 (5%) to the Congress party, 21 (9%) to the Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP) and 50 (21%) identified others (Question 21 in research questionnaire).

The repeal had come with a grave price for the Congress as it was ousted from power in the General Election of 2018. The issue of liquor had caused ministries to

⁴¹⁴ *Zu Khapna Bill Putluh ani dawn*. Sunday Post. (3-9, September, 1995). P. 8

fall and other to rise, majority of the stakeholders also perceive it true as 175 (76%) respondents agreed liquor issue to cause the rise and fall of ministries in Mizoram, while 23 (10%) disagreed and 34 (14%) presented no opinion on the issue (see Table 4.0 below). Thus proving true the fourth hypothesis, ‘the issue of liquor had been used by political regimes in Mizoram to influence electorates’. With the major cognisance that liquor prohibition was the right thing to do for a Christian majority state like Mizoram and that such belief would prompt voters more of who are women to ‘not vote’ for a pro-liquor party (correlation as mentioned in chapter III, Table 3.6 & Table 2.1) thus often translates to losing vote banks for political regimes and vote gains for the alternative pro-prohibitionist regimes. To some the issue might not be the deciding factor that caused to lose support for a political party, but responses show that liquor issue would cause a fair majority to abstain from voting a pro-liquor party in Mizoram.

Table: 4.0. Do you think that alcohol is an issue which causes the rise and fall of ministries in Mizoram? (Q 29 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
72 (75.0%)	10 (10.4%)	14 (14.6%)	111 (77.1%)	13 (9.0%)	20 (13.9%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

Majority of respondents further felt happiness with the reinstatement of prohibition act as majority of them 183 (76.2%) agreed they were, whereas the majority 23 (9.6%) were not and 34 (14.2%) had no opinion on the issue. As an anonymous commentator had said, “Had the Congress continued to rule, my husband would have died from excessive drinking, therefore I voted for the MNF”. The MNF who promised to reinstate prohibition during their election campaigns in 2018 seemed to resonate as a solution for many women to their domestic problems.⁴¹⁵ Such would have been the case for many women, not to mention liquor as the case for domestic violence and other related problems. However, one has to objectively recognise that most habituated to drinking had cultivated the habit since the times of prohibition.

⁴¹⁵ Anonymous. Personal communication. Dated: 14/12/2019.

As seen from the table below (Table 4.1), majority of the urban respondents exhibited happiness on prohibition being reinstated than their rural counterparts. However, when they were asked if the opinion of the people is reflected in the Government policies, 94 (39%) agreed it did, while 99 (41%) disagreed to not having representation and 47 (20%) had no opinion on the matter (see Table 4.2). This questions the general nature of democracy in the state. It is observed that stakeholders feel a general sense of disconnect to their Government maybe owing to lack of political responsiveness or simply because they feel lack of impact on policy making process. Thus, perception regarding representation of their opinion seem to be conflicted. This uncertainty could also result in lack of trust on their Government to promote and deliver their interests.

Table: 4.1. Are you happy with the reinstatement of the prohibition act? (Q 40 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
55 (57.3%)	22 (22.9%)	19 (19.8%)	16 (11.1%)	86 (59.7%)	42 (29.2%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

Table: 4.2. Do you believe that the opinion of the people is reflected in the Government policies? (Q 31 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
39 (40.6%)	39 (40.6%)	18 (18.8%)	55 (38.2%)	60 (41.7%)	29 (20.1%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

Table: 4.3. Do you think that liquor is an issue that should be politicized? (Q 43 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
7 (7.3%)	84 (87.5%)	5 (5.2%)	11 (7.6%)	127 (88.2%)	6 (4.2%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

When respondents were further asked if liquor is an issue that should be politicized, majority of the stakeholders 211 (87.9%) believed it should not be politicized while minority 18 (7.5%) thought otherwise that it should be politicized while and 11 (4.6%) presented no opinion on the issue (see Table 4.3 above). It had been observed that many believe the issue of liquor had been a utilized by political regimes as a source of political play owing to lack of results during prohibition. Thus, liquor is seen as a good site for vote bank politics and that it should not be politicized.

F. Liquor conflict revisited

It is no secret that Aizawl had seen illicit liquor hubs like the Atta Lane located in Upper Bazar, Red Rose in Bawngkaw, Cheng Nga Mual at Tuikual to name the popular ones in the past. The present Rangvamual, Phunchawng, Halflong and such places which are considered hotspots to get charged with illicit liquor. Places like Atta Lane and Red Rose had become irrelevant but the rest seem to continue to operate in its own world. Liquor though considered a nuisance had managed to seep into society and collect a following despite prohibition and rigorous attempts by the Government and social organization to curb and eradicate its flow. This shows the truth to the belief 'one cannot legislate on people's moral and human behaviour'. Seventeen years of total prohibition had not been able to put an end to illicit brewing, sale, drinking, transport, import of liquor. Life had managed to keep the flow of demand and supply despite enforcement of the dry law.

On passing of the law R. Lalzirliana, Minister, Excise & Narcotics commented during the session 'We want our state not to be troubled by liquor and with the MLTP Act we had hoped to end it but failed. The Government does not agree with those who interpret our move on revising the law and replacing it with MLPC as legalising liquor. We simply hope to control what we cannot end.' He even stressed how many lost lives after consuming denatured liquor during prohibition days. "Bad liquor deteriorates ones' health, it is known that the number of people hospitalised on liquor based illnesses is more prior to prohibition. If the MLTP Act were to be successful it is clear the state and society itself will find great comfort in it, for that we wish for too'. He

explained “the MLTP Act was repealed because of enforcement failure. It might look successful in the beginning, lack of people working in enforcement section, less jail time for those caught and lack of space in jail have all led to increase in the number of liquor. The efforts of the NGOs in their fight against it have only resulted in the increasing number of liquor confiscated by the excise and the police”.⁴¹⁶ The minister further commented “As prohibition only increased the sale of spurious liquor, we strongly felt the need to lift prohibition so that those people who cannot do without drinks can find good quality liquor at cheaper prices”.⁴¹⁷ He also refuted the churches’ allegations that the government was tempted by the revenue expected to generate from liquor. So, after 17 years of implementing the Total Prohibition Act, the law had been replaced by the Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition and Control) Act 2014.

This legalizing act of the government was vehemently opposed by the Church. Posters had been hung, mass prayer meetings conducted twice by the Church prior to the discussion of the Bill. The 2015 Synod Assembly passed a resolution to forbid the services of members with Liquor permit in the Church ministry.⁴¹⁸ It campaigned against regulated sale and controlled consumption of liquor. Campaign against the law had an ultimate goal: the reinstatement of prohibition. It mobilized its pastorates who openly preached against it in churches. This campaign against liquor also gave trend to the publication of ‘liquor literature.’ Examples of recent publications may be of the writings of Revd. Chuauthuama titled “*Zu hi thil a ni*” (translated as *Liquor is a Thing*) and ‘*Bible, Zu leh Mizote*’ (translated as Bible, Liquor and the Mizos), C. Lalhrekima and Laldinliana Varte titled ‘Zu’ (translated as Liquor) to name a few. The writings of C. Lalhrekima and Laldinliana Varte titled ‘Zu’ was first made into a small booklet and circulated in the Mission Veng locality as the writing was initiated under the Mission Veng, Kristian Thalai Pawl, Mission Veng Pastor Bial,⁴¹⁹ it was then

⁴¹⁶ MLTP Act thlakna tur bill pass a ni Vote lak lain ptu member-te an tel lo. (11th July 2014). *Vanglaini*. p.1

lain ptu member-te an tel lo. p.1

⁴¹⁷ Life after Mizoram passes the MLPC Act 2014. *Milaap*. Retrieved from <https://milaap.org/stories/mlpc>

⁴¹⁸ General 13. (2015). *Zu Zawrh leh Zu lei phalna permit nei te chungchang ah rawtna*. Synod Assembly 2015 Minute. 2015 Synod Bu Vawi 92-na. Aizawl: Presbyterian Church of India Mizoram Synod. pp. 49-50.

⁴¹⁹ Kristian Thalai Pawl, Mission Veng Pastor Bial is the Youth Wing of the Church belonging to the Mission Veng Pastorate Area.

published again as a book with added contents to it. Such writings can also be found in Agape Vol. XXXII No. 299 titled “*Uaiin ruin awm suh u*” (translated as Do not be drunk with wine), the Synod Revival Committee publication on “*Unique Identification (UID) leh Zu Chungchang*” (translated as *On Unique Identification (UID) and Liquor*). These publications had hoped to educate masses on health-related illnesses of liquor, the socio-economic perspective and theological teachings on liquor with the intent of dissuading Church members from drinking. The Mizoram Synod Social Front in 2014-2016 put together a study team and conducted a study titled “*Zuin Mizote Min Nghawng Dan Zir Chianna*” (translated as The Impact of Liquor on Mizo Society). The study and its findings were published as a booklet by the Synod Social Front. Such publications promoted the needs of the Church to educate and campaign against liquor to its people.

On the perception of Church leaders and pastors on liquor, Congress President, Lal Thanhawla had related the days of the past where he as Chief Minister would have visitors at the Chief Minister Office in Tuikhuahtlang; when two or three Church leaders and pastors would visit and discussions held on the issues, on such discussions, my reasoning would be found ‘acceptable’ but it never seem to be vocalized in their respective Church and Synod Committees; none had been willing to question ‘what is so wrong with it?’ when as a group ‘they stand united against’ and the visitors too unquestioningly ‘fall in line’ irrespective of what they think individually. It can be analyzed that the inability to question a group might spring from fear of not belonging to the collective, fear of thinking differently especially in relation to the Church and the question of morality. True to the standing of the collective, the Church once again vehemently stood against the move of the Government.

There had been an uproar when the Congress party in their official newsletter named *Congress Thlifim*, Vol. No. 1. 4 July 2015 published the heading “*Tunge Sorkar Policy Do?*” (Translated as Who is against Government Policy?). The article carried a questionnaire asking readers to answer, “After the implementation of the MLPC Act by the Congress party, write down the name of the pastor who openly lectures against the policy, opposes it, influences the people, name of the Church he is affiliated to, and his locality. Also name the time and place where he lectures against the policy.”

Five thousand copies of the newsletter was printed and distributed. Inside sources also mentioned that payment of Rs.2/- for a copy distributed was made.⁴²⁰ This act of Congress party shocked many. It clearly exhibited the party had an open conflict with the Church. It also further added fuel to their already deteriorating reputation. It had been reported that the Church through its many pastorates openly preached against liquor and against the Congress party, even to the extent of promoting other political parties of choice from their pulpits. Pulpits have often been used to preach not just the Gospel but also have been utilized as a platform to formulate public opinion and influence electorates. Churches have been doing so for a long time; they have preached for the promotion of various causes like good governance, good election conducts etc. ‘In the midst of the absence of anti-incumbency wave in the last Congress ministry’ commented the Congress President, “pastors and revival speakers preached against the ministry from Church pulpits with ulterior motives; on the last Sunday before the General Election scheduled on Wednesday, the 28th November 2018, Churches had collectively preached against liquor and the ministry in places like Chhingchhip, Dawrlawn, Thenzawl and other places information had also been received of pastors promoting candidates of the upcoming Zoram Peoples’ Movement (ZPM) party”.

Such action of the Church proved contradictory to its own preaching of ethical election campaign conduct promoted through their Mizoram People Forum (MPF). The Congress patriarch commented ‘liquor will continue to be present as long as there is people and its society, as a political leader, one has to ponder on how to live with it? How to go with it?’ had the MLPC not been successful, the party had been prepared to repeal the law. It had been clear as related by the President, the party had not anticipated its downfall in 2018.

One has to keep in mind the enforcement of the dry law was a failure, Report of the Study Group of the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition (MLTP) Act mentioned that various NGOs in the society consider it a failure but some organizations would like the Government to efficiently continue its implementation. One might question their

⁴²⁰ *Sorkar policy sawisel leh Kohhran*. (29th August 2015). Zalen Newspaper. P.1

want of continuity despite the apparent failure of the prohibition law. There can be no alternative to the law according to the Church. The lessons imparted by the colonial Church on the issue of alcohol had been so deeply imbedded in the psyche of the people that even today attitude of the post-colonial Church continue to remain the same; negatively perceived as the source of all social evils. In a collective society like a Mizo society, a person dare not speak in support of liquor for fear of the backlash it will face from the society. The Church dictates the moral code of the people! It has campaigned against the Excise Act and has caused the Mizo National Front ministry to topple. Once again in 2014, it finds itself standing on the opposite pole, in dispute with policy makers. It had mobilized its people with sermons preached against zu in various churches, dissemination of knowledge on liquor literature, putting up posters against the liquor bill, conducting mass prayers hoping for the reinstatement of prohibition or prayers for a new ministry. All this and its coordinated work with the NGOs had definitely caused a change in electoral behavior.

The 2018 General Election showed change in ministries, the Mizo National Front (MNF) with their promise to reinstate prohibition came to power with a win of 26 seats out of 40. The Church had two ultimate objectives: a) bringing an end to the legalizing law and b) the change of ministry. The two correlated as one cannot be achieved without fulfilment of the other. The Church vehemently campaigned against the ministry which eventually resulted in handing the baton of power to major opposing political party viz., the MNF. This proves true the second hypothesis, “The repeal of the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1995 in 2014 resulted in differences of opinion among the political regimes as well as the people of Mizoram”. The repeal of the prohibition law in 2014 not only resulted in the apparent differences of opinion between political parties; the Congress Government and oppositions consisting of the MNF and MPF but also between the Congress Government and Church led civil society which ultimately led to change of ministry at the 2018 General State Election.

The chapter clearly exposes the tug and pull for power between Church led civil society and the state. It also exposes how liquor issue had been utilized by political regimes to influence electorates. Content Analysis of the Assembly debates from the

Mizoram Excise Bill 1973 to the Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition & Control) Bill, 2014 clearly helps locate centrality of the ‘prohibition narrative’ promoted by the Church in the state of Mizoram. This prohibition narrative has been an issue promoted since times of the early Mizo Christians. It is one vital issue which helps deduce that:

- a) It exhibits schism between the Churches led civil society and the Government,
- b) The Church and Government both wishes to dominate the liquor narrative often resulting in clash of interests and exhibits power play,
- c) An issue for political regimes to influence electorates,
- d) The true stance of political regimes on liquor issue remains uncertain unless they remain in the position to effect legislation and
- e) Liquor issue had been used by the Church to influence electorates as well.

One cannot be dismissive of the issue as it causes ministries to rise and fall and mobilises major actors to action in the state to promote their interests. It causes divide not only in families but also family of the larger unit: the state as a whole.

CHAPTER V

UNDERSTANDING THE CONSEQUENCES OF LIQUOR POLICIES

This chapter studies the policy perspectives of both prohibiting act viz., the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1995 and legalizing act viz., the Mizoram Liquor Prohibition and Control (MLPC) Act, 2014. It will study the implication of the liquor laws which will help determine either its success or failure. As it explores the multiple implications; the social, economic and political implications of liquor policies on the Mizo Society it will help deduce if the facts run counter to the fourth hypothesis 'liquor consumption has negative effects on Mizo society'.

Liquor has often been identified as the cause of putting society on the brink of moral and social precipice. It had also been believed that 'forced sobriety' in the form of national prohibition would help save society from drunkenness, improve morality, lessen crime rates, strengthen families, improve national character and society in general. In America, such belief birthed temperance associations like the American Temperance Society in 1826, the Anti-Saloon League in 1893, Women's Christian Temperance Union in 1873 and many more. Their pressure resulted in the subsequent passing of national ban on liquor through the 18th Amendment, which came into effect from 1920. The 18th amendment banned the manufacture, sale and distribution of intoxicating liquors. Prohibition did not yield their intended results, it instead gave rise to powers like Al Capone who benefitted the most from the law, encouraged widespread corruption among the enforcing agencies. The Noble Experiment however survived a mere decade as it came to an end in 1933 with the repeal of the 18th Amendment with the subsequent 21st Amendment.

Prohibition in Mizoram too arose from the widespread belief in the need for forced sobriety. Aizawl City itself had witnessed the hotspots for sale, purchase and consumption at the so-called Atta Lane located at the Upper Bazar area in Aizawl. Today numerous pharmaceutical shops occupy the area as it is located close to the junction leading to the Government Aizawl Civil Hospital. This area peaked its reputation during the 1970's where the law permitted the sale and consumption of the drink. Comments had been made of how most shops (also selling various eateries,

some function as tea stalls and more to conceal the openness on the part of the seller) in the lane would sell both country and Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) and served their customers the drink in their stalls functioning as an open bar. The 1970's had also witnessed the establishment of bars such as Tuboh Bar, Sertawk Bar, Aunty's Kitchen, Broadway Hotel in the city. However, the functioning of the Atta Lane and other bars came to a close the same decade of its establishment⁴²¹. The close of one leads to the establishment of another in a different region. Tuikual locality located in the western part of the capital had once also been a hub for illicit brewing and sale of country liquor, there existed the *Cheng Nga Mual* (or the Five Rupee Area), *Cheng Hnih Mual* (or the Two Rupee Area). Former CYMA leader, R. Zomawia remarked there used to be a saying regarding giving direction to the area as such, "the Church will be located there and the school there, the rest you'll find *zu zuar*" (lit. liquor seller). Recollection by another is made on the shootings of a few '*hmeithai zu zuar*'⁴²² at the Tuikual area by the prohibitionist MNF while underground. The shootings had been followed by prior warnings, failure to comply had cost a few lives, and homes being burnt to the ground. Such had been the history of the area. 1980s further saw the popularity of Red Rose at Thuampui area a locality situated in the northern end of Aizawl, besides this there existed the Kang Bang (called as K.B) in the late 1980s. These shifts from the city occur as a result of the community coming together, legitimizing the actions of their respective VDPs in pushing out these manufacturers of illicit country liquor and sellers. Sellers are pushed out from their spaces into the periphery, thus the 90s saw hubs further shift to the western peripheral part of the city located at Phungchawng and Rangvamual area. Most patrol duties in the 1970s and 1980s was undertaken by the VC's and then the VDP's with their respective local YMA's later on.

The Central YMA full-fledgedly joined the fight, taking over the torch to help light the darkness away from 2000 onwards. A recent hub which finds mention of illicit

⁴²¹ Zomawia, R., (Executive Member, Central Executive Committee, Central YMA (2014-2017) & Former Secretary, Kupuan Committee, Central YMA), personal communication. Dated: 24/3/2021.

⁴²² *Hmeithai Zuzuar* lit. '*hmeithai*' a widow, '*zu zuar*' a liquor seller, it is believed that liquor sale is mostly done by poor widow deprived of employment, to make ends meet. Thus, at times generate sympathy from the general public

sale had been located in the northern side of the city at Haf Long. Phungchawng and Rangvamual manufacture most illicit liquor and sell it while places like Haf Long help sell the illicit product. R. Zomawia had commented on the difference between prohibition and regulated sale as under prohibition ‘liquor became a little illusive, those habituated to the drink could still find their drink, however at a high price’. Thus, the positive point had been drinking and all its associates went in the hiding, reduced to an open secret, did not help entirely in eliminating its presence, instead it did inflate the rate of the drink, as one would have to require to purchase what little is found at an exorbitant rate, though draining to the private purse, many still willing to pay to quench their thirst for liquor. Further comments had been made on how the pursuit of these illegal manufacture had caused the ‘degradation of the liquor quality that is brewed’.

As the YMA pursued to find and destroy factories hidden from sight in the forests, once found, the liquid is spilled, utensils confiscated and auctioned off, but the livelihood of the illicit brewers which remain unsubstituted, work harder to cover up their loss, thereby taking shortcuts to making the drink ready as soon as possible by adding substances that will make it easily ready to sell. Substances added become more and more harmful upon intake therefore, ‘greatly compromising the quality of the drink’. However, under the prohibited sale, R. Zomawia observes the difference ‘as drinking became more open, it did create frequent problems for YMA duties to break up petty fights’. A better analysis of the important aspects of both the acts; the prohibiting and the restricted sale laws; the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1995 and the Mizoram Liquor Prohibition and Control (MLPC) Act, 2014 respectively will help understand the dynamics of both laws despite having been briefly mentioned in the previous chapter. Focus on the important facets of both the laws particularly the enforcing authority, the prohibition and the penal provisions had been given particular mention as seen below:

A. On Forced Sobriety

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the ideal to suppress drunkenness stemmed from the Church and endorsed by all its social following which came to manifest in the form of pressure for ‘total prohibition’ thus, leading to materialize the Mizoram Total Prohibition Act 1995. The push for this law had been a culmination of belief that it would help rid social evils, save people from crumbling marriages, promote a somewhat stable and healthy upbringing for children, bring back people to strengthened faith and spirituality thus standing true to exhibiting character befitting the identity of the state as a Christian state. Also, the opposition MNF party in their play to unearth the intentions of ruling Congress party pushed for a watertight prohibition bill through the introduction of the Mizoram Prohibition of Liquor Bill, 1995. They out-gunned the Congress ministry in the Legislative Assembly House. The rejection of the opposition bill and the re-introduction of an entirely new prohibiting bill two months later can be interpreted as a move on the part of Congress ministry to do the needful however, it was so done ‘on their terms’. Likewise, the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Bill, 1995 was formulated on their terms and conditions and was later enforced as a principal act in 1997. The Act though claimed to be ‘very strict’ in nature made quite a few ‘exceptions’ for liquor acquirement which made the opposition MNF party question the so claimed stringent nature of the prohibiting law. This accommodating nature of the bill made the opposition consider the law as a failure even before it had been implemented. Certain features of the prohibiting law will be as mentioned below⁴²³:

A) Applicability: The Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition (MLTP) Act 1995 could not be extended the Lai, Mara and Chakma Autonomous District Council (ADC) areas thus putting to question the ‘totality’ aspect of the law enforcement in the land. These regions remain excluded from applying the law owing to the Constitutional law stipulated under 12B of the Sixth Schedule. The law stipulates, “no act of the Legislature of the State of Mizoram in respect of any of the matters specified in

⁴²³ For details regarding the law, refer to The Mizoram Gazette. (13/2/1996). *The Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1995*. Aizawl: Authority

paragraph 3 of this Schedule as matters with respect to which a District Council or a Regional Council may make laws, and no act of the Legislature of the State of Mizoram prohibiting or restricting the consumption of any non-distilled alcoholic liquor shall apply to any autonomous district or autonomous region in that State unless, in either case, the District Council for such district or having jurisdiction over such region, by public notification, so directs, and the District Council, in giving such direction with respect to any act, may direct that the act shall, in its application to such district or region or any part thereof, have effect subject to such exceptions or modifications as it thinks fit”.

This provision safeguards the indigenous drinks of the minority by limiting the jurisdiction of the Legislature of Mizoram on enforcing laws made on restriction and consumption of any non-distilled alcoholic liquor in the ADC regions. The application of liquor prohibiting law had been left to the discretion of District Council or any authority having jurisdiction over such region by giving direction through public notification. The hope of the opposition party during the debate on the MLTP bill, 1995 had been for the regions to adopt the law in their respective regions on the premise that ‘it is the right thing to do’. But this hope had fallen on deaf ears. Dr. B. D. Chakma had commented, “the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition (MLTP) Act is not applicable to the extent that Duichuni (double distilled wine) is not commercialised, as it is used for rituals and other social festivals”.⁴²⁴ So, the liquor prohibiting law had been enforced in the entire state except for the Lai, Mara and Chakma Autonomous District Councils (ADCs). Thus, the commencement of Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition (MLTP) Act, 1995 repealed the Mizoram Excise Act, 1973 as provisions of the previous act was found inconsistent with the interests of civil society.

B) Establishment and Control: Chapter II of the act describes the appointments of officials, thus establishing the structural hierarchy of functioning where the State Government stands at the apex. The State Government appoints, supervise and

⁴²⁴ Chakma, Dr. B. D., (Former MLA, Seventh Mizoram Legislative Assembly), telephone communication. Dated: 12/4/2021.

delegates functions to the Commissioner and other subsidiary officers for the fulfilment of the act. It appoints the Commissioner of Prohibition or Prohibition Commissioner who remain subject to the control of the State Government and other officer(s) deemed necessary for the functioning of the prohibiting law viz., the Collector(s) and other officers subordinate to the Collector(s). The Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition (Amendment) Act, 2013 made an addition of sub-section (3) which allows the appointment of an Officer or Class One Officers in the Excise & Narcotics Department and the Police Department as 'expert' for the purpose of analysis or examination of alcoholic liquor by the State Government under section 5 to relieve the heavy burden of the Forensic Department.

B. i) Change of designations: To serve the purpose of the prohibiting act as stated in Chapter II, all officers and staff appointed under the Excise Act, 1973 came to be differently designated through the MLTP Act. The Commissioner of Excise came to be designated as the Commissioner of Prohibition, Deputy Commissioner of Excise as Deputy Commissioner of Prohibition, Assistant Commissioner of Excise as Assistant Commissioner of Prohibition, Superintendent of Excise as Superintendent of Prohibition, Excise officer as Prohibition Officer, Inspector of Excise as Inspector of Prohibition and Sub-Inspector of Excise as Sub-Inspector of Prohibition.

B. ii) The Commissioner of Prohibition: The State Government through the act delegate vast powers exercisable to the Commissioner which he in turn could delegate to his subordinates. However, they remain subjected to the control of the State Government. The act further grants power to control and subordinate the police and other departments if subjected to general or special orders of the state Government.

B. iii) The Collector(s): Collector implies a 'Collector of Excise appointed under the Excise Act' including those officers whose designations had been changed viz., Commissioner of Prohibition, Deputy Commissioner of Prohibition, Assistant Commissioner of Prohibition, Superintendent of Prohibition, Prohibition Officer, Inspector of Prohibition and Sub-Inspector of Prohibition. These appointments made

by the State Government is to carry out the administration of prohibition within a district or the limits of stipulated jurisdiction. A Collector is put in charge for carrying out the provisions of the act and all Collectors remain subordinate to the Commissioner. However, wide power granted to the Commissioner was questioned by the opposition at the time of debate on the prohibiting bill. Thus, in 1999, the MNF ministry effected amendment where they excluded officers of the Police Department from the hold of the Commissioner.

It is observed that the State Government stands at the helm as the executive power, next in line falls the Commissioner, the head administrator who functions on the discretion of the Government. The Commissioner oversees the entire functioning of his subordinate Collectors like the Deputy Commissioner of Prohibition, Assistant Commissioner of Prohibition, Superintendent of Prohibition, Prohibition Officer, Inspector of Prohibition and Sub-Inspector of Prohibition and ranked below whose appointment is issued by the State Government in the Excise Department.

C) Prohibition provision: Chapter III contains the most awaited component of the act viz., the prohibition and punishment components. The prohibition components of the act prohibits⁴²⁵:

- i. prohibition of all individuals to transport, import, export, possess, sell, manufacture, to keep materials, utensils or apparatus for the manufacture of liquor or construct distillery or brewery.
- ii. Consumption of liquor except on a prescription by a registered Medical Practitioner, or on a permit granted under the act for people aged 21 years and above.
- iii. publication of advertisements of liquor,
- iv. alteration and possession of denatured spirit,
- v. alteration of denatured spirituous preparation,
- vi. issuing prescription for liquor except by a Registered Medical practitioner,
- vii. possession of denatured spirituous preparation in excess of prescribed limit.

⁴²⁵ For more see The Mizoram Gazette. (13/2/1996). *The Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1995*. Aizawl: Authority or Appendix IX.

- viii. sale of denatured spirit,
- ix. regulation of permit holders to drink or consume liquor in public place or institution,
- x. granting permission for the utility of premises or property for commission of an offence is liable to punishment,
- xi. misconduct by permit holder or person in the employ of such holder on failure to produce permit, pass or authorisation on demand by Excise Officer of the rank of sub-Inspector and above.

The act seem to prohibit quite a few things for the making of a dry state. The enforcement of the law required the vast pull of Government resources and man power. However, most important of all, the success of any prohibition rests on the commitment of the people to let go of their drink.

D) Penal provisions: Chapter III also stipulates the various penal provisions bestowed in contravention of the prohibition law. Most penal provisions consisted of five years imprisonment on conviction and fines extending mostly from Rs. 200/- the highest being Rs. 10,000/-. The minimal term of imprisonment depended on the case of conviction which may range from not less than 24 hours, one month, six months, two years and three year.⁴²⁶

The penalty for transport, import, export, possess, sell, manufacture, to keep materials, unlawful consumption of liquor would lead to imprisonment for a term extended to five (5) years but not less than three (3) months and a fine which may extend to Rs. 10, 000/- rupees but not less than Rs. 1000/-.⁴²⁷ What the opposition argued during the debates as ‘inconsiderate of the repercussions it will cause for the future life of youths’ was the immediate punishment provision made for person(s) under twenty-one (21) years of age, with no previous conviction, would be awarded a sentence of less than three (3) months and a fine less than one thousand Rs. 1000/-.⁴²⁸ Whereas, the consumption of liquor without medical license, on conviction would lead

⁴²⁶ For details see The Mizoram Gazette. (13/2/1996). *The Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1995*. Aizawl: Authority or Appendix X.

⁴²⁷ Ibid., see section 7.

⁴²⁸ Ibid., see section 8(1)

to imprisonment for a term of one (1) month not less than twenty-four (24) hours or a fine up to Rs. 1000/- but not less than Rs. 500/- or with both.⁴²⁹

Contravention to the law against knowingly permitting the utility of premises or property for commission of an offence is liable to punishment with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years but not less than two months and with fine which may extend to Rs. 5000/- but not less than Rs. 1000/-.⁴³⁰ A person who is under 21 years of age and against whom no previous conviction is proved, may be awarded a sentence of less than two months and a fine less than one thousand rupees for reasons to be recorded in the judgement that in consideration of the age, character and antecedents of the person concerned, a lesser sentence is justified. The amendment of 2013 to the Principal act made a substitution of the words ‘knowingly permits’ with “unless he satisfactorily proved that he did not know’ to distinguish the ‘known’ and ‘unknown’ compliance of the owner of property which makes him/her either an accomplice or not to the crime.⁴³¹

Another interesting portion of the law had been that the failure to produce permit, pass or authorisation on demand by authority can lead to punishment of imprisonment for a period of six (6) months or a fine of then Rs. 10,000/- or both.⁴³² This particular section of the law was intended to discourage illegal drinking and control consumption.

As stipulated in chapter IV, the act does not allow any sentence awarded to be suspended or remitted or commuted. Also, the punishment for a person having been previously convicted of an offence punishable under any of the provisions of the act subsequently commits and is convicted of another offence punishable, that person will be awarded twice the punishment which might be imposed on a first conviction under the Act, for the third and subsequent offences, the punishment stands to not be less than one (1) year imprisonment with a fine of Rs. 2000/-.⁴³³

⁴²⁹ Ibid., see section 8(b)

⁴³⁰ Ibid., see section 24

⁴³¹ See Amendment of section 24 in The Mizoram Gazette. (14/8/2013). *The Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition (Amendment) Act, 2013*. Aizawl: Authority

⁴³² The MLTP Act, 1995, op.cit. see section 25.

⁴³³ Ibid., section 39 & 43.

This section of the law has been considered as quite harsh by many from the enforcement agency side as well as from the MNF opposition as seen from the Assembly debates in 1995. The suggestion had been for the implementation of a less severe penalty for contravention especially with due consideration given to teen offenders. However, it can be observed that the formulation of these draconian laws had been a result of a direct challenge to the Congress Ministry back then in 1995.

E) Grant of licences and permits: The unanticipated aspect and the most criticised chapter of the act had been the component which grants licences and permits to certain categories. This section of the law is a digression from the intent of prohibition. The law stipulates the general conditions for authority to allow for the grant of licence on payment of prescription fee,⁴³⁴ to persons above 21 years; if the person actually requires for the improvement or restoration of his health or relieve him from ailment and the person belongs to any armed forces.⁴³⁵ The law also grants permit to – any person having prescription from registered medical practitioner for purchase and consumption of liquor on health ground and any Hospital, Dispensary or Institution for the import of different kinds of spirits for a bonafide medicinal, scientific or industrial purpose. It also rules out the need for permits for the possession of denatured spirit up to 2 (two) litres.⁴³⁶

The chapter also contains provisions for the grant of special permits subjected to conditions and personalities such as a) sovereign or head of a foreign country, b) ambassadors, diplomatic envoy or Consul, Trade, Commerce or other representatives of a foreign country, c) member of staff appointed by or serving under any person specified under a) & b) provided that such a member is a national of a foreign country, e) consort of persons specified in a) & b) or c) or any relation dependent upon him, f) any foreign national employed by or engaged in any firm or any other concern in Mizoram.⁴³⁷

⁴³⁴ Ibid., section 26.

⁴³⁵ Ibid., section 32 (a).

⁴³⁶ Ibid., section 32 (b).

⁴³⁷ Ibid., chapter IV section 29

The law allows the purchase of liquor only from Departmental store established by the Government on the basis of permit or authorization obtained by him from the authority.⁴³⁸ As seen in Chapter III, the law allows the purchase and consumption of liquor on a prescription to ease an ailment,⁴³⁹ chapter IV also contains provisions of grant of licenses and permits. It allows the acquirement of 'permit' on the basis of the prescription to persons made by a Registered Medical Practitioner.⁴⁴⁰ The law grants permission of import of liquor by armed forces for purchase of liquor from Canteen Stores Depot (India), for sale and consumption in their messes and canteens.⁴⁴¹

With 'prohibition' being the main focus of the Act, one might find the existence of such dispensation segment baffling. One might even question the true intent of the law makers as the existence of such segment can be assumed as an aperture, the making of the failure of the law. However, this section had been reasoned to accommodate certain needs for certain section of the people.

F) Cancellation and suspension of licences and permits: Licences and permits have been granted on a contractual nature requiring the fulfilment of certain provisions. If the provisions go unfulfilled by the licensee, the granting authority can cause cancellation of permits and licences on grounds such as –

- i. non-payment of duty or fee by the holder;
- ii. on breach of any of the terms and conditions of the licence or permit by the holder;
- iii. if the holder is convicted for an Offence punishable under the Act, the Mizoram Excise Act in force or the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substance Act, 1985;
- iv. if the licence or permit has been obtained through wilful misrepresentation or fraud.⁴⁴²

⁴³⁸ Ibid., section 28 of the MLTP Act, 1995.

⁴³⁹ Ibid., section 7(b) of the MLTP Act, 1995.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid., section 27, 31 & 32(1) of the MLTP Act 1995. Section 27 makes a repetition contents similar to section 7(b) of the Act.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid., section 30

⁴⁴² Ibid., section 33.

Breach of licence or permit agreement also resulted in cancellation or suspension of licence, permit or authorization granted to him, punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three months or with a fine extendable to Rs. 500/- or with both unless it is proved that all due and reasonable precautions was exercised by him to prevent such a breach.⁴⁴³

G) Prevention, detection, investigation, prosecution and trial of offences: The enforcement details of the act had been mentioned in chapter V of the Principal Act. The law grants the power of entry search, seizure and arrest to any Excise or Police Officer not below the rank of Sub-Inspector.⁴⁴⁴ This definite ceiling on authority made by the Principal act was changed through the 1999 Amendment. It caused the Government to be the prescribing authority to decide who among the Excise or Police will perform the entry search, seizure and arrest function. The act grants the authorities the power to – a) enter any building, vessel or place and conduct search; and in case of resistance, break open any door and remove any other obstacle to such entry; (b) seize liquor, material, utensil, implement, or apparatus and any document or apparatus, or other articles which may furnish evidence of the commission of the offence and (c) detain, search and arrest any person whom he has reason to believe to have committed an offence against this act relating to liquor, material, implement or apparatus.

If an officer has reason to believe that a search warrant cannot be obtained without affording opportunity for the concealment of evidence or facilitate the escape of an offender, he may after recording the grounds of his belief, enter and search such buildings, vessel or place at any time by day or night. Officers of Excise and Police Departments also had also been empowered to seize and make arrests - a) in any public place or in transit any liquor, material utensils, implement or apparatus used for offence under the act and b) detain, search and arrest any person whom he has reason to believe to have committed an offence under the Act.⁴⁴⁵

⁴⁴³ Ibid., section 36.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid., section 50.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid., section 51.

The act also bounds officers of the Government, members of Village Council, Village Defence Party to give immediate information to the nearest Excise or Police Station of any offence or intention or preparation to commit any offence under the Act.⁴⁴⁶ The law also bounds landlords who own or occupy any land or building of any unlawful manufacture of any liquor or any owner of a vessel or vehicle in which liquor is manufactured or carried to give notice of the same to the Excise or Police Officer after the same have come to his knowledge.⁴⁴⁷ The law also requires any officer making arrest or seizure shall within twenty-four hours of such seizure to his immediate official superior and produce the arrested person before a magistrate. The time taken for the journey from the place of seizure or arrest to the Court is however, not counted.⁴⁴⁸

As can be seen, the act mobilises not only the official enforcing agencies but also the civil society in the enforcement of the law. It grants wide power to the enforcing agencies which may be plainly labelled as extremely intrusive with the intent to further negate and marginalize poverty stricken illicit liquor sellers. The law criminalizes both sellers and drinkers and reacts as harshly as befitting other crime heads such as robbery, criminal conspiracy, sedition, bribery and more.⁴⁴⁹ Most of these crimes do not have additional fines, but the special state laws; the MLTP, 1995 and the MLPC, 2014 Acts both levy fines and imprisonments.

G. The Prohibition Council & District Prohibition Committee: The act as written in chapter VI establishes a Prohibition Council at the State level and District Prohibition Committee for a District consisting of official and non-official residents of the state as prescribed by the Government and also by notification.⁴⁵⁰ The Prohibition Council and the Committee exercise jurisdiction over the area for which it is constituted and the Council and all the Committees cooperate with one another in the discharge of their duties.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid., section 55.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid., section 56.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid., section 57.

⁴⁴⁹ The First Schedule, Classification of Offences. Retrieved from <http://www.lawsindia.com/LawForCommon/THE%20FIRST%20SCHEDULE1.htm>

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid., section 59 (1).

G. i) Composition: The Council and the Committee is composed of a Chairman; a Vice Chairman and a Secretary with any number of members not ordinarily exceeding ten. As a general procedure, the Secretary, Excise Department shall be a Member Secretary of the Council and the Commissioner of Prohibition as one of the members. In a district, the Superintendent of Prohibition in-charge of a district is one of the members of the Prohibition Committee. The term of the council and the Committee is two years which may be extended for any longer period as deemed necessary by the State Government.

G. ii) Functions: The Prohibition Council and the Prohibition Committee function as an Advisory Body to the Government in the implementation of the Total Prohibition act in Mizoram. The Prohibition Council and the Committee have an in-depth study on the progress or otherwise of the introduction of total prohibition within their respective areas. They also have an in-depth study of the repercussion of the introduction of total prohibition and give reports and suggestions to the State Government for the effective implementation of the act. Both the Prohibition Council and the Prohibition Committees hold a meeting at least once in three months to make assessment of the situation and the problems of unauthorized manufacture, possession, sale and consumption of liquor including bootlegging and drunkenness. The Prohibition Committee submit its reports to the Prohibition Council and the Council after examining the reports of the Prohibition Committees, submit the reports to the Government for further action as it sees fit and proper. The prohibition Committee function in subordination to the Prohibition Council and the Council have the powers to direct the Committee and assign any duties aforesaid as it may consider necessary.⁴⁵¹

⁴⁵¹ Govt. of Mizoram. (2008). *The Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1995 (with Amendments) The Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Rules, 1996 The Mizoram Excise & Narcotics (Wine) Rules, 2008*. Mizoram Excise & Narcotics Department: Aizawl. pp. 52-53. Retrieved from https://excise.mizoram.gov.in/uploads/attachments/a574872c0783fe21e367de349a45c341/MLTP_Act_1995_Rules_1996_and_Wine_Rules_2008_and_amendment.pdf .

H) Miscellaneous: The concluding chapter of the act, chapter VI also consist of the miscellaneous points which highlights components for the efficient enforcement of the prohibiting law such as the establishment of Departmental Store for the stock of Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) and beer and for issue of liquor for the Departmental Store.⁴⁵² The law also makes a provision for the payment of rewards to any person instrumental for the arrest and seizure under the provisions of the act.⁴⁵³ It also empowers the Government to suspend all or any provisions of the act which will result in change of prohibition policy of the Government.⁴⁵⁴ It also grants the Government power to make rules on various matters such as regulating the duties and powers particularly pertaining to delegatory powers of the Commissioner and any other Officers subordinate to him; regulate the consumption of liquor of a permit holder and more.⁴⁵⁵

The act further provides privilege to the Government on complaints made against it in exercise of the Act. It bars Civil Courts to try suits filed against the Government, except with the previous sanction of the Government. No magistrate is to take cognizance of any charge made against any Excise or Police Officer or any charge made against another person unless the suit is instituted within one month after the date of the act complained of.⁴⁵⁶ Accusation of offence against prohibition officers in discharge of their duties, no courts take cognizance of offence, except with the previous sanction of the Government under section 197 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.⁴⁵⁷

On seeing the title of the Act, viz., the Mizoram Total Prohibition Act 1995, one might expect a 'total' prohibition, an act that would prohibit the entire flow of liquor as that had been the demand of the Church and it followings. Framers of the act accommodated quite more than expected, thus, the most criticized part of the act remains sections containing various exemptions made for acquirement of permits and licenses by categories as mentioned under section 29, 30, 32 and consumption of

⁴⁵² The MLTP Act 1995, op.cit. section 61.

⁴⁵³ Ibid., section 62.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid., section 69.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid., section 70.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid., section 66 (1).

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid., section 66 (2).

liquor on prescription under section 7(b). The intention of Congress ministry remains clear regarding the issue and does not come as a surprise for they have stood their ground to deconstruct the narrative of ‘sin associated with liquor’. Besides these exempting sections, the 2007 amendment made by the MNF ministry, paved the way for the establishment of grape and guava winery at Champhai and Hnahlan villages with the intent to uplift the burden of local farmers. Under section 2 of the MLTP Act, formulation of the Mizoram Excise & Narcotics (Wine) Rules 2008 led to grant of Winery licenses to the Champhai Grape Growers Society, Hnahlan Grape Growers Society that very year. In the year 2010 Winery license was further granted to Bluí Gem Winery, Sesawng and R.K. Winery, Chite.⁴⁵⁸

The 2011 amendment further allowed making of apple, ginger, passion fruit, peach and pear wines. Thus, progression of the principal law can be said to be gravitating towards legalization of liquor given time. The MLTP Act had its design flaws, amendments made were functional in nature which came to be amended over time, upon assessment of its performance, came the unravelling of its successes and failure over the course of 17 years of its enforcement. However, the failure came to be more apparent and its eventual replacement in 2014.

B. On Regulated Sale

The Government took a bold step in 2014 with the introduction of Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition & Control) Bill with ardent request from the then Chief Minister Lal Thanhawla for all to promote a tolerant attitude to people habituated to drinking. An experiment with the adoption of a quasi-liberal approach to the drink, with commitment to repealing the sale law if it did not work for the people. The sudden introduction and passing of the Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition & Control) Bill sent a shock wave throughout the state. However, the bold move of the Government would be celebrated by the minority drinking population despite vehement criticism from

⁴⁵⁸ Govt. of Mizoram. (2008). *The Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1995 (with Amendments) The Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Rules, 1996 The Mizoram Excise & Narcotics (Wine) Rules, 2008*. Mizoram Excise & Narcotics Department: Aizawl. p. 2. Retrieved from https://excise.mizoram.gov.in/uploads/attachments/a574872c0783fe21e367de349a45c341_Retrieved_from_Retrieved/MLTP_Act_1995_Rules_1996_and_Wine_Rules_2008_and_amendment.pdf.

civil society at large. The new law consisting of 10 chapters aimed to put a tight rein on consumption of liquor by limiting its purchase rationed by the permit. The act again excludes enforcement in three autonomous districts: Lai, Mara and Chakma Autonomous District Councils. It claims to ‘prohibit and control’ the production, manufacture, possession, transport, export, purchase, sale and consumption of intoxicating liquor and to provide for the imposition of excise duty in the state of Mizoram. The new law was the apparent response to the recommendation of State Prohibition Council for the formulation of a ‘better and a more successful law’ according to the then Home Minister, R. Lalzirlaina.⁴⁵⁹ The commencement of the act automatically repealed the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1995 and its corresponding Rules, 1996. The components of the legalizing law can be mentioned as under⁴⁶⁰:

A. Licensing and Manufacture: The MLPC Act 2014 granted licensing rights to people under licensing components of the act mentioned in chapter II. Licensing rights are granted on sanction by the Commissioner, on payment of prescribed fees licences are issued for the establishment of - distilleries, breweries, wineries, bottling plants and bonded warehouse for liquor.⁴⁶¹ The most objected and questioned section of the act may be identified in this chapter consisting of the portion which allowed the issue of license for retail sale of liquor⁴⁶² and the issue of licence for bar.⁴⁶³ However, the law also contains a failsafe option of discontinuing any distillery, brewery, winery, bottling plant, bonded warehouse, retail shop, or bar so established under the law.⁴⁶⁴ The Government made possession of liquor card available on the payment of Rs. 300/-

⁴⁵⁹ Assembly Debates Proceedings. Seventh Mizoram Legislative Assembly. Third Sitting. Dated 10/7/2014

⁴⁶⁰ For more details refer to The Mizoram Gazette. (22/7/2014). *The Mizoram Liquor Prohibition & Control Act, 2014*. Aizawl: Authority

⁴⁶¹ See section 3 (1) to (5) in in The Mizoram Gazette. (22/7/2014). *The Mizoram Liquor Prohibition & Control Act, 2014*. Aizawl: Authority

⁴⁶² Ibid., section 3 (6).

⁴⁶³ Ibid., Section 3 (7).

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid., section 3 (8).

and a renewal fee of Rs. 300/- as well. The fee required for the procurement of liquor cards had been Rs. 500/- prior to the 29th Feb, 2016.⁴⁶⁵

B. Possession: The grant of licences for the sale of liquor will require the need for storage on the part of Government and the private retailers. Storage of liquor require the grant of licence, permit or pass granted by the Commissioner or any other officer authorized by the Commissioner as stipulated in Chapter II.⁴⁶⁶ The law limits possession of liquor⁴⁶⁷ as prescribed by the Government. It permitted only lawful possession and purchase for only bona fide private consumption and not for sale.

The law further limits a person licenced to manufacture, possess or sell any intoxicating liquor not have in his possession at any place other than that authorized by his licence, permit or pass, any quantity of any intoxicating liquor in excess of such quantity as the Government has declared to be the limit of a retail sale, except under a permit granted by the Commissioner in this behalf

The law also allows the Commissioner to declare dry days⁴⁶⁸ and the District Magistrate to issue order of closure of shops on circumstances like the occurrence of riot or unlawful assembly in the vicinity.⁴⁶⁹

C. Import, Export and Transport: The law through chapter III, permits movement of liquor; the export, import and transport with the authorisation of the Commissioner or any other competent authority and on payment of fees or duty⁴⁷⁰ on the issue of a pass.⁴⁷¹

D. Licences, Permits and Passes: The grant of licence permits or passes ushers both granter and grantee into an agreement for the stipulated period of licence tenure.

⁴⁶⁵ No. G. 20011/1/2014-EXC. (29th Feb. 2016). Excise & Narcotics Department. Aizawl: Gov.t of Mizoram.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid., section 4, section 5 also necessitates the need to pay duties and fees for the removal of intoxicating liquor from any distilleries, breweries, wineries, bottling plants and bonded warehouse to appropriate authority.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid. section 8.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid., section 11

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., section 12

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid., section 13 (1 to 3)

⁴⁷¹ Ibid., 14 (1).

Licences, permits or passes under the act are granted for a period of one year commencing from the 1st April to 31st March⁴⁷² on the fulfilment of certain conditions.⁴⁷³ The grant of licence, permit and pass requires the fulfilment of agreement on the part of licensee which otherwise lead to cancellation or suspension of licence, permit and pass. The Rules 2014 stipulated the legal age for purchase, possession and consumption of liquor the same as the MLTP Act viz., 21 years and above. The proof of age required therein was one's Voter Identity Card or Birth Certificate.⁴⁷⁴ The limit of sale to a person in one month had also been fixed to six bottles of IMFL (750 ml or its equivalent), ten bottles (650 ml or its equivalent) each of beer and wine purchased only from a licenced vendor.⁴⁷⁵

E. Prevention, Detection and Investigation: The idea pitched to reason the sale law had been the formulation of stringent enforcement of law. Therefore, the law thoroughly empowered enforcement agencies to carry out their work. The modus operandi did not differ much compared to the prohibition law. In fact it continued to oscillate more towards the same draconian nature. It will not be wrong to assume that the sale law rendered more power to enforcing agency than the previous law. Chapter VII grants authority the power to search, inspect at any time be it day or night any licenced manufacturer carries on the manufacture of, or bottling, or stores any intoxicating liquor; any place in which any intoxicating liquor is sold or kept for sale by any licenced person; examine the accounts, registers, passes and other documents prescribed by the Government by rules; examine, test, measure or weigh materials, stills, utensils, implements, apparatus or intoxicating liquor found in any such place as aforesaid; seize any intoxicating liquor, materials, stills, utensils, implements together with any accounts, registers, passes and other documents and examine or test

⁴⁷² *The Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition and Control) Rules, 2014*. (17th November, 2014). In *The Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition and Control) Act, 2014*.

⁴⁷³Op. cit. Chapter IV, section 15 (a to b) such as- a) payment of such fees fixed by the Government may, b) subject to such restrictions and on such conditions as may be imposed by rules, and c) in such form and contain such particulars as the rules may prescribe.

⁴⁷⁴ The Mizoram Gazette. (2014). *The Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition and Control) Rules, 2014*. (17th November, 2014). In *The Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition and Control) Act, 2014 (ActNo. 8 od 2014)*. Government of Mizoram. Aizawl. p. 79. Retrieved from <https://police.mizoram.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/MLPC-Act-2014-Rules-2014.pdf>.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 79

and seize any measures, weights or testing instruments, found in any such place as aforesaid, which he has reason to believe to be false.⁴⁷⁶

Enforcing agencies are further granted power of entry, search, seizure and arrest under any time of day or night.⁴⁷⁷ The law further grants them power to seize and arrest anyone in public places without warrant.⁴⁷⁸ Any first-class Judicial Magistrate can try offences under the act⁴⁷⁹ and issue warrant of arrest for search,⁴⁸⁰ whether by day or by night, any buildings, vehicle, vessels or places in which he has reason to believe that any liquor, material, utensil, implement, documents or apparatus, in respect of which an offence punishable under this act has been committed, is kept or concealed.

F. Mobilization of stakeholders: The Act mobilizes various stakeholders of society, making enforcement of the law an inclusive affair as read in chapter VII. The law bounds every officer of the Government, every member of a Village/Local Council, and Village Defence Party to give immediate information to the nearest Excise & Narcotics or Police Station of commission and intension of any offence.⁴⁸¹ It also allows arrest of any person who commits a non-bailable offence without unnecessary delay by a private person or group of persons, such person arrested should be handed over to the nearest authority.⁴⁸² It further expects every person who owns or occupies any land or building to furnish information of any unlawful manufacture of any liquor to the Excise & Narcotics officer or Police officer immediately after the same had come to his knowledge.⁴⁸³

G. Prohibition and control: The makers of the law believed the act will prohibit 'any unlawful means' and 'control any offences' based on the prohibition laws stipulated in chapter VIII of the Act. Prohibition and penal provisions remain mostly similar with the MLTP Act 1995. It prohibits without licence, permit or pass to - transport, import,

⁴⁷⁶ Op.cit. section 29 or see Appendix XI.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid., section 30.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid., section 31.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid., section 32.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid., section 33.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid., section 35.

⁴⁸² Ibid., section 36

⁴⁸³ Ibid., section 37. For more see Appendix. XII.

export, or possess liquor; sell or buy liquor; manufacture liquor; use or keep for use any material, utensil, implement or apparatus whatsoever for manufacture of liquor; and construct any distillery, brewery, winery, bottling plant and bonded warehouse. It prohibits the consumption of liquor except on a permit granted under the provisions of this Act the rules, consumption in public place, to make nuisance under the influence of liquor to drive any motor vehicle while under the influence of liquor.⁴⁸⁴ It further stipulates quite a few other prohibitions like the illegal possession of liquor,⁴⁸⁵ to obtaining liquor from illicit sellers,⁴⁸⁶ employing under aged children⁴⁸⁷ and more.

Legislators relied on this segment of prohibition to control the peoples conduct and to subdue the ‘anticipated negativity attached to the Act’. The lawful conduct of affairs through permits granted by the Government was encouraged as opposed to what had been illegally so done under prohibition.⁴⁸⁸

H. Penalties: The act makes stringent punishment for contravention of provisions of the Act. The consequences of contravening the law makes a person liable to various punishments as mentioned in chapter VIII. Punishments under this law come in the form of imprisonment, fines and community services. On conviction of offences, imprisonment are awarded for periods stretching from a minimum of five days to a maximum of five years. Imprisonment goes along with imposition of fines stretching to a minimum of Rs.100/- maximum of Rs.10,000/-. Like the law penalizes anyone without licence, permit or pass transport, import, export, or possess liquor, sell or buy liquor, manufacture liquor, use or keep for use any material, utensil, implement or apparatus whatsoever for manufacture of liquor; and construct any distillery, brewery, winery, bottling plant and bonded warehouse on conviction, be punished with imprisonment for a term of not less than six months which may extend to five years and also with fine of not less than Rs. 5000/- which may extend to Rs. 10,000/-.⁴⁸⁹

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid., section 42.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid., section 44.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid., section 50.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid., section 56.

⁴⁸⁸ For more see Appendix. XIII.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid., section 42.

Under the MLPC Act 2014, consumption of liquor without permit, consume liquor in public place, making nuisance under the influence of liquor and driving under influence of liquor on conviction can lead to imprisonment for a term of not less than one month which may extend to two years or with fine of not less than Rs. 1000/- which may extend to Rs. 5000/-, or with both.⁴⁹⁰ They shall also be made liable to do social work for not more than five working days under the supervision of the Excise & Narcotics officer or Police officer. If the convict absconds or violates the terms and conditions passed by the trial court, he shall be liable to the prescription of further sentences like cancellation of permit.

The law had also made sale of spurious liquor is punishable with imprisonment of not less than three months which may extend to three years and fine of not less than Rs. 5000/- which may extend to Rs. 10,000/-.⁴⁹¹ There had been a relaxation on punishment clause for failure to produce licence, permit or pass on demand by authority. Anyone unable to produce permit will be liable to a fine of not less than five (500) hundred rupees which may extend to Rs. 1000/-.⁴⁹² While the MLTP Act 1995 for the same conviction awarded six months imprisonment or a fine of then Rs. 10,000/- or both.⁴⁹³

The Rule stipulates the proof of liquor influence if a person's alcohol content level is 30 mg or above 100 ml through the use of Breathalyser.⁴⁹⁴ Penalties for various contraventions of provisions under the act had been well meditated compared to the Mizoram Excise Law. It signifies the well preparedness on the part of legislators who advanced the act, arming the law with penalties against every possible contravention with hope of maintaining control over the drinking population.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid., section 43

⁴⁹¹ Ibid., section 47.

⁴⁹² Ibid., section 60

⁴⁹³ For more penal provisions, refer to The Mizoram Gazette. (22/7/2014). *The Mizoram Liquor Prohibition & Control Act, 2014*. Aizawl: Authority or Appendix XIV.

⁴⁹⁴ The Mizoram Gazette. (2014). *The Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition and Control) Rules, 2014* in The Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition and Control) Act, 2014 (ActNo. 8 of 2014). Government of Mizoram. Aizawl. P. 82. Retrieved from <https://police.mizoram.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/MLPC-Act-2014-Rules-2014.pdf>.

I. Establishment: The law stipulates (i) the administration of the provision of the Act and the rules generally remain under the charge of the Commissioner and (ii) the administration of the provision of the act and the rules and the collection of excise revenue within a district remain under the charge of the Superintendent of Excise & Narcotics, or any officer empowered on this behalf.⁴⁹⁵

J. The State Prohibition Council and the District Prohibition Committee: The act empowers the Government to constitute the State Prohibition Council and the District Prohibition Committee to look into the success of the implementation of the Act. The State Council and the District Committee meets at least twice a year and observe procedure in regard to the transaction of its business as may be prescribed by the State Government. The constitution of the both Council and Committee are -

- i. Minister of Excise and Narcotics, as Chairman of the State Prohibition Council and the Deputy Commissioner of a district who shall be the Chairman of the District Prohibition Committee;
- ii. Other official or non-official members representing such interests as may be prescribed by the State Government.⁴⁹⁶

K. Power of the Government to make rules: The act further empowers the Government to make rules for the purpose of carrying out the Act. It has been stipulated under chapter X of the act which allows: the Government to make notifications, rules such as regulating the import, export, transport, sale, purchase, possession, or consumption of any intoxicating liquor; regulating the periods for which licences, permits or passes for the wholesale or retail vend of any intoxicating liquor may be granted, and the number of such licences, permits or passes which may be granted for any local area and particulars to be contained in the licences, permit or passes granted under the Act; for prohibiting the grant of licences, permits or passes for the retail sale of any intoxicating liquor at any place or within any local area⁴⁹⁷ and more.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid., section 70

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid., section 81.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid., section 73.

The Commissioner declared Sundays and National Holidays as dry days apart from other days so declared as dry days.⁴⁹⁸ Violation of the act and rules can lead any licensee, tenderer, bidder, manufacturer or supplier (whose products are sold in Mizoram) to be ‘blacklisted’ by the Commissioner and liable to be barred from applying or holding any excise licence within Mizoram for such period not exceeding five years. Name of the blacklisted person would be circulated by the Government to Excise authorities of neighbouring States.⁴⁹⁹

A person convicted of having transported, imported, export, or possess liquor, sell or buy liquor, manufacture liquor, consume liquor without permit in public and caused a scene intoxicated and who is ordered to do social work (community service) shall perform social work which may include sweeping and cleaning public places, market areas, public toilets, hospital premises, court premises, public drains, rendering help in orphanages, old age homes etc. under the supervision of Excise & Narcotics or Police personnel detailed by the Officer-in-Charge of an Excise & Narcotic Station or of a Police Station respectively. The detailed performance record is maintained by the said Officer and within one week of performance of work, compliance report is submitted by the said Officer to the court which passes the conviction order.⁵⁰⁰ This social work punishment clause formulated was expected to hit the heart of any convict and was celebrated by the legislators at the time of the assembly debate. The Rule stipulates the proof of liquor influence if a person’s alcohol content level is 30 mg or above 100 ml through the use of Breathalyser.⁵⁰¹ Penalties for various contraventions of provisions under the Act had been well meditated compared to the Mizoram Excise Act, 1973.

Every rule made under both acts is laid before the Legislative Assembly of Mizoram which makes necessary modification to the rules or decides if rules should

⁴⁹⁸ The Mizoram Gazette. (2014). *The Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition and Control) Rules, 2014* in *The Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition and Control) Act, 2014 (ActNo. 8 of 2014)*. Government of Mizoram. Aizawl. p. 83. Retrieved from <https://police.mizoram.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/MLPC-Act-2014-Rules-2014.pdf>.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 83

⁵⁰⁰ The Mizoram Gazette. (2014). *The Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition and Control) Rules, 2014* in *The Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition and Control) Act, 2014 (Act No. 8 of 2014)*. Government of Mizoram. Aizawl. p. 84. Retrieved from <https://police.mizoram.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/MLPC-Act-2014-Rules-2014.pdf>.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid. p. 82.

not be made. The apprehension associated to introducing a legalizing law amidst a conservative crowd had been rationalized with the introduction of a stringent law which prohibits and controls legalization. On analysis of the two laws, both prohibiting and legalization laws, seem not to fall far away from their basic framework; each containing lengthy provisions of prohibition and control, whereas, the major difference being that the former act allows very limited categories to acquire liquor and the former permits a wider category to individuals aged above 21 years and above. The effort to reshape the Mizo way of thinking on the subject of liquor was projected to be achieved through the Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition & Control) Act of 2014.

C. A Necessary Evil?

The perception on the subject continues to baffle people. One has to ponder if ‘the existence of liquor truly a necessary evil that society cannot entirely rid of thus necessitating the need to regulate and control?’ as mentioned by Congress Legislator, R. Romawia.⁵⁰² The demand for liquor in society had always been present despite the many attempts of state and society to break the chain of supply and demand. A look into the past had seen the failure of the MLTP Act and then the resultant birth of MLPC Act. The effects of both laws have been studied by Study Groups constituted by the Government of Mizoram. Under legal sale of liquor by the Government the first time around in 1984 through the Mizoram Excise Rules 1983 there had been an opening of two wholesale outlet viz., RTP and the Eastern Syndicate, ten wine shops, four bar in Aizawl and four wine shops in Lungei.⁵⁰³

While J. V. Hluna mentioned the grant of 26 total permits for the sale of liquor in 1976 under the Excise Act 1973. Under prohibition, the MLTP Study Group⁵⁰⁴ reported the grant of liquor licences to 12 Security Forces from various districts of

⁵⁰² Romawia, R. Assembly Debates Proceedings on The Mizoram Excise Bill 1992. Mizoram Legislative Assembly. Second Legislative Assembly. Tenth Sitting. Dated: 17/3/1992.

⁵⁰³ Government of Mizoram. (2012). Report of the Study Group of Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act1995. Excise and Narcotics Department: Aizawl. p. 1. Retrieved from https://excise.mizoram.gov.in/uploads/attachments/74618b1c7ab4271f50c0c1e8f16d07e4/Study_Group_of_MLTP_Act_1995_Report_full.pdf

⁵⁰⁴ The Study Group of MLTP Act1995 was constituted by the Government on the 24th January 2011.

Aizawl, Lunglei, Serchhip and Kolasib, 178 prescribed permits by a registered Medical Practitioner(s), 2231 Ex-servicemen. Whereas, under the MLPC Act, 2014⁵⁰⁵ there had been two licence holders for government lodging and hotel, viz., Aijal Club and Hotel Ritz both located in Aizawl district. There had been three bonded warehouse licensee namely, SS. Enterprise Bonded Warehouse, RTP Bonded Warehouse and Rafael Enterprise all located in Aizawl district. There had also been a total of 54 retail vending of liquor licensee located in various districts of the state – thirty (30) in Aizawl, six in Lunglei, four in Champhai, seven in Kolasib, four in Serchhip and three located in Mamit district. There were also a total of 35190 valid permit holders for consumption of liquor (in 2018-2019) under the MLPC Act 2014.⁵⁰⁶ It can be seen that the regulated liquor sale had provided an individual the opportunity to exercise one's freedom to drink legally as one would prefer as opposed to illegally drinking illicit liquor. Under total prohibition, the law had been so formulated to accommodate the needs of the minority thus, leading to the grant of licence under exemptions.

The question remains, under prohibition from where does the habitual drinker not included in the category get his drink from? The answer to this question is quite simple; the black-market, which has formed a life of its own. The sale of some remain unrevealing particularly of the minimal sale of IMFL at an exorbitant rate whereas the other side continue to pulsate with life devoid of its inconspicuous nature with sale of illicit liquor called *local zu* (local liquor) concentrated in the peripheral areas of the land. One of the findings of the MLTP Study Group had been that the act failed to achieve its objective of ending the flow of liquor and its related social harms.⁵⁰⁷ They had also found that the apparent failure had been acknowledged by most NGOs and suggested need for the Government to be more determined to successfully enforce the law.⁵⁰⁸ The major conclusion of the Study Group had been that liquor continues to proliferate despite prohibition because of high and continued 'demand' for consumption. Here some may pose a question, (for those that demand the presence of

⁵⁰⁵ Data sourced from the Excise & Narcotics Department, Government of Mizoram, licences have granted for a duration of one year from 2018-2019.

⁵⁰⁶ Excise and Narcotics Department, Government of Mizoram.

⁵⁰⁷ Government of Mizoram. (2012), op. cit. p.19.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid., p.20.

liquor) should they be forced into their liberty from addiction? The path to forced sobriety as advocated by the Church and its followings did not seem to work in their favour, nor did it solve the problem of eradicating social problems. It certainly proved true the difficulty in legislating over one's morality despite study by Mizoram University having proved that 'dependency on liquor causes depression, anxiety and stress on addicts and their family'.⁵⁰⁹

As the enforcement of law had been the primary reason for the apparent failure of prohibition, one must also keep in mind, the act regarding enforcement had mobilised not only the nodal department viz., the Excise & Narcotics Department but also the Police, social organizations and the individuals to bring an end justice to the perceived liquor pandemic. Thus, when such is said, one can equate that it reflected poorly on all enforcing agencies besides the Excise and Police Departments, Social Organizations and individuals in their capacity as landlords and tenants of building or estate, vessel or vehicle had been a party to the enforcement agency under section 55 and 56 of the MLTP Act.

The response of Government to the prohibition failure with controlled legalization Act was also assessed by the MLPC Study Group constituted by the Government on the 10th March 2017. The Study Group, a branch of the Review and Evaluation Committee of the MLPC Act found that the revenue profit generated by the Government from liquor was an estimate of Rs. 23.52 crore,⁵¹⁰ Rs. 4.91⁵¹¹ crore received from excise duty and Rs. 12.45⁵¹² crore from value added tax. The study group also revealed that apart from drinkers whose consumer surplus was estimated as Rs. 28.19⁵¹³ crore, only the government, liquor vendors and commercial sex workers benefitted from liquor.⁵¹⁴ The study group further revealed the social benefit: cost ratio

⁵⁰⁹ Varte, C. L., Zothanmawia, C., & VAnlalruata, A. (2012). *A Study of the Impact of Alcohol on the Mizo. A Research Report* submitted to "The Study Group" of MLTP Act, 1995.

⁵¹⁰ Government of Mizoram. (2018). Report of the Study Group of Mizoram Liquor Prohibition & Control Act, 2014. Aizawl. p. 27.

⁵¹¹ Ibid., p. 29.

⁵¹² Ibid., p. 28.

⁵¹³ Ibid., p. 18

⁵¹⁴ Inc, Vas. (2018, July 31). Study Group Analyses Liquor related issues in Mizoram. The Hills Times. Retrieved from <https://www.thehillstimes.in/regional/study-group-analyses-liquor-related-issues-in-mizoram/>

to be 1:2.85⁵¹⁵ which implies the profit or benefit earned ratio from liquor and the revenue loss ratio incurred from purchase of liquor is 1:2.85.⁵¹⁶ It would be safe to sum up that the various findings of the Study Group did not find any positive highlights of the presence of liquor on the society and economy. This had also been the case of the Study Group of the MLTP in its assessment of the effects of alcohol on health, its influence on youth, women and its impact on the Mizo as a whole. But the issue continues to be discussed and debated till date as liquor, as a commodity, continue to be high on demand. Therefore, to some, the issue of liquor may present itself as a necessary evil that require regulation, as it seem to penetrate the very fabric of society despite prohibition of the ‘total’ kind or not.

D. The General Perception

The General perception of stakeholders on liquor politics had been presented in the previous chapter, their perception of other liquor related issues will be presented from the interpretation of research questionnaire responses taken from 240 respondents from three districts namely, Aizawl, Mamit and Kolasib districts.

i) Perception of Liquor

In order to understand the general perception of people about liquor, respondents were asked certain questions which will help to throw light on their attitude towards liquor. It has been highlighted in chapter III, the major perception of respondents is the continued belief that drinking was morally unacceptable. To further explore the general perception of the people representing various walks of life, various demographics will be presented below through their responses to the research questions.

⁵¹⁵ Government of Mizoram. (2018). Report of the Study Group of Mizoram Liquor Prohibition & Control Act, 2014. Aizawl. p. 46.

⁵¹⁶ Inc, Vas. (2018, July 31). Study Group Analyses Liquor related issues in Mizoram. The Hills Times. Retrieved from <https://www.thehillstimes.in/regional/study-group-analyses-liquor-related-issues-in-mizoram/>

Table: 2.8. Do you agree with the statement ‘*Mizos like to drink*’? (Q 38 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
54 (56.3%)	27 (28.1%)	15 (15.6%)	67 (46.5%)	57 (39.6%)	20 (13.9%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

When respondents were asked whether they agree with the general observation ‘*Mizos like to drink*’, it was found that majority of both respondents (urban and rural) agreed to the statement, where rural respondents agree more to it than the urban respondents as seen in the table above. A total majority of 121 (50%) respondents agreed with the statement, while 84 (35%) disagreed to it and 35 (15%) presented no opinion. This major agreement is indicative of the vast presence of liquor in the Mizo society and also acknowledges the large presence of people habituated to drinking.

Table: 2.9. Are you against the consumption of liquor? (Q 10 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
54 (56%)	29 (30.2%)	13 (13.5%)	108 (75.0%)	27 (18.8%)	9 (6.3%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

Respondents were asked if they were against the consumption of liquor. It was observed that majority of people (both rural and urban) continue to be against the consumption of liquor. Respondents from rural areas can be considered more conservative in their attitude towards liquor as 108 (75%) were against consumption of liquor as seen in the table above. A total of 162 (67.6%) respondents were against liquor consumption, 56 (23.3%) were not and 22 (9.1%) presented no opinion. As mentioned in chapter III, majority of respondents supported total abstinence, they even stood against consumption of beer and wine. Thus, making clear the negative inclination of liquor as seen by society.

Table: 1.10. Male Response Analysis based on Gender (Q10 of research question)

Male Respondents (109)	Frequency	Percent
1.00	61	56.0
2.00	36	33.0
Valid 3.00	12	11.0
Total	109	100.0

Source: SPSS Response Analysis. There are 109 male respondents and response frequencies are coded as 1 = Agree, 2 = Do Not Agree and 3 = No Opinion. Male (coded as 1) Responses.

Table 1.11. Female Response Analysis based on Gender (Q10 of research question)

Women Respondents (131)	Frequency	Percent
1.00	101	77.1
2.00	20	15.3
Valid 3.00	10	7.6
Total	131	100.0

Source: SPSS Response Analysis. There are 131 female respondents and response frequencies are coded as 1 = Agree, 2 = Do Not Agree and 3 = No Opinion. Female (coded as 2)

It can be seen from the table above that from the 240 respondents, majority of women 101 (77.1%) were inclined to dislike consumption thus making majority of 61 (56.0%) male respondents aligned to the thinking of the women majority. The dislike of liquor consumption by most women can be attributed to the fact that they themselves make up a very small portion of the drinking population. They often become victims of domestic violence inflicted under the influence of liquor and other intoxicating substances. It was also observed that excessive drinking on the part of male spouse at times contribute to failed marriages. And those that tend to stick by their alcoholic spouses, think liquor to be one cause of unproductivity, causing

illnesses they need to tend to and its purchase a waste of hard earned money. It has also inflicted deaths of husbands, of fathers and sons thus, naturally leading more women to stand opposed to consumption of liquor.

Table: 1.12. Response Analysis on Age to Research Question 10.

Age Group	17-below (2/240)	18-25 (67/240)	26-35 (54/240)	36-45 (52/240)	46-55 (37/240)	56-65 (17/240)	66-above (11/240)
1 (Agree)	2 (100%)	45 (67.2%)	31 (57.4%)	34 (65.4%)	26 (70.3%)	14 (82.4%)	10 (90.9%)
2 (Disagree)	0	16 (23.9%)	16 (29.6%)	15 (28.8%)	6 (16.2%)	2 (11.8%)	1 (9.1%)
3 (No Opinion)	0	6 (9.0%)	7 (13.0%)	3 (5.8%)	5 (13.5%)	1 (5.9%)	0

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

Opposition to drinking also comes highest from the older generation aged 46 and above, and surprisingly from the younger generation of 18 – 25 years of age. However, one also has to take into account the 29 (30.2%, urban) and 27 (18.8%, rural) respondents who stand on the other side, with different beliefs, perhaps a more liberal approach. The minority respondents who have different inclination towards liquor consists of 36 (33.0%) men and 20 (15.3%) women.

Table 2.10. Is there any drinker in your family? (Q14 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (64/96)			Rural Respondents (70/144)		
Heavy Drinkers	Occasional Drinkers	No Drinkers	Heavy Drinkers	Occasional Drinkers	No Drinkers
10 (10.41%)	54 (56.3%)	32 (33.33%)	17 (11.8%)	53 (36.8%)	74 (51.4%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

When asked if respondents had any liquor consumer in their family, it was found that majority of respondents from both urban and rural areas i.e., 134 (56%) had family members who drank liquor, against 106 (44%) respondents who did not. On

categorizing responses, it had been found that the high percentage of the drinking population is caused by the identification of the ‘occasional drinkers’ from families of both rural and urban respondents. Based on these responses, 72 (37 urban and 35 rural) liquor consumers were randomly selected from the same samples and further interviewed. They represented the voice of half of the 134 (56%) drinking population identified. The details of the interview is further presented in point 5 below. On interviewing the drinking population, it was found that there existed three categories of drinkers; the occasional drinker who drank only on social occasions with close friends, the regular but moderate drinker who was habituated to his daily peg of liquor drink and then the heavy drinker who is very dependent on liquor. Thus, it can be assumed that quite a few of the occasional drinkers categorized by respondents; 54 (56.3%) from the urban and 53 (36.8%) from the rural areas may also belong to the ‘regular but moderate drinker’ category. Also, a respondent’s categorization of a heavy drinker may vary from person to person. Responses clearly shows that Mizoram has quite a high percentage of liquor consumers, thus it continue to be an issue in civil society.

Table: 2.11. Is liquor a source of problem in your family? (Q13 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
64 (66.7%)	22 (22.9%)	10 (10.4%)	97 (67.4%)	40 (27.8%)	7 (4.9%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

When respondents were further asked if liquor is a source of problem in their family, majority of both rural and urban respondents responded yes it was, making it a total of 161 (67.08%), 62 (25.83%) responded no while 17 (7.08%) presented no opinion. This can often translate to ‘personal is political’, as identified by many as a source of problem in the family, the issue of liquor will definitely not garner any social or political support from the majority.

Table: 2.12. Is liquor a factor that causes tension in your community/neighborhood? (Q15 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
59 (61.5%)	18 (18.8%)	19 (19.8%)	119 (82.6%)	18 (12.5%)	7 (4.9%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

On being asked if liquor is a factor that causes tension in their respective community/neighbourhood, 178 (74%) respondents agreed that liquor caused tension while 36 (15%) disagreed and 26 (11%) responded to having no opinion. The case also appears to ring more true in the rural communities. This might also provide a plausible cause to why the majority remain averse to liquor as it is the identified ‘source of problem’.

So when respondents were asked, what their solution would be regarding liquor consumption (question 41 in research questionnaire) it did not come as a surprise when majority respondents 114 (48%) identified ‘total prohibition’ as the solution to liquor consumption, 91 (38%) identified partial prohibition/controlled prohibition as their solution and 35 (15%) identified free sale as their solution.

Table: 2.13. “Liquor should be liberalized, we should learn to co-exist with it” Do you agree or not? (Q16 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
41 (42.7%)	41 (42.7%)	14 (14.6%)	38 (26.4%)	97 (67.4%)	9 (6.3%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

When asked if they agree with the statement “liquor should be liberalized, we should learn to co-exist with it”, the minority 79 (32.9%) agreed to the statement, 138 (57.5%) disagreed while 23 (9.6%) had no opinion on the issue. It can be observed that fear of liberalizing liquor continued to dominate the psyche of majority of the people. They would not like to be presented with the opportunity of making available the drink and learning to adapt to the openness of its presence in the society.

Table: 2.14. Response Analysis on Age to Research Question 16.

Age Group	17- below (2/240)	18-25 (67/240)	26-35 (54/240)	36-45 (52/240)	46-55 (37/240)	56-65 (17/240)	66-above (11/240)
1 (Agree)	1 (50%)	28 (41.8%)	17 (31.5%)	20 (38.5%)	8 (21.6%)	4 (23.5%)	1 (9.1%)
2 (Disagree)	2 (50%)	35 (52.2%)	31 (57.4%)	27 (51.9%)	22 (59.5%)	13 (76.5%)	9 (81.8%)
3 (No Opinion)	0	4 (6.0%)	6 (11.1%)	5 (9.6%)	7 (18.9%)	0	1 (9.1%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

Upon closer analysis on age based responses, it was found that quite a substantial number of youth respondents (excluding response of 17 years and below) aged 18-25 years and adult respondents aged from 36-45 years tend to agree with the need to liberalize and co-exist with liquor. However, this makes it quite clear that the majority of Mizos respondents spanning all ages remain ‘un-open’ to the idea of liberalization of liquor and co-existence still a far-fetched ideal.

Table: 2.15. Do you think that drinking is an ‘art that can be mastered’? (Q18 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
48 (50.0%)	37 (38.5%)	11 (11.5%)	46 (31.9%)	91 (63.2%)	7 (4.9%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

When respondents were asked if they considered drinking an ‘art that can be mastered’? Majority of 128 (53.3%) disagreed, while 94 (39.2 %) respondents think it could be mastered and 18 (7.5%) had no opinion. Rural respondents tended to be more in disagreement to the statement while majority of urban respondents think it possible.

Table: 2.16. Are you aware of the liquor found in the black market in Aizawl, Mizoram? (Q28 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
82 (85.4%)	10 (10.4%)	4 (4.2%)	93 (64.6%)	44 (30.6%)	7 (4.9%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

When asked if respondents were aware of the liquor found in the black market in Aizawl, Mizoram a majority of 175 (72.9%) respondents both from urban and rural areas agreed to knowing its availability, 54 (22.5%) disagreed, while 11 (4.6%) had no opinion on the issue. So despite any liquor law enforced, availability of illicit liquor in the black market is common knowledge. This clearly exhibits the failure of the prohibition law that had been enforced since 1997.

Table: 2.17. Do you think liquor should be prohibited? (Q12 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
54 (56.3%)	26 (27%)	16 (16.7%)	108 (75.0%)	26 (18.1%)	10 (6.9%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

When asked if respondents think if liquor should be prohibited, majority 162 (67.5%) agreed it should be prohibited whereas 52 (21.7%) disagreed and 26 (10.8%) presented no opinion. When majority continue to oppose the idea of consumption, it is natural for stakeholders to have more leanings towards prohibition as seen above. A deduction can also be made that rural respondents seem to exhibit a more conservative approach in matters relating to liquor.

ii) Perception on prohibition

As already mentioned in chapter III, majority of respondents believe that prohibition was the right way to go for a Christian majority state like Mizoram and majority acknowledged the failure of the MLTP Act, 1995 but despite its failure,

majority exhibited happiness in the reinstatement of prohibition in 2019 under the MNF ministry. To further explore people’s perception on the issue, respondents were asked certain questions

Table: 2.18. Do you have any knowledge of the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition (MLTP) Act, 1995? (Q24 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
71 (74.0%)	13 (13.5%)	12 (12.5%)	101 (70.1%)	19 (13.2%)	24 (16.7%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

Respondents were asked if they were aware of the MLTP Act 1995, 172 (71.7%) agreed to having knowledge about the Act, 32 (13.3%) did not and 36 (15%) did not present any opinion on the issue. This exhibited the awareness of respondents on the liquor prohibiting law, thus proving the popularity of liquor issue among the people.

Table: 2.19. Is prohibition good for the Mizo society? (Q26 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
54 (56.3%)	27 (28.1%)	15 (15.6%)	106 (73.6%)	25 (17.4%)	13 (9.0%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

When respondents were asked if they believed prohibition to be good for the Mizo society, majority of respondents 160 (66.7%) agreed it was while 52 (21.7%) disagreed and 28 (11.6%) had no opinion on the issue. This signify people’s belief in the positivity of liquor prohibition for the society. Their perception indicates prohibition as the ideal promoted in the interest of bringing about the greatest good of the greatest number. And to this ideal, is seen subscribed more so by the rural respondents.

Table: 2.20. Do you think prohibitionist policy is an infringement on individual freedom? (Q20 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
43 (44.8%)	35 (36.5%)	18 (18.8%)	30 (20.8%)	92 (63.9%)	22 (15.3%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

When respondents were asked if they thought prohibition was an infringement on individual freedom, it was found that majority of 127 (53%) respondents disagreed that prohibitionist policy is an infringement on individual freedom, while 73 (30%) respondents agreed and 40 (17%) had no opinion regarding. However, as seen in the table above, majority of the urban population agreed that it was an infringement on personal freedom. It can be safe to assume that on the issue of liquor, people have become very complacent with the idea of negative freedom as it is believed to serve happiness of the greatest number.

Table: 2.21. Do you consider prohibitionist policy of Government the solution to many problems in the society? (Q 37 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
34 (35.4%)	48 (50.0%)	14 (14.6%)	56 (38.9%)	62 (43.1%)	26 (18.1%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

When respondents were further asked if they considered prohibitionist policy of Government the solution to many problems in the society, minority of 90 (37%) respondents agreed prohibitionist policy to be a solution to social problems while 110 (46%) disagreed to it and 40 (17%) had no opinion. As seen earlier, people accept the state of ‘un-freedom’ as ‘freedom’ under liquor prohibition, however, there is also an acknowledgement that prohibition does not solve social problems.

Table: 2.22. Does the implementation of prohibition make you feel safer? (Q 22 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
42 (43.8%)	32 (33.3%)	22 (22.9%)	102 (70.8%)	24 (16.7%)	18 (12.5%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

When asked of the general conception if liquor prohibition provides a sense of security, majority of 144 (60%) respondents particularly more so from the rural side considered it a factor while 56 (23.3%) did not agree and 40 (16.7%) had no opinion on the issue. It will not be wrong to assume that the absence of open endorsement of liquor provides people a sense of security which is felt more so by rural respondents.

Table: 2.23. Do you think that prohibition is the solution to solving liquor addiction? (Q5 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
22 (22.9%)	68 (70.8%)	6 (6.3%)	56 (38.9%)	80 (55.5%)	8 (5.6)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

However, when respondents were asked if prohibition is the considered solution to liquor addiction, minority 78 (32.5%) agreed it was whereas, majority 148 (61.7%) disagreed which consisted more from the urban respondents and 14 (5.8%) had no opinion. There is a realization that prohibition does not provide solution to liquor dependency. The presence of liquor demand despite enforcement of prohibition law had caused for a boost in illicit liquor business. It so indicates that prohibition does not actually help reduce demand.

Table: 2.24. Do you think the Government should continue with the prohibition policy? (Q27 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
53 (55.2%)	30 (31.3%)	13 (13.5%)	110 (76.4%)	22 (15.3%)	12 (8.3%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

Again when asked for their opinion on whether they believed the Government should continue with the prohibition policy, majority of 163 (67.9%) responded to agreeing to their want for continued prohibition. It can be seen that prohibition find more support from the rural respondents. However, minority of 52 (21.7%) disagreed and 25 (10.4%) had no opinion. With a better policy alternative to the drink issue not presented nor conceived in the immediate present, majority of the respondents continue to find more agreement with continuing the prohibition policy.

iii) Perception on regulated sale

The failure of prohibition had led Government to resort to regulated/controlled sale which sparked controversy. Certain questions were asked to highlight the perception of the people in this regard. Respondents were asked to indicate their opinion as to what the Mizoram Liquor Prohibition & Control Act 2014 signified to them either a) Freedom of choice or b) A source of various social evil or c) No Opinion (Q 17 of research questionnaire). Majority of 121 (50%) respondents perceived it as one having to exercise the 'freedom of choice', 55 (23%) saw it as 'a source of various social evil' while 64 (27%) refrained from presenting their opinion regarding the issue.

Table: 2.25. Do you hold a Liquor License issued under the MLPC Act? (Q 32 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
7 (7.3%)	84 (87.5%)	5 (5.2%)	5 (3.5%)	138 (95.8%)	1 (.7%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

It was found that very few respondents 12 (5%) actually possessed Liquor License issued under the MLPC Act. Majority of 222 (92.5%) respondents did not have permit and 6 (2.5%) had no opinion regarding. This seem to be a very minor representation of the 35190 (2018-2019) liquor permit holders in the state which formulates only 3.2% of the Mizo population.⁵¹⁷

Table: 2.26. Is making Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) available for people to purchase the solution to fixing the drink problem? (Q19 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
33 (34.4%)	48 (50.0%)	15 (15.6%)	48 (33.3%)	66 (45.8%)	30 (20.8%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

When respondents were asked if the solution to fixing the drink problem lay in making the Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) available for easier purchase majority 114 (47.5%) respondents disagreed while 81 (33.8 %) agreed it would help fix the problem, and 45 (18.8%) respondents had no opinion on the issue. This indicates the disagreement of the majority to the move of the Government to regulated/controlled sale in 2014.

Table: 2.27. What would be your solution to liquor consumption? (Q41 in research questionnaire)

Total Respondents (240)		
Total Prohibition	Regulated sale	No Opinion (%)
112 (47%)	92 (38%)	37 (15%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

⁵¹⁷ Permit holder percentage has been calculated on the basis of 2011 census which places Mizoram population at 1,097,206.

When further probed on what their considered solution to the dilemma of liquor consumption would be given the choice between total prohibition, regulated sale and no opinion, minority of 21 (8.7%) respondents opted for total prohibition, majority 168 (70%) had opted for regulated sale and 51 (21.2%) had no opinion on the issue. This indicates the complexity of the issue, where the data shows acknowledgement of the failure of total prohibition which a substantial percentage opting for a regulated sale. However, perception of respondents in the urban populace seem to be devoid of opinion on the issue.

iv) Perception on civil society

Perception of the people regarding civil society on liquor is presented through the responses of research questionnaire. The perception of the people reveal quite a few insight to the issue as presented below:

Table: 2.28. Do you believe that the community based NGOs are doing good work in helping the government implement prohibitionist policy? (Q 33 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
7 (7.3%)	84 (87.5%)	5 (5.2%)	115 (79.9%)	13 (9.0%)	16 (11.1%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

When respondents were asked if they believe that the community based NGOs are doing good work in helping the government implement prohibitionist policy 185 (77%) agreed they did good work helping the Government enforce prohibitionist law. However, 25 (10%) did not believe they did good work, whereas 30 (13%) had no opinion on the issue. The pro-active role taken by the community based NGOs particularly the YMA had tremendously helped enforce prohibition law. This pro-active involvement can be attributed to the role taken up by the parent agents viz., the Churches in wanting to do away with liquor. Recognizing this drive, law makers have often mobilized community based NGOs, Governments have continued to

accommodate their drive by giving them legal backing to help dispense enforcement functions, as seen in section 56 under the Mizoram Excise Act 1992, sections 55 and 56 under the MLTP Act, 1995 and section 35 under the MLPC Act 2014. Through these empowerment, they have elaborately helped dispense enforcement functions worthy of praise. However, there is much disagreement from urban respondents. This may be so as they do not find appetizing the approach taken by these agents particularly the YMA in dispensing its policing function which often finds occasional reports of human rights violation.

Table: 2.29. Do you think that your opinion on liquor is represented by the civil society like the Church, the YMA, the MHIP etc.? (Q 39 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
42 (43.8%)	32 (33.3%)	22 (22.9%)	82 (56.9%)	43 (29.9%)	19 (13.2%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

When respondents were asked if their opinion on liquor is represented by the civil society like the church, the YMA, the MHIP etc. 124 (51.7%) agreed it did, while 75 (31.3%) believed it did not while 41 (17%) had no opinion on the issue. It is disconcerting to find 31.3% of the respondents feel unrepresented by the agents of Civil Society. This may be so because they do not support their anti-prohibitionist stance which remains often generalized and leaves very little space to accommodate individual opinion.

Table 2.30. Do you think prohibition benefits all stakeholders? (Q23 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
30 (31.3%)	50 (52.1%)	16 (16.7%)	58 (40.3%)	51 (35.4%)	35 (24.3%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

Also when further probed if they think prohibition benefits all stakeholders, minority of 88 (36.7%) respondents agreed while majority of 101 (42%) did not seem to think so, and 51 (21.3) had no opinion. This may be so as the stakeholders find provisions of prohibition ineffective in the state. Liquor prohibition by nature leaves out consideration for the drinking minority, they remain marginalized. One has to fall under certain prescribed category to legally procure a drink. This has left many of the drinking population to source their drink from a shady outlet, which more often than not forms a very unhealthy drink. The nature of the law itself tends to leave out the minority as democratically the Government promotes the will of the majority.

Table: 2.31. Do you think that the collective attitude towards liquor is relative to the values taught by civil society in Mizoram? (Q7 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
75 (78.1%)	9 (9.4%)	12 (12.5%)	109 (75.7%)	10 (6.9%)	25 (17.4%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

When asked if they think that the collective attitude towards liquor is relative to the values taught by civil society in Mizoram, 184 (77%) agreed it to be relative 19 (8%) disagreed and 37 (15%) had no opinion on the matter. As seen in the previous chapters, the narrative of liquor has been controlled by the civil society in Mizoram. This control is apparent to peoples perception as they are made to endorse their narrative.

Also when respondents were asked to indicate in numerical order (1, 2, 3, 4.....) the agencies which first give them awareness on the effects of liquor, they were given the options of indicating agencies like family, school, church, friends, NGO's and others (Q8 in research questionnaire). Majority of respondents identified family as the first agency that gave them awareness on the effects of drinking liquor, next sensitizing agency had been identified as the Church and then Schools⁵¹⁸.

⁵¹⁸ Percentages to this questionnaire is not provided as majority of respondents failed to provide a full answer indicating the respective agencies. Family as the first agency had been indicated by 213 (89%) of respondents, while 100 (46%) indicated the Church as the second agency, whereas 86 (36%)

v) Perception of faith as seen from the lens of liquor

Faith dictates our customs and traditions, as explored in the earlier chapters, faith of the Mizo Christian kind dictates abstinence from liquor consumption. Thus, the perception of people is further presented in this regard through various questions asked in the filed survey. It has been mentioned in chapter III, that majority of respondents corresponding to the Mizo Christian custom propagated a belief on dinking/consumption of liquor as a sin by agreeing to the statement ‘drinking liquor is a sin’ (see Chapter III, Table 2.1). From the interview of the drinking population in Mizoram, it had been found that most of them believe otherwise (details of the research interview; is further explained in the subsequent point 5).

Table: 3.1. Drinking population on ‘is drinking a sin?’

Urban Respondents (37)		Rural Respondents (35)	
Yes	No	Yes	No
6	31	12	23

Source: Interview (personal & telephone) conducted during April – May 2021.

The drinking population’s notion of ‘drinking as a sin’ appears to be relational to one’s Action, not having much to do with faith, but rather represents a simple deduction made of stimuli consequential with negative or positive response. If drinking leads a person to perform various misconducts, then most agreed to that making it a sin for the respective individual. Most refuse to align themselves to the negative generalization against liquor. Some reasoned like Laldenga once did, ‘the drinking person himself is sinful not the liquor’.

indicated the School as the third agency. Majority count of scores indicated to respective agencies had been taken into consideration in the interpretation of the questionnaire.

Table: 2.32. Do you believe that the Church should excommunicate drunkards from the church? (Q2 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
9 (9.4%)	73 (76.0%)	14 (14.6%)	24 (16.7%)	97 (67.4%)	23 (16.0%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

On the subject of punishment, when respondents were asked if they believe that the Church should excommunicate drunkards from the Church, 33 (14%) agreed they should be excommunicated, whereas a majority of 170 (71%) respondents disagreed to resorting to such Actions against drunkards and 37 (15%) had no opinion regarding. It seems the issue of punishment is perceived to be kept within the purview of the Government only and the Church tolerant.

Table: 2.33. Do you believe that a person drinking liquor disqualifies a person from going to heaven? (Q3 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
33 (34.4%)	42 (43.8%)	21 (21.9%)	65 (45.1%)	39 (27.1%)	40 (27.8%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

On being questioned about their belief if drinking liquor disqualifies a person from going to heaven, 98 (41%) agree to their belief that liquor consumption would disqualify anyone from going to heaven, whereas 81 (34%) respondents did not believe in disqualification and 61 (25%) refrained from presenting their opinion on the question. The absolute perception of drinking liquor as sin would result in the absolute perception of disqualification from entry to heaven, responses on the particular issue exhibit uncertainty of cognition of repercussions of drinking on the afterlife.

Table: 2.34. Do you believe that the Value Added Tax (VAT) collected from liquor sales by the Government is in conflict with your concept of morality? (Q 30 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
25 (26.0%)	37 (38.5%)	34 (35.4%)	39 (27.1%)	54 (37.5%)	51 (35.4%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

Respondents when asked if the Value Added Tax (VAT) collected from liquor sales by the Government is in conflict with your concept of morality, 64 (27%) agreed as conflicting to their morality, while 91 (38%) disagreed as they did not find it conflicting and 85 (35%) had no opinion regarding. The general argument against liquor tax had been put forward time and again in the Assembly debates. The oppositions have pitched against the idea of generating revenue from liquor time and again. As MNF legislator R. Lalthangliana had argued for the state not to aim for wealth from liquor revenue.⁵¹⁹ Such an act was perceived to be opposed to Christian ethics. However, the perception of the people regarding this issue proves to be different. It can be deduced that stakeholders have problem with sale and consumption but not with liquor revenue.

Table: 2.35. Do you think that it is the work of the Church to address social issues/problems? (Q34 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
42 (43.8%)	34 (35.4%)	20 (20.8%)	76 (52.8%)	41 (28.5%)	27 (18.8%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

⁵¹⁹ Lalthangliana. Dr. R. Assembly Debates Proceedings on The Mizoram Excise Bill 1992. Mizoram Legislative Assembly. Second Legislative Assembly. Tenth Sitting. Dated: 17/3/1992.

The Church has been quite pro-active in addressing various social issues, so when respondents were asked if they believe it is the work of the Church to address social issues/problems, majority 118 (49.1%) respondents believe it to be the work of the Church to help address social issues and problems, while 75 (31.3%) disagreed and 47 (19.6%) had no opinion on the matter. This also somehow indicates the central role played by the Church to help address social problems and the dependency of the respondents on the Church. It also indicates more leanings on the Church by rural respondents than the urban.

E. On liquor Finances

To better understand the expenditure of liquor consumers, personal and telephone interview was conducted. Most interviews in the rural areas were conducted on telephone owing to the movement constraints put on by the Covid 19 pandemic. From the 240 respondents who responded to the research questionnaires, a significant percentage 56% (135) identified to having liquor consumers in the family. This helped map liquor consumers for interview. Representing a little over half the identified sample of 135 (56%) both from the urban and rural respondents, seventy-two (72) were randomly selected and interviewed; thirty-seven (37) from the urban and thirty-five (35) from rural areas were interviewed personally and on telephone as well to represent the perception of both urban and rural drinking population. Their interview helped estimate the monthly expenditure of the drinking population.⁵²⁰

i) Demography: A comparative analysis of the drinking expenditure of the urban and rural habitual drinkers will be made from the interview conducted on habitual liquor drinkers. The gender consisted of:

⁵²⁰ For more details see Chapter I, Table 1.0 for reference to the methodology.

Table: 3.2. Gender demography of interview respondents

Urban Respondents (37)		Rural Respondents (35)	
No. of Male Drinkers	No. of Female Drinkers	No. of Male Drinkers	No. of Female Drinkers
28	9	33	2

Source: Interview (personal & telephone) conducted during April – May 2021

The urban representation of 37 people interviewed consisted of 28 male and 9 females whereas, 35 interviewed from rural population consisted of 33 male and 2 female. From the sample interviewed, it can be determined that women drinkers are minority on the drinking population.

Table: 3.3. Employment status demography of interview respondents

Urban Respondents (37)		Rural Respondents (35)	
Employed	Unemployed	Employed	Unemployed
35	2	31	4

Source: Interview (personal & telephone) conducted during April – May 2021

Out of the 37 people interviewed from the urban area, 35 had employment, 2 did not. In the rural area 31 had employment while 4 did not. The income structure was divided into eight (8) categories based on their responses and the number of interviewees were categorised based on their income.

Table: 3.4. Income demography of interview respondents

Sl. No.	Income Structure	Income of respondents, Urban Area (37 total)	Income Structure	Income of respondents, Rural Area (35 total)
1	4999 - below	2	4999 - below	5
2	5000 - 9999	6	5000 - 9999	10
3	10000 - 14999	5	10000 - 14999	10
4	15000 - 29999	4	15000 - 29999	4
5	30000 - 49999	8	30000 - 49999	6
6	50000 - 74999	5	50000 - 9999	Nil
7	75000 – 99999	3	75000 – 99999	Nil
8	100000 – above	4	100000 – above	Nil

Source: Interview (personal & telephone) conducted during April – May 2021

The table above shows the income categorization and representation of both urban and rural drinking population interviewed. Among the habitual drinkers interviewed, 2 from the urban Mizoram fell under the first category of income (4999 and below) and 5 from rural Mizoram fell under the same category. 6 from urban and 10 from rural Mizoram respectively fell under the second income category (5000 – 9999) while 5 (urban) and 10 (rural) respondents belonged to the third income category (10000 – 14999). The fourth category (15000 – 29999) had both 4 (urban) and 4 (rural) respondents and on the fifth income category (30000 - 49999) fell 8 (urban) and 6 (rural) respondents. Under the sixth category (50000 – 74999) 5 (urban) respondents came under the income categorization while there had been no more rural representation from this category onwards. 5 respondents fell under the seventh income category (75000 – 99999) and finally 4 urban respondents had monthly income of more than Rs. 100000 and above. Majority of drinkers interviewed from rural Mizoram had low paying private employment as compared to the urban majority who figured in the category of middle class strata as they consisted Government employees and owners of private businesses.

Table: 3.5. Expenditure on liquor

Urban Respondents (37)			Rural Respondents (35)		
Heavy Drinkers	Occasional Drinkers	Regular but Moderate Drinkers	Heavy Drinkers	Occasional Drinkers	Regular but Moderate Drinkers
8	24	5	6	27	2

Source: Interview (personal & telephone) conducted during April – May 2021

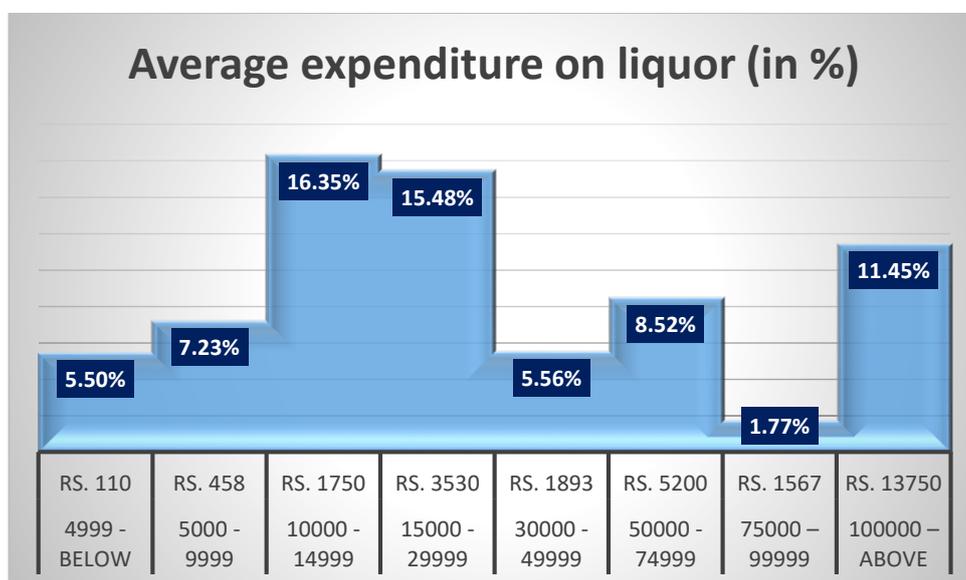
One's monthly expenditure on liquor will be heavily dependent on ones habit of drinking. From the interview, three types of drinkers were identified – the heavy drinker, the occasional drinker and the regular but moderate drinker. 8 urban and 6 rural interviewees identified themselves as 'heavy drinkers', 24 urban and 27 rural interviewees identified themselves as the 'occasional drinkers' while a minority of 5 urban and 2 rural interviewees were found to be 'regular but moderate' drinkers. The

average age of their first taste of liquor had been 17 years for the urban consumers and 16 years for rural consumers.

On being asked their preferred drink, majority of both urban and rural drinkers identified the local zu (local liquor) and Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) as their preferred drink, while the occasional drinkers preferred softer drinks like Beer and Wine. It was also found that those women habituated to occasional drinking would seldom purchase it themselves and drink whatever is made available or provided to them.

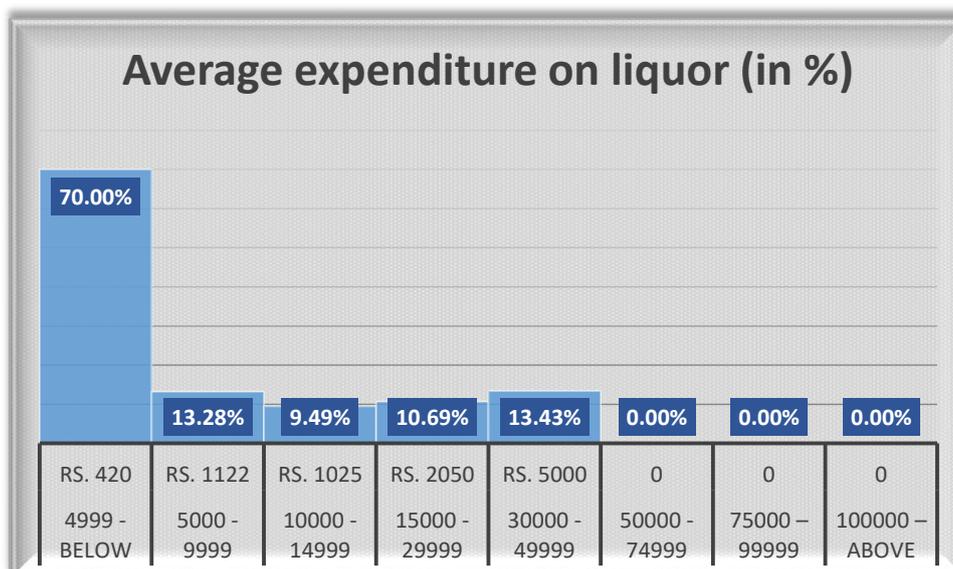
When the population was asked regarding their average monthly expenditure on liquor, the total average expenditure of urban respondents can be determined at Rs. 3468/- as against Rs. 1747/- average expenditure of rural respondents. This makes the average expenditure of rural residents 49.62% lower than the urban drinkers. Further comparison of average expenditures of urban (see fig. 5. 1) and rural (see fig. 5. 2) respondents under various pay categories are is represented below

Fig. 5. 1. Average expenditure of liquor consumers in urban Mizoram.



Source: Interview (personal & telephone) conducted during April – May 2021

Fig. 5. 2. Average monthly expenditure of consumers in rural Mizoram.



Source: Interview (personal & telephone) conducted during April – May 2021

As seen in the figures above, among lower income strata of 4999 and below, the average expenditure of habitual drinkers from their average income in urban area is 5.5% (Rs. 110/-) as compared to rural drinkers who spend over 70% (Rs. 420/-) of their pay thus making their spending 73.80 % higher than the urban drinking population. The differentiation between the two is so made by the status differences caused by employment which affects income as more rural respondents were unemployed yet drank liquor from what they acquired. Liquor is purchased mostly from pocket money acquired and also at the expense of friends.

The second income category which spans from 5000 – 9999, found that urban liquor drinkers monthly spend an average of 7.23% (Rs. 458) to purchase liquor as compared to rural spending of 13.28% (Rs. 1122) of their income, thus making the rural spending 59.18% higher than urban drinkers in this strata. It can be seen that the spending is quite less in the urban area as most interviewed had claimed to be occasional drinkers who barely spend money to procure their occasional drink.

In the third income category spanning from 10000 – 14999, there is a hike of expenditure in the urban drinking population where an average of 16.35% (Rs. 1750) is monthly spent as compared to 9.49% (Rs. 1025) spent by rural drinkers. This put

urban spending 41.42% higher than that of rural spending. This strata of drinkers mostly consist of employees of private businesses and Muster Roll Government employees.

The fourth income category spanning from 15000 – 29999 also shows higher expenditure of urban drinkers who spend 15.48% (Rs. 3530) of their income as against 10.69% (Rs. 2050) of rural drinkers thus making it 41.92 % higher. This strata of drinkers belong to provisionally employed government servants and private employees.

The fifth income category of 30000 - 49999 shows higher rural expenditure of 13.43% (Rs. 5000) against urban expenditure of 5.56 % (Rs. 1893). These drinkers from the rural area consist mostly of permanent Government employees and in the urban area they belong to private businessmen and government employees.

The rural income scenario shows lack of people from the higher income strata from the sixth category onwards, while the sixth category in the urban scenario of income ranging from 50000 – 74999 shows spending of 8.52% (Rs. 5200) of their income as most of them had been regular occasional with the occasional heavy drinkers.

The lowest spending had been identified from the seventh income category 75000 – 99999 consisting mostly of officers of government employees. It shows a minimal spending of 1.77% (Rs. 1567) of their income as most of them had identified themselves as occasional drinkers.

From the highest strata of monthly income consisting of Rs. 100000 and above, it was found that the monthly expenditure used for bulk purchases of liquor was the highest. However, owing to their high income their average expenditure makes up only 11.45% (Rs. 13750) of their monthly income. They were mostly identified as regular but moderate drinkers who purchased their drink in bulk, for some, a single purchase would be costing as high as more than a lakh or lakhs despite prohibition or not. This bulk purchases of liquor enables them to sustain their moderate habitual consumption of liquor as a lifestyle.

Thus, calculating in terms of percentages, the urban expenditure was found to be highest at the middle income range of 10000-14999, where 16.35% from their

monthly income goes to the purchase of liquor. However, in the rural drinking scenario, it is found that the lowest strata of income 4999 and below had the highest percentage of monthly expenditure with 70% of their income used for purchasing liquor. The total percentage of both urban and rural drinking expenditure can be determined to be 9.55 % with an average amount of Rs. 2631.53 spent monthly to procure liquor. It had been quite interesting to know that some consumers in the rural areas were able to procure their drink in the dated for of ‘barter’.

F. On consumption difference

During interview when drinkers were asked if either prohibition law or the regulated sale law had any effect on their drinking pattern, to which they responded:

Table: 3.6. Effect of liquor laws on drinking pattern.

Urban Consumers (37)		Rural Consumers (35)	
Yes	No	Yes	No
11	26	9	26
29.72%	70.27%	25.71%	74%

Source: Interview (personal & telephone) conducted during April – May 2021.

Majority of liquor consumers both urban and rural responded as the changing laws having made no difference to their drinking pattern as majority of them stated the availability of liquor all through despite prohibition or not. Change of liquor law did not bring about differences however, the drop of liquor price had been appreciated. On the other side of the coin, the minority of those who responded to saying it made a difference was mostly so because easy access to liquor increased their consumption. Some also stipulated that the regulated sale of IMFL by the Government had compromised the quality of illicit liquor they were used to drinking from the days of prohibition.

G. On liquor revenue.

Liquor revenue formulates a substantial source of income for state Governments. Taxes levied on liquor serves a dual purpose: to regulate the consumption of liquor and a revenue source to fund Government initiatives. There is a prevalent belief that high taxes on liquor would reduce demand besides curb excessive consumption thus preventing public health and safety issues related to drinking.⁵²¹ Taxing approach to liquor remains different in the Union of India, while a few states have opted to ban liquor in the spirit of promoting the ideal of liquor prohibition elucidated in Article 47 of the Directive Principle of State Policy, majority have opted to serve the drink thus tax the drink. States like Tamil Nadu impose Value added Tax (VAT), some charge special fees for import, export of Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL), some impose ‘special duty’ on liquor to fund a special purpose. The PRS Legislative Research had identified ‘sales tax/value added tax (VAT) on alcohol and petroleum products and state excise duty on alcohol’ as two importance sources of own tax revenue for states.⁵²²

The Reserve Bank of India located 10-15 per cent of Own Tax Revenue of a majority of states is sourced from state excise duty on alcohol.⁵²³ It is the second or third largest contributor to State’s Own Tax revenue; sales tax (now GST) is the largest’.⁵²⁴ One has to know that petroleum and liquor does not come under the purview of Goods and Service Tax (GST). It remains taxed separately with petroleum products under the Sales tax. In Mizoram, commodities such as Motor Vehicles, building materials (cements & rods), drugs and medicines provide a good source

⁵²¹ Dhanuraj. D., & Kumar. V. Rahul. (November 11, 2014). *Liberalizing Liquor Trade in India*. Centre for Public Policy Research. Retrieved from <https://www.cppr.in/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Report-on-Liberalizing-Liquor-Trade-in-India.pdf>

⁵²² *State of State Finances: 2019-20*. New Delhi: PRS Legislative Research. Retrieved from <https://prsindia.org/policy/analytical-reports/state-state-finances-2019-20>

⁵²³ *State Finances: A Study of Budgets 2019-2020*. (30th Sept.2019). Reserve Bank of India. Retrieved from <https://m.rbi.org.in/Scripts/PublicationsView.aspx?id=19240>

⁵²⁴ Sharman, Harikrishan. (25th June 2021). *Explained: Why liquor sales matter to states*. The Indian Express. Retrieved from <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-why-states-are-so-keen-about-excise-duty-on-liquor-6393643/>

income for the state. Liquor while the sale law was in force, provided a good source of income as well.⁵²⁵

On the eve of 2014-2015 Budget speech of the Finance Minister, Lalsawta Finance Minister under the Congress ministry announced the expectation of huge revenue earnings from the MLPC 2014 law once implemented.⁵²⁶ True to their expectation, the MLPC Act had generated Rs. 41.96 crores in 2015-2016 (upto December),⁵²⁷ 43.08 estimate in 2016-2017 and 51.50 crores target estimated in 2017-2018,⁵²⁸ 59.40 crores estimated for 2018-2019.⁵²⁹ However, the following year, the new Finance Minister, Zoramthanga under the MNF ministry failed to mention the specifics of revenue generated from the MLPC Act. A study will be made on the implication of liquor tax on the state revenue through analysis of three factors viz., implication of liquor tax on state own revenue, on Gross State Domestic Product and Per Capita Income.

I. Implication of liquor tax on State Own Revenue

Various liquor laws have been implemented in the state as have been read in the previous chapters. The era of enforcement of the Mizoram Excise Rules, 1983 indicates liquor duties being handled by the Excise Department. Duties had been previously levied on the drink based on 'per proof litre'⁵³⁰ of the various types of drink such as foreign liquor, beer, country liquor, rectified spirit etc. The liquor revenue generated during the Mizoram Excise Act 1973 was mainly sourced from i) import

⁵²⁵ Hrangthanmawia., (Asst. Commissioner, Taxation Department, Govt. of Mizoram), personal communication. 3/5/2021

⁵²⁶ India. (2015). *Budget Speech of Finance Minister 2014-2015*. (Mizoram): Government of Mizoram. P.16.

⁵²⁷ India. (2015). *Budget Speech of Finance Minister 2016-2017*. (Mizoram): Government of Mizoram. P. 7.

⁵²⁸ India. (2015). *Budget Speech of Finance Minister 2017-2018*. (Mizoram): Government of Mizoram. P. 5.

⁵²⁹ India. (2015). *Budget Speech of Finance Minister 2018-2019*. (Mizoram): Government of Mizoram. P. 5.

⁵³⁰ The formula to calculate Proof Litre is based on the formula, Alcohol Strength in % $\div .571 \div 100 \times$ bulk litre. For example, the Proof Litre for Officer's Choice Blue Pure Grain Whiskey 750 ml – 42.825% alcohol strength will be calculated as $42.825 \div 0.571 \div 100 \times 9$. This makes the Proof Litre for a case of Officer's Choice Blue Pure Grain Whiskey as 6.75. One has to multiply this Proof Litre with the excise duty rate which will generate the duty fee paid for each liquor case. Sourced from Excise & Narcotics Department, Government of Mizoram.

permit of liquor from Security Forces, ii) license fee and iii) import duty. Revenue generated from fines were sourced from i) settlement fees, ii) sale of confiscated liquor (purchased by permit holders on health grounds and Ex-Servicemen) and iii) license renewal fees.

While the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act 1995 sourced liquor revenue mainly from i) import permit of liquor from Security Forces, Assam Rifles, BRTF and CRP ii) license fee renewal and iii) license fee for winery and iv) import permit fee extra neutral alcohol. Also revenue sourced under fines and confiscations were the same as the Mizoram Excise Act 1973 viz., i) settlement fees, ii) sale of confiscated liquor purchased mainly by permit holders on health grounds and Ex-Servicemen and iii) license renewal fees.

The revenue generated from the MLPC Act 2014 was also mainly sourced from duties paid by i) Armed Forces, ii) Import permit fees paid by bonded warehouses, iii) Transport permit fee and iv) Special permit fee from bonded warehouses for purchase and possession of liquor. The revenue generated from fines are sourced from i) license fee for bonded warehouse, retail vendors, club license, ii) Company registration fee, Label registration fee, mono carton registration fee, iii) Hologram fee and iv) License fee for exclusive sale for country liquor.⁵³¹

Under the Sales tax era in 2005, tax of 13.5% is levied on liquor followed by 16% tax from 2017 under VAT during the MLPC era. The revenue generated from liquor during the era of the ME Act to the MLPC era from 1985 to 2020 shows an overall contribution of 4.9% to the State Own Resources (SOR) of Mizoram (see Table 3.7. & Appendix XV. Table 5.0. for further reference). Liquor revenue generated during 1986-1987 was Rs. 33.16217/- lakhs which led to the highest ever contribution made by liquor to SOR with a whopping 33.6% under the Mizoram Excise Act, 1973. This eventually picked up again with the implementation of the wet law starting 2014. A year of liquor sale had generated revenue of Rs. 10365.30738/- lakhs, thus contributing 15.8% to the SOR. However, the trajectory of the Finance Minister had

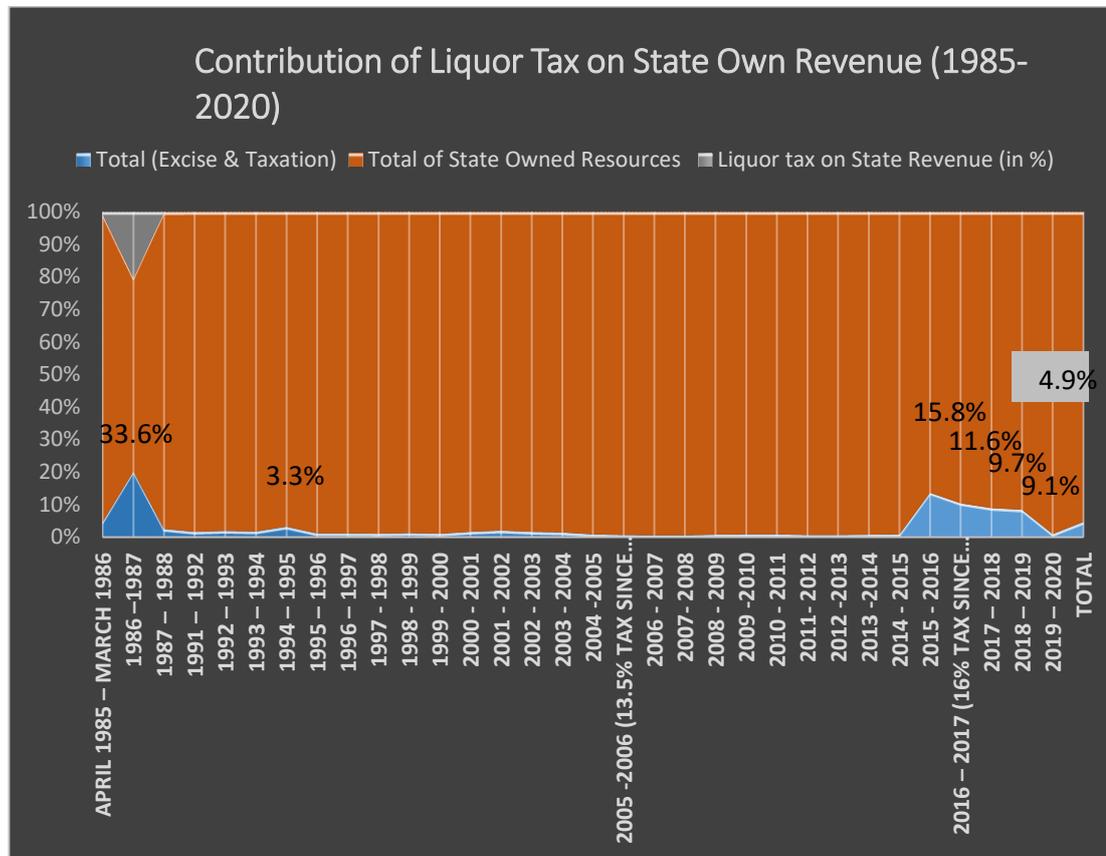
⁵³¹License fee for exclusive sale for country liquor is granted by the Government on occasional fair conducted in the state.

shown hope for increase in revenue, however, it is seen that liquor revenue continued to drop in the consecutive years that followed.

As the table shown below, the year 2016-2017 had seen liquor tax contribution plummeting to 11.6% to SOR with an income generated accruing to Rs. 9387.87412/- lakhs. 2017 had been the year the tax rate was fixated to 16%.⁵³² Income received show a decline of taxes with a difference of Rs. 977.43326/- lakhs from the previous income. This was mainly due to refusal of tax payment by vendors and non-action on the part of the authority to push for payment. Years 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 show a contribution of liquor tax further decline to 9.7% and 9.1%. The prospect of a higher contribution of liquor tax to SOR would have been a possibility had there been better co-ordination between the taxing agents viz., the Excise and the Taxation Department, exhibition of good governance from the Government and accountability from wine shop vendors.

⁵³² Notification No. H. 12018/122/2017, the 1st June, 2017. (Dated: 2/6/2017). The Mizoram Gazette.
Authority: Government of Mizoram.

Table: 3.7. Contribution of Liquor Tax on State Own Revenue (1985-2020)



Source: Revenue data sourced from Excise & Narcotics Department, Government of Mizoram, Tax data from 2015-2020 is also sourced from Office of Commissioner of State, Govt. of Mizoram, State Owned Resources (Tax and Non-Tax Revenue) data sourced from Annual Financial Statement (Budget) Statements, Government of Mizoram, 1987-88 to 1998-1999, Finance Department, Government of Mizoram. (For details see Appendix XV. Table 5.0) The figure shows a break of data during April 1988 to March 1991 as sale was discontinued during this period.

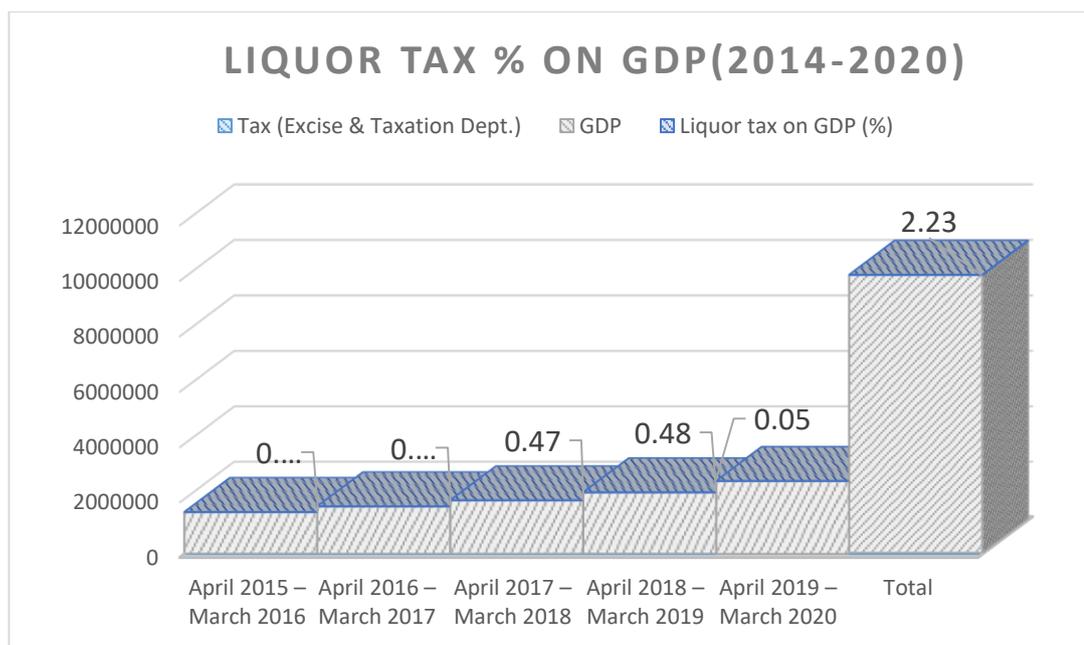
Eighteen years of prohibition enforcement from 1997 to 2015 had seen an income of Rs. 3240.942/- lakhs from liquor which contributed a total of 18.5% during the period compared to the earnings of Rs. 40845.61/- lakhs during the sale law from 2015 to 2020 which contributed to 47.3% of revenue to the state in a span of five years.

II. Implication of liquor tax on GDP

It can be seen that the liquor income during the enforcement of the sale law amounted to an earnings of 40845.61 lakhs in the span of five years from 2015-2020. Such earnings contributed a total of 2.23% to the state GDP. (see Table 3.8. & appendix Table 5.1. for details)

Its contribution to state GDP spanning from 1985 to 2020 had been a total of 0.24%. The total income of liquor during the enforcement of sales in the era of the Mizoram Excise Rules 1983 spanning from 1985 to 1988 and the sale law under the MLPC Act from 2015 to 2020 resulted in a total income of 40948.01 lakhs which made a contribution of a total of 2.69% to the state GDP.

Table: 3.8. Liquor Tax % on GSDP (2014-2020)



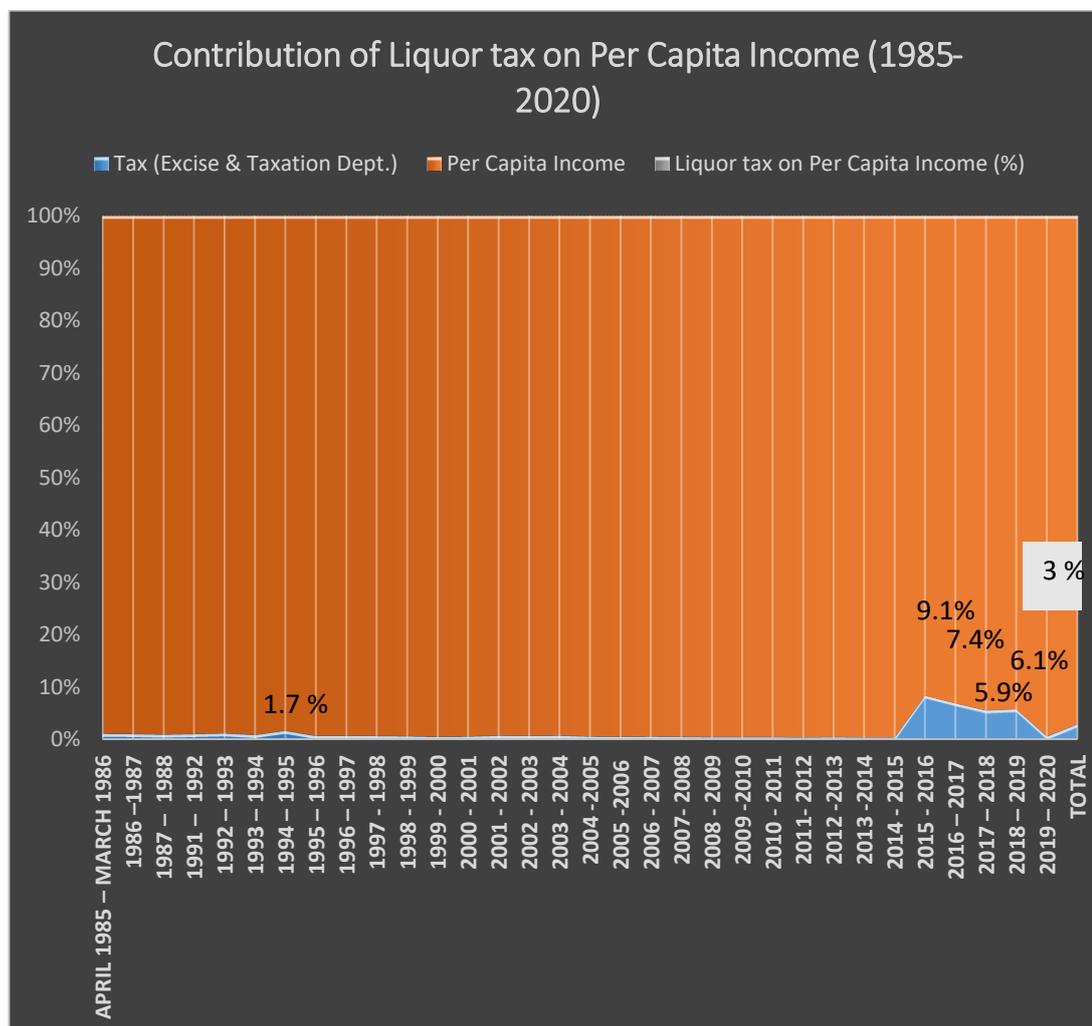
Source: Revenue data sourced from Excise & Narcotics Department, Government of Mizoram, Tax data from 2015-2020 is also sourced from Office of Commissioner of State, Govt. of Mizoram & GSDP (at current) data sourced from Directorate of Economics & Statistics. (For details see Appendix XV. Table 5.1)

III. Implication of liquor tax on Per Capita Income

The implication of liquor tax on the amount of money earned per person in the state over the years spanning from 1985-2020 accumulates to a total of 3%. (see Table 3.9 & Appendix Table 5.2. for details) The highest exhibit of liquor tax on per capita income had been during 2015-2016 with revenue earnings of 10365.30738 lakhs on liquor, this contributed to 9.1% of per capita income in the state. The contribution plummeted to 7.4% owing to decline of liquor revenue the following year in 2016-2017. It further declined to 5.9% with an earnings of 9098.44464 lakhs in the year 2017-2018 which had been 289.42772 lakhs less than the previous year. One would assume liquor to have no contribution to the economy during the prohibiting years.

Calculation of liquor income during the enforcement of the MLTP Act, for eighteen years spanning the period 1997-2015 shows an income amounting to 3240.942 lakhs thus making a total contribution of 9.9% to the per capital income. On the other hand, the enforcement of the sale law under the MLPC Act from 2015-2020 shows a total earnings of 40845.61 lakhs from liquor which contributes 29% to per capita income in the state.

Table: 3.9. Contribution of Liquor tax on Per Capita Income (1985-2020)



Source: Revenue data sourced from Excise & Narcotics Department, Govt. of Mizoram, Tax data from 2015-2020 is sourced from Office of Commissioner of State, Govt. of Mizoram & Per Capita Income (Rupees in Lakhs) data sourced from Directorate of Economics & Statistics. (For details see Appendix XV. Table 5.2)

There is no denying that liquor revenue proves a very good source of income for the state, as seen from the differences of the impact of liquor tax between prohibition and the sale law. One also has to take into account the number of illicit drinks sold in the black market that goes untaxed, which would have made a good source of revenue for the state with the right policy implementation. However, taxing liquor has been subjected to objections as seen in the Assembly debates as it is believed better to remain poor than rich from sin tax.

IV. Revenue leakage

The sale law through the MLPC Act, 2014 had led to procure liquor from outside states like Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and more.⁵³³ Had the sale policy on liquor been more stable, and liquor factories established within the state itself, it would have helped save a lot of capital spent to source the drink sold in the state. This leakage represents total amount of money spent by the Government and vendors to procure liquor from other states. The year 2015-16 had the highest estimated Liquor Leakage (LL) of Rs. 76780.05467/- lakhs, 2016-17 had a leakage of Rs. 58674.21325/-, 2017-18 had leakage of Rs. 56865.279/-, 2018-19 had leakage of Rs. 67233.90181/- and 2019-20 had seen a leakage of Rs. 7728.524/- lakhs. The total revenue collected from liquor tax during the MLPC era spanning from 2015-2016 had been Rs. 40845.61427/- lakhs. Leakage of revenue spent to procure the drink during the MLPC era (2015-2016) had culminated to a total of Rs. 267281.9727/- lakhs (see Table 3.10 below).

For better understanding of the impact of liquor leakage on Mizoram economy, the calculation of Liquor Leakage (LL) percentage in State Own Resource (SOR) is made. It is found that in the initial year of liquor sale in 2015-16, Liquor Revenue (LR) had an impact of 15.79% to the SOR. SOR this year stood at Rs. 65604.04/- lakhs whereas LL had been Rs. 76780.05467/- lakhs the very same year. This indicates the leakage percentage amounting to 117% of the SOR. This indicates the spending to procure liquor far surpassing the SOR. However, the leakage percentage in SOR declined thereon. The year 2016-17 had seen liquor revenue contribute 11.63% to SOR, whereas LL stood at Rs. 58674.21325/- lakhs and SOR at Rs. 72.70459291/- lakhs. This indicates the leakage percentage amounting to 72.7% of the SOR. The following year, 2017-2018, LR showed 9.71% contribution to SOR while LL had been Rs. 56865.279/- lakhs and SOR had been Rs. 93655.94/- lakhs thus leakage percentage on SOR amounted to 60.71% this year. The year 2018-19 showed LR contribute 9.14% to SOR, LL stood at Rs. 67233.90181/- lakhs and SOR this year had culminated to Rs. 117665.4/- lakhs. The LL percent on SOR amounted to 57.13%. 2019-20 had

⁵³³ List of Liquor Labels and Mono-carton Registered in Mizoram Under MLPC Act, 2014 for the year 2018-2019. (As on 24th October, 2018)

seen LR contribute 0.98% to SOR, the sudden drop had been due to policy change on liquor. This year LL stood at Rs. 7728.524/- lakhs and SOR had been Rs. 125332.71/- lakhs thus making the LL percent on SOR stand at a 6.16%. The total years of MLPC era spanning from 2015-2020 shows a LL amounting to Rs. 267281.9727/- while the SOR in the same time frame stood at Rs. 482960.3/- lakhs. Thus, the LL percent on SOR in the span of five years had culminated to a total of 55.34%. This shows a huge impact of leakage on the state's economy in these respective sale periods. Had these money been used within the state's economy, it would have huge positive economic impact like increase sales, production, generated employment and more (see Appendix XV. Table 5.3. for details).

To further clarify the impact of leakage on the economy, a study of the impact of leakage on state GDP is made. It is seen that in 2015-16 liquor leakage has an impact of 5.07% on state GDP. However, its impact continued to decline in the following years. 2016-17 had seen the impact of leakage to 3.41% on the GDP, 2017-18 had an impact of 2.93%, 2018-19 had a slight increase by 3.01% on GDP and 2019-20 had seen leakage impact of 2.65% on state GDP. The overall impact of leakage amount on the state GDP spanning for five years from 2015 to 2020 had been 2.65% (see Appendix XV. Table 5.3 for details).

Table 3.10. Revenue Leakage during the MLPC Act, 2014

LEAKAGE OF REVENUE FROM STATE ECONOMY DURING MLPC ACT, 2014								
Year	Liquor Revenue Collected (Excise Department)	Liquor Fines Collected (Excise Department)	Other Fines (Excise Department)	Excise Total (in lakhs)	Office of Commissioner of State Tax	Total (in lakhs)	Total (Excise & Taxation in lakhs)	Leakage (in lakhs)
April 2015 – March 2016 (13.5 % Tax was levied on liquor till May 2017)	572767278	2573113	29997347	6053.37738	431193000	4311.93	10365.30738	76780.05467
April 2016 – March 2017 (16% Tax was levied on liquor since June 2017)	708373873	530395	10809609	7197.13877	219073535	2190.73535	9387.87412	58674.21325
April 2017 – March 2018	635782608	163868	20912220	6568.58696	252985768	2529.85768	9098.44464	56865.279
April 2018 – March 2019	639684229	301516	14262341	6542.48086	421494343	4214.94343	10757.42429	67233.90181
April 2019 – March 2020	25595869	98190	75981517	1016.75576	21980808	219.80808	1236.56384	7728.524
TOTAL	2582203857	3667082	151963034	27378.33973	1346727454	13467.27454	40845.61427	267281.9727

Source: Revenue data sourced from Excise & Narcotics Department, Govt. of Mizoram, Tax data from 2015-2020 is sourced from Office of Commissioner of State, Govt. of Mizoram. The formula used to estimate leakage had been: $\text{Tax Rate} \div 100 \times \text{Leakage} = \text{Amount of tax collected}$.

G. Hit on the Justice System.

The impact of liquor on Mizoram justice system was studied and conclusion arrived from the data acquired from the Excise and Narcotics Department, Government of India and the Police through its Crime Investigation Department (CID). Data had been acquired from the two departments as they both maintain separate data of their law enforcement. Data spanning ten (10) years from 2010-2014 and 2015-2019 both sets representing crime figures for the liquor prohibition and regulated sale era as represented in Figure 5.3 and 5.4. The widespread belief that liquor increases crime rate is proven true from the data presented below. The Mizoram

crime scenario is definitely dominated by cases registered on liquor related problems. The mobilization of the two (2) government departments namely the Excise and the Police respectively along with the entire civil society in their capacity as a collective; as members of community based organizations like the Young Mizo Association (YMA) and as individuals to purge contraveners of both Acts seemed to boost the efficiency in checking contravention. It has come to be understood that most cases which eventually end up as data shown below have mostly been consequences of reports given by individual of contraveners/contravention to authorities.

Figure 5.3: Number of registered crimes related to liquor from 2010-2014.

Year	A. No. of liquor cases registered by the Police Department	B. Total No. of cases registered by the Police Department (IPC, Special & Local Laws)	C. No. of liquor cases registered by the Excise Department	Sum of Liquor (A & C)	Sum of all (B & C)	Liquor Crime Percent (2010-2014)
2010	553	2730	2565	3118	5295	59
2011	546	3035	2674	3220	5709	56
2012	457	2712	2649	3106	5361	58
2013	297	1984	2163	2460	4147	59
2014	248	2284	2020	2268	4304	53
Total	2101	12745	12071	14172	24816	57

Source: CID, Mizoram, Govt. of Mizoram and Excise & Narcotics Department, Govt. of Mizoram.

The Police department presents figure for all crimes registered under various heads according to the Indian Penal Code (IPC), it represents various crime heads like - murder, rape, robbery, theft, cheating, outraging, fatal road accidents, hurt, crime against women etc. Also, figures for crimes registered under local and special laws are also presented in the figure of which the MLTP Act is categorized as well, but for the sake of highlighting 'liquor crimes' it has been put under separate head. Other local and special laws besides the MLTP Act are such laws as the Arms Act, Narcotic Drugs

and Psychotropic Substances Act (ND & PS Act), Foreigner Act, Immoral Traffic Act, Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (PCOSO) Act and others.

Figure 1 shows the percentage of liquor related crimes over the years during prohibition. Here cases had been registered based on contravention of the standing law against consumption, transportation, importation, exportation, possession, selling, manufacture of liquor to name a few except under license or permit granted by authority. During prohibition era, the highest contributing crime rate in Mizoram remained 'liquor related cases'. Registered crime rate for the duration of five years from 2010 to 2014 show liquor crime contributing more than half of the percentage throughout. The highest having been 59% in 2010 and 2013 as seen in the figure above.

In the span of five years from 2010 to 2014 in the era of prohibition, liquor cases contributed a total of 56% of the crime rate in Mizoram. This high representation of crime percentage does not come as a surprise with the thought of 56% (135 out of 240) respondents who identified to having family members who consumed liquor. In a nutshell, it reflects the efficacy of mobilizing the entire population through the MLTP Act. However, one is reminded of the findings of the Study Group of the MLTP Act 1995, where it was mentioned that liquor and its related problems continued to proliferate in the Mizo society simply because there exists continued 'demand' for liquor. The case seemed true as seen from the data below and proves thus the difficulty in legislating over one's morality. The war waged on liquor had certainly led to the justice system to be overrun with solving its related problems.

The data presented for various crime heads in Figure 5.4, from 2015-2019 remains the same as figure one, except for the change in the local law which replaced the MLTP Act with the MLPC Act. The data for 2019 had been included despite the passing of the Mizoram Liquor Prohibition Act, 2019 and enforcement from the 28th May 2019 by the new MNF ministry. However, rules have not been formulated since then. Therefore, 2019 have been accounted under the MLPC Act crime data.

The rise of crime rates due to liquor in the prohibition period would automatically lead to the assumption of a further massive hike on the crime rate owing to the new regulated sale law. Data presented in Figure 5.3 also shows liquor as one

of the highest contributor of crime rates in Mizoram. However if one was to compare the crime data of the corresponding five years from 2010-2014 against 2015-2019 of prohibition and regulated sale era, one would find a surprising decrease in the liquor crime percentage.

Figure 5.4: Number of registered crimes related to liquor from 2015-2019.

Year	A. No. of liquor cases registered by the Police Department	B. Total No. of cases registered by the Police Department (IPC, Special & Local Laws)	C. No. of liquor cases registered by the Excise Department	Sum of Liquor (A & C)	Sum of all (B & C)	Liquor Crime Percent (2015-2019)
2015	81	2565	2017	2098	4582	46
2016	107	2866	1288	1395	4154	34
2017	137	2729	1078	1215	3807	32
2018	163	2388	1672	1835	4060	45
2019	159	2884	151	310	3035	10
Total	647	13432	6206	6853	19638	35

Source: CID, Mizoram, Govt. of Mizoram and Excise & Narcotics Department, Govt. of Mizoram.

As liquor was sold from the 16th of March 2015⁵³⁴ under the MLPC Act, 2014, data shows a drastic decline to 7% in liquor crime percentage from 2014 to 2015. The comparative span of five years between 2010 to 2014 and 2015 to 2019 have shown a surprising decrease in the overall liquor crime rate during the regulated sale period to 35% as compared to the overall of 57% in the prohibition period making the overall difference 22%.

⁵³⁴ Notification No. C. 18015/18/2015 – Comex. (Dated: 12/3/2015). Commissionerate of Excise & Narcotics. Aizawl: Government of Mizoram

Figure 5.5. Number of registered crimes related to NDPS Act, 1985 from 2010-2014.

Year	A. No. of liquor cases registered by the Police Department	B. Total No. of cases registered by the Police Department (IPC, Special & Local Laws)	C. No. of liquor cases registered by the Excise Department	Sum of Liquor (A & C)	Sum of all (B & C)	Liquor Crime Percent (2010-2014)
2010	110	2730	275	385	3005	13
2011	97	3035	214	311	3249	10
2012	86	2712	505	591	3217	18
2013	187	1984	414	601	2398	25
2014	97	2284	318	415	2602	16
Total	577	12745	1726	2303	14471	16

Source: CID, Mizoram, Govt. of Mizoram and Excise & Narcotics Department, Govt. of Mizoram.

Figure 5.6. Number of registered crimes related to NDPS Act 1985 from 2015-2019.

Year	A. No. of ND & PS Act cases registered by the Police Department	B. Total No. of cases registered by the Police Department (IPC, Special & Local Laws)	C. No. of ND & PS Act cases registered by the Excise Department	Sum of ND & PS Act (A & C)	Sum of all (B & C)	ND & PS Act Crime Percent (2015-2019)
2015	81	2565	361	442	2926	15
2016	107	2866	328	435	3194	14
2017	137	2729	407	544	3136	17
2018	163	2388	518	681	2906	23
2019	159	2884	777	936	3661	26
Total	647	13432	2391	3038	15823	19

Source: CID, Mizoram, Govt. of Mizoram and Excise & Narcotics Department, Govt. of Mizoram.

Drugs and liquor are substances considered to go hand in hand. As some would often say the journey to one's drug addiction often begin with a drink. It had been found that after liquor, cannabis and opioids are the next commonly used substances

in India.⁵³⁵ However, it would be safe to make a deduction that not all people who drink liquor end up being addicted to drugs. The drug addict population is relatively smaller from the drinking population. The relative crime cases of substance abusers has been registered under the NDPS Act 1985 by both Police and Excise & Narcotics department. The crime percentage presented under this crime head during the prohibition period from 2010 to 2014 had been 16% (see Fig. 5.5) as against the 3% rise during the regulated sale era from 2015 to 2019 (see Fig. 5.6).

Liquor show an unexpected lowering of crime percentage over the years despite being consistently high compared to other crimes. Despite the lowing percentage, it remains high as the provision of both Acts; the MLTP, 1995 and MLPC, 2014 remained mostly the same as both ordered arrests of those ‘drinking without permit, consuming liquor in public place, making nuisance under the influence of liquor and driving under influence of liquor. This provision of both Acts kept afloat the liquor crime rates throughout as most arrests and cases registered had been done so under this provision. The liquor laws had put a strain on the justice system and law enforcement agencies. It had also caused structural and managerial problems of prisons as a consequence of over population caused by these liquor Acts. The only difference of the two Acts from the enforcement point of view was that arrests were not made on those who privately held their liquor drink.

Besides personal arrests, confiscation of various kinds of liquor have been made over time. Similar time frame of confiscations made by law enforcing agencies have been presented above. Enforcing agencies at times might come under fire for inefficiency or that the law might seem ineffective on the outset. However, there is no denying that they have done much to slow the unlawful proliferation of liquor in the state. There has been consistent arrests and confiscations made regarding liquor and is presented as recorded by respective authorities. Data of confiscations of the Police Department in the prohibition (2010-2014) era has been excluded for lack of official records maintained by the respective department. These data show that confiscations

⁵³⁵ Magnitude of Substance Use in India 2019. (2019). Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India. P. 2. Retrieved from http://socialjustice.nic.in/writereaddata/UploadFile/Magnitude_Substance_Use_India_REPORT.pdf

were made more frequent during the prohibition period (despite lack of data from the Police Department), it also did not decline much during the regulated sale period as well.⁵³⁶

I. Undoing one's Health?

Theodore Levitt once said, 'Anything of an excess is poison'.⁵³⁷ This stands true for liquor consumption. It might be a medicine for some but poison leading to their demise for others. There is no denying that liquor comes with various related harms. Excessive consumption can result in various health complications like cirrhosis, internal bleeding, liver diseases, pancreatitis, cancer etc. Exhibition of these health-related harms require swift control or total sobriety, if not, it often results in mortality. The table below presents data of liquor deaths at Civil Hospital, Aizawl for a period of seven (7) years starting from 2013 to 2019. Data presented below of 2013 and 2014 represents mortality data representing the prohibition era while 2015 to 2019 represents the regulated sale era.

Table 5.7. Liquor Mortality Data, Civil Hospital Aizawl (CHA) from 2013-2019.

Liquor Mortality Data, Civil Hospital Aizawl (2013-2019)			
Year	Liquor Related Deaths	All Deaths	Liquor Deaths (in %)
2013	147	889	17
2014	150	915	16
2015	119	779	15
2016	150	750	20
2017	150	730	21
2018	116	616	19
2019	107	649	16
Total	939	5328	18

Source: Data obtained from Medical Record Department, Civil Hospital Aizawl (CHA) from 2013-2019.

⁵³⁶ See Appendix. XVI. Figure 1 & 2

⁵³⁷ Theodore Levitt was a German American economist and a professor at Harvard Business School. Author of Globalization of Markets and was credited with popularizing the term 'globalization'.

The data obtained from Medical Record Department of Civil Hospital Aizawl (CHA) is the largest public sector hospital in the state with varying patients from both the urban and rural areas. It is supposedly best represents the population in the health sector. Proper data is represented from 2013 as the Health Management Information System (HMIS) of records began from the said year and thus available.

Table 5.8. Alcohol related illness causing liquor mortality, Civil Hospital Aizawl (CHA) from 2013-2019.

Year	Chronic Liver Disease	Alcoholic Liver Disease	Acute Pancreatitis	Cirrhosis of Alcoholic Liver Disease	Cirrhosis of Liver	Upper Gastro Intestinal (UGI) Bleeding	Total
2013	64	29	7	0	9	38	147
2014	78	24	4	0	2	42	150
2015	76	17	3	0	2	21	119
2016	90	24	10	0	2	24	150
2017	113	8	7	1	1	20	150
2018	81	12	1	1	3	18	116
2019	78	5	4	0	5	15	107

Source: Data of various mortalities related primarily to liquor obtained from Medical Record Department of Civil Hospital Aizawl (CHA) from 2013-2019.

Table 5.8 represents details of table 5.7, various alcoholic related diseases such as chronic liver disease, alcoholic liver disease, acute pancreatitis, cirrhosis of liver and Upper Gastro Intestinal (UGI) Bleeding that were common exhibition of liquor related illnesses that results in fatalities in Mizoram. A disclaimer has to be made regarding the data presented as there is a great overlap between various liver diseases. Multiple causes such as Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, HIV or other infective diseases may lead to Chronic Liver Disease (CLD), and as represented in the data majority of the cases would have been assumed to be chronic alcoholic.

The assumption had been that the sale of liquor would lead to a proportionate increase in the number of liquor related deaths. However, as can be seen from the data, the escalation of liquor death rates appears to be insignificant to as small a number as

3%. The overall recorded percentage of liquor related deaths over the span of seven (7) years remains 18%. While according to the National Centre Disease Informatics and Research (NCDIR) the leading cause of death mentioned in 2018 had been diseases of the circulatory system like heart attacks and strokes which overall presented 16% of deaths in Mizoram.⁵³⁸

Liquor consumption might be a lifestyle for some, a sustainable lifestyle for those moderate drinkers, but one cannot deny the harm caused on the health of a person habituated to excessive drinking. One also cannot ignore the physical, emotional and economic toll it takes on the family members involved in the process in their capacity as care providers.

The retrospective study on the implications of the MLTP Act and the MLPC Act indicates that liquor caused problems in communities and that people were generally intolerant towards liquor consumption. The expenditure on liquor consumption also exhibit strain on income where 9.5 % of their earnings is utilized to purchase liquor which could otherwise go to personal savings. Liquor compared to other crime heads has consecutively been the highest contributor of crime rate in Mizoram, though it showed a surprising decrease in the overall liquor crime rate during the regulated sale period.

It none the less remain the highest contributor to the crime rates over the years. However, on the issue of health, data indicates that liquor induced deaths contribute a small percentage of deaths compared to diseases like heart attacks and strokes. It none the less causes various health related issues. Thus, the implication study of liquor all point towards proving true the hypothesis that “liquor consumption has negative effects on Mizo society”. The personal sentiment of the then Chief Minister Lal Thanhawla to make the minority of the people habituated to drinking, learn the art of moderate drinking by Actually making the drink accessible is a sentiment unacceptable to many. He had on the occasion of the MLPC Bill debate, requested for

⁵³⁸ Profile of Cancer and Related Health Indicators in the North East Region of India. ICMR – National Centre Disease Informatics and Research (NCDIR). p. 93. Retrieved from https://ncdirindia.org/All_Reports/NorthEast2021/resources/NE_chapter6.pdf

people to have a tolerant sentiment towards liquor consumers. The wish of the majority of the people speaks otherwise.

J. Undoing Ones Dependency

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India in collaboration with the National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre (NDDTC), All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi published the report on the Magnitude of Substance Use in India 2019 where liquor was identified as the most common psychoActive substance used by Indians and found that ‘adult men bear the most brunt of substance use disorders’.⁵³⁹ Their report further pins 2.7% of Indians (2.9 crore individuals) as having liquor dependency among which Tripura (13.7%), Arunachal Pradesh (7. 2%), Chhattisgarh, Punjab and Andhra Pradesh (around 6% each) tops the list.⁵⁴⁰ Dependency necessitate treatments to address suffering from Substance Use Disorder.

The presence of liquor and its related problems though dated in the Mizo society had only been introduced to systematic rehabilitation or institutional rehabilitation in recent years. As the debate continued to centre around solving the problem to ‘harm’ and ‘supply’, institutional solutions to preventing and addressing ‘demand’ had found little focus until recent. Many dependent liquor consumers had previously received ‘spiritual help’ to cure their dependency. The major source of help received by liquor dependent Indians had been identified the ‘spiritual/religious’ help.⁵⁴¹ This case had been true for the Mizo people, the believed route to their independence had been the rather unsystematic ‘gospel campings’ organized by churches for their members. The objective had been to for one to find complete healing of the self. Through this approach, many would have found temporary healing or independence from their disorder but relapse had also been a common factor.

⁵³⁹ Magnitude of Substance Use in India 2019. (2019). Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India. p. 1. Retrieved from http://socialjustice.nic.in/writereaddata/UploadFile/Magnitude_Substance_Use_India_REPORT.pdf

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 14

⁵⁴¹ Ibid., p. 29

It can be said that ‘God and legislation’ had been the considered answer to the solution of pulling an addict out of his/her sinful bondage by the Church led civil society. Despite legalization in the initial years, focus had not been given by the Government to providing proper rehabilitation services for addicts. Local Churches time and again organize Gospel Camping’s and it continued to be the considered solution to heal all kinds of addiction by society. Families often admit their addict sons or daughters to these Gospel Camps with the hopes of them repenting their past wrongs, coming out clean with renewed faith and spirituality in a week’s time. This perception continues to thrive. The perception of people today (as represented by the questionnaire responses to Q4 in research questionnaire) indicates that majority of the people 145 (60%) believed the times spent in both Gospel Camping and Rehabilitation Centre to be the solution to tackling addiction, whereas 34 (14%) believe Gospel Camping as the sole solution, another 33 (14%) believe admission to the Rehabilitation Centre as the sole solution and 28 (12%) had no opinion regarding the issue. When respondents were further asked if they believed the government doing enough to find institutional solution that addressed drinking problems, 55 (22.9%) believed it was whereas 120 (50%) remained skeptical of the efforts of the Government, which consisted more from the rural respondents and 65 (27%) had no opinion on the issue. (see Table 2.40)

Table: 2.40. Is the government doing enough to find institutional solution that addresses drinking problems? (Q 35 in research questionnaire)

Urban Respondents (96/240)			Rural Respondents (144/240)		
Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Opinion (%)
42 (43.8%)	34 (35.4%)	20 (20.8%)	13 (9.05)	86 (59.7%)	45 (31.3%)

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

Under the chairmanship of the Minister i/c Social Welfare Department, the Mizoram Social Defence & Rehabilitation Board (MSD&RB) was established by the state Government in 1999 to tackle drug addiction. Equipped with consultancy expertise and technical resource services for partner NGO’s, State AIDS Prevention

and Control Societies (SACS) and other agencies, the MSD&RB plays a significant role to help primary 'prevention' and tone down 'demand reduction'. Prior to the establishment of the MSD&RB, the Social Welfare Department solely carried the burden of tackling social defence along with some private centres established to fill the need less addressed by the Government. Such centres were: Damna In established in 1986, SGA in 1986, Faith Home in 1987, AMRO in 1989, Synod Rescue Home in 1987, TNT in 1988, New Life Home Society (Jeriko Khualbuk) in 1990, Blessing Home in 1991, Women Anti-Drug Association (WADA) in 1997 and many more followed.

The MSD&RB after its establishment having been appointed as the Regional Resource and Training Centre (RRTC) under the National Institute of Social Defence (NISD) began to coordinate the social defence drive of both the government and non-government organizations at the state level. The NISD is the nodal training and research institute in the field of social defence under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJ&E).⁵⁴² Today the RRTC has come to be known as State Level Coordinating Agency (SLCA) under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJ&E).

The MSD& RB has its main office located at Chaltlang, Aizawl along with two functional rehabilitation centres viz., Pisgah Reformatory located at Thingsul and Reformation Centre at Champhai, Mizoram, both established in 2000. These centres along with 11 other centres are funded by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJ&E). These Government funded organizations are formally known as Integrated Rehabilitation Centre (IRCAs). Mizoram has 11 IRCAs such as Agape Moral Reformation Organization, ZDRB (Damna In), Social Guidance Agency, Blessing Home, Women Anti-Drug Association (WADA) and more.⁵⁴³

Numerous amount of organizations exist throughout the state besides the IRCAs. They provide rehabilitation needs for '*ruihhlo ngai*' which is the general label given by society to the collective of people addicted to various substances. Their

⁵⁴² For more see <http://www.nisd.gov.in/about.html>

⁵⁴³ See Appendix. XVII. for detailed list of the MSJ&E funded centres known as Integrated Rehabilitation Centre (IRCAs)

services require the fulfilment of a certain standard to be an IRCA. The rehabilitation work is mostly provided as a collective, where the populace will be a mix of a drug dependent, liquor dependent and more. The rehabilitation work of the MSD&RB despite being labelled as catering to drug dependents, often extend their services to sole liquor dependents in their centres.

The MSD&RB work for primary prevention is pursued by organizing awareness programmes on various target groups like parents, church, schools besides the making and distribution of educational pamphlets. Reduction work is pursued through their rehabilitation centres; Pisgah Reformatory, Thingsul and Reformation Centre, Champhai which houses patients for one month, a treatment which can be extended for another month on the basis of a case considered 'deserving'. The treatment routine begin with a 10 days detoxification programme followed by the rehab phase. Most patients in the state consists of hard-core drug users (multiple drug users), thus the treatment spanning one month is often considered inadequate in order to administer effective treatment services. Those admitted end up being treated for stretch for two months. Rehabilitation centres not funded by the MSJ&E often house patients for months even up to a year at a stretch. Treatments in these ministry funded centres are provided free of cost. However, they are also often fuelled by donations given by patient parties and community leaders. On examination of patient case history, it is often found that the addiction does not begin for the majority by direct injection, but rather begin with the indulgence in gateway drugs like tobacco, cigarettes, gutkhas, marijuana and also liquor (though liquor/alcohol has often been debated if it should come categorised as a gateway drug or not).

The way to healing for an alcoholic at times become problematic with the presence of a common misconception by the liquor dependent while seeking treatment with other substance dependents. An alcoholic would disassociate self with the need for treatment as he/she fails to associate self to being an addict. This denial of self creates a barrier to being receptive to treatment.⁵⁴⁴ The other barrier to providing

⁵⁴⁴ Vanlalhruii, [Field Staff, SLCA, Mizoram Social Defence & Rehabilitation Board (MSD&RB) Government of Mizoram], personal communication. Dated: 5/4/2021

rehabilitation treatment for liquor dependents appears to be the need to provide different rehabilitation regiment required for different dependents. Thus, the rehabilitation treatment focus is drug dependent centric for the Government sponsored centres. It was found that there was no rehabilitation centre which specifically caters to liquor dependents in the Mizoram. A Christian state like Mizoram definitely prioritizes the need to seek spiritual healing and importance given to being ‘in the spirit’ results in organization of Gospel Campings year after year, church after church. Healing would not be complete without providing food for the soul. It has come to light that the MSD&RB had collaborated with the Chhinga Veng Church, Aizawl in formulating a more systemic curriculum for the Gospel Camping, organized for addicts for the duration of over a month from 15th March to 17th April 2021. The routine incorporated detoxification from the 15th – 28th March and the rest from the 29th March – 17th April 2021 stressed on the spiritual aspect. This blend of providing a systemic treatment for the body and the spiritual needs through Biblical study in a Gospel camp been the first of its kind. The church in consultation with the MSD&RB, making a joint effort to help curb demand would certainly have a positive impact for the future.

The study of liquor laws show similarities between the two. The prohibition and the penal aspect of both MLTP, 1995 and MLPC, 2014 Acts reveal the draconian nature of both laws to fulfil the objectives of prohibition and control respectively. Law makers had extensively empowered enforcing agencies to aid their efforts in prevention, detection and investigation of contraventions. Both prohibiting and legalization laws, seem not to fall far from their basic framework; each containing lengthy provisions of prohibition and control. Whereas, the major difference being that the former act allows very limited categories to acquire liquor and the latter permits a wider category to individuals aged above 21 years and above. Despite the draconian nature of the prohibition law, it is astounding to discover the failure of the law. The simplest explanation one can actually make sense of is the continual presence of ‘demand’ for liquor. It is also seen that efforts to reshape the Mizo way of thinking on the narrative of liquor was projected to be achieved through the Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition & Control) Act of 2014. The study of social perception, financial

implications, liquor revenue on state economy, justice system and impact on health all point towards proving true the hypothesis that liquor consumption has negative effects on Mizo society. But as data presents, it does not surpass the negative assumption of ill effects as pre-conceived by most.

CHAPTER VI

FINDINGS & CONCLUSION

The debatable issue of liquor has often been used by political regimes to influence electorates where most campaign promises have been directed towards formulation and enforcement of prohibiting policies. State Governments in India have time and again changed their wet or dry state status through adoption or repeal of liquor policies. Recent transitions were made by Kerala and Mizoram, the former from dry to wet and the latter vice versa. However, Kerala in a short span of three years (2014-2017) reverted to selling liquor again and then Mizoram went from sale to prohibition in five years (2014-2019). This transition in Mizoram rekindled the liquor controversy between Government and Church led civil society that had been dormant for the past nineteen years.

Liquor issue remain a persistent subject of conflict between power arbiters in Mizo society. The fight had been for prohibition on one hand and sale on the other. Civil society's disposition on liquor issue in contemporary society has been unwavering. While the paradigm of liquor debate continued to follow the same pattern with precedence given to religious views, economic factors (loss or gain) relative to drinking and assumed social consequences of liquor liberalization. The narrative of liquor ethnography has often been side-lined in exploration of the issue. Instead, the debate is shrouded with religious dogmatism which puts a veil to basic considerations like heavy price of enforcing prohibition, negating the notion of liquor tax and the least consideration given to individual freedom. Enforcement cost is an appendage to the state's treasury and at times considered a wasted effort as its failure is marked by the apparent availability of illicit liquor throughout the state. Civil Society has considered prohibition a failure but continues to lobby for its continued enforcement. Contrary to the wishes of the Church, the Mizoram Government repealed the dry law in 2014. This puts both Government and Church led civil society on opposite ends tussling once again to have the ball on their court.

The genesis of liquor problem is explored with a throwback to the past, with a critical lens analysing the socio-cultural and political history of the Mizos thus, aiming

to provide further insight to the present liquor debate. It aims to answer how the narrative came to be, how it had been contextualized to the larger socio political structure and exposes the power play between arbiters of power. Analysis of the history of disrupted past of the indigenous narrative, the consequences of interjection of the colonial power can provide a link to a better understanding of the present stance of the Government and civil society. Resurfacing of the debatable liquor issue demands a critical retrospective view to help provide a better understanding in its entirety through a post-colonial lens.

Findings

Study of the issue on liquor politics: state and civil society interventions has led to the exploration of liquor narrative from pre-colonial era to the present. The study had been directed with the aim of proving or disproving four hypotheses. Findings have been made through qualitative research, interview schedule and quantitative analysis of research questionnaires from Aizawl, Mamit and Kolasib Districts. The research findings are as presented below:

I. The first hypothesis: Adoption of Christianity by the Mizos put an end to the opposition between the Chiefs and the Missionaries on the issue of liquor.

The study of liquor politics in Mizoram required a recollection of the cultural past. Navigating the past had shined a light to the central role played by indigenous liquor. It can be seen that the existence of liquor predates the arrival of the Whiteman; to times prior to 1890's that exhibited the presence of Zubel in every household and also the very natural existence of liquor in the indigenous cultural society of the Mizos.

A. Back to the past with liquor as the looking glass:

The unfiltered past had seen liquor as a binding agent that invited community mobilization and participation in its making for various cultural festivities and occasions. The number of Zubel stored in the household was a marker of one's social standing, symbolic of the prestigious Nopui award bestowed to recognize altruism viz., tlawmngahna and its consumption also regulated by social status and tradition.

Also, the customary regulations of liquor consumption acknowledged of the past appeared to be better observed than the written laws enforced today. The disruption of the Mizo narrative by the colonial rule and the enforcement of their paternalistic system of administration had been rendered successful in the Hills with aid from the British missionaries. Studies have shown that the work of the British missionaries consolidated the rule of colonial power in the Lushai Hills. The missionaries could be identified as legitimizing agents of the colonial rule. Writings of Joy and Sajal Nag have attributed to the proliferation of the new religion to factors as:

- i. the existence of fluidity of structure through the practice of Saphun where one was allowed to change tribe and reformulate identity by adopting a new religion naturally made it easy for the indigenous Mizos to embrace a new religion such as Christianity
- ii. the occurrence of natural calamity of bamboo flowering viz., Mautam (1911-12 and 1929) endemic to the Mizo Hills inflicted famine, which resulted in hunger and deaths that weakened the resolve of the people to resist the colonial power, thus setting the site for philanthropic work of the British missionaries thereby making them and their work more acceptable and the resultant embrace of the new religion. The lack of rice grains during the famine had left them starving, unable to make rice beer that added fuel to their celebrations and had left them unable to perform many of their festive celebrations and practice their *sakhua* as it required giving feasts and providing zu to the community. It had dimmed their spirits and made them look for new hope which they found in the new religion.
- iii. the spiritual revival movement that came in different phases starting from 1906 to 1930 raised the Christian percentage. Fuelled by the spiritual revival movements that followed in the wake of the famine, by 1960, all had endorsed Christianity, thus, bringing to an end the opposition that existed between the Village Chiefs and the missionaries; after all they had become one in Christ.

The present study with liquor as a looking glass has identified three power arbiters in the colonial era viz., the Village Chiefs, the Colonial Administrators and the British Missionaries. The once powerful Village Chiefs had been reduced to do the biddings of the Colonial Administrators. The Chiefs who had lost their power to the Empire had resolved to safeguard their culture and social structure, thus, resisting

change advocated by the new religion. The new religion advocated the rejection of the indigenous culture and its practices as they were abhorred by the missionaries. As Lloyd writes, of the two indicators for a man to show his earnestness in becoming a Christian:

- i. First, to give up drinking zu because it involves the discontinuing of numerous religious and social rites.
- ii. Second, surrendering the *kelmei* amulet they wore around the neck, they considered it to provide protection from evil spirits, to set it aside showed serious intention to become a Christian free of superstitions.

They were expected to groom themselves in the likeness of the Whiteman, men were expected to cut their hair as against the long tresses they were used to wearing as a bun, women who used to wear *saiha bengbeh* or ivory earrings were expected not to wear it anymore. The early converts were 'introduced and educated to the concept of sin' as they were seen to be 'ignorant' on such conception. Christianity insisted a break with the old traditions, customs and habits. The simple proselyte tribes had to re-learn to exist as a Christian, re-orient themselves to the practices taught by the missionaries, like the observance of Sabbath, regular attendance at Church. So among many other things insisted for a Christian, consumption of liquor became notable as a 'sin'. This was so done as liquor represented a very deep link to the cultural practices of the past. The conceptualization of 'liquor as a sin' and 'to give up drinking to show earnestness in becoming a Christian' can only be identified as the beginning of negative conception towards liquor for the simple proselyte tribes.

The struggle on the issue of liquor had come to concentrate between the Village Chiefs and the British missionaries, the former resisted change and the latter advocated complete transformation in the western light. History has shown true to the saying of Sajal Nag "the administration governed them and the missionaries made them governable. One conquered them politically; the other consolidated it by conquering them morally and culturally". The study also indicates that the proliferation of Christianity can be attributed to the recognition of supplementing relations between the missionaries and the Colonial Administrators. This rendered the Village Chiefs helpless in their fight to resist change. The supplementing relation between two can

be seen in the colonial narratives cited under certain circumstances as:

- i. The resultant release of Thankunga, a keen Christian and son in law of Dawrphawka imprisoned at Lunglei prison in 1901 on the plea of missionary D.E. Jones.
- ii. The 1906 Lungpher incident where D.E Jones felt unfairly treated and threatened to report the Chief's action in directing his subjects to refrain from listening to his preaching which caused the Chief to rescind his order.
- iii. Donation of Colonel G.H. Loch to the Welsh Mission which enabled the purchase of a treadle operated printing machine in 1914. This afforded the mission to continue its printing work.
- iv. Stern criticism of the legalizing act of liquor by the officials in 1923 which prompted missionary J.H. Lorrain to question the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills to the Commissioner, Surma Valley and Hills Division and the daring request for the annulment of the order.

The above elaboration helps deduce that:

- i. Both belonging to the same identity, there is a recognition of the greater relations between the British missionaries and the colonial administrators that rendered the Village Chiefs powerless to fully protest and retaliate the works of the missionaries. This leaves them ineffective to block out the changes imposed by the missionaries as it threatened their very essence of life.
- ii. The aid of the apex power arbiter viz., the colonial administrators afforded the missionaries to subdue the opposing Chiefs thereby supplementing the mission work and the proliferation of Christianity.

The only souring glitch shown in their relation had been on the issue of Dr. Peter Fraser and his humanitarian work to liberate bawis (slaves) which led to his expulsion from his mission in the hills. The study had also brought an understanding to the conceptual factors behind the success of proselytization.

- i. The ultimate aim of the indigenous people had been the attainment of the coveted title of Thangchhuah which is bestowed only on complete performance of the various series of Khuangchawi ceremony. They believed the complete performance of this ceremony would usher them to heaven they called Pialral. This however was attained

only by the skilled hunter or the rich, one ultimately toiled hard during his lifetime and many a times to no avail. The new religion propagated salvation, did not discriminate but promised entry to heaven for all by the simple act of accepting Jesus Christ as the saviour. Such a promise was antithetical to their prior belief. Thus, the acceptance of Christ and all the practices that came along with the new religion ultimately led to the demise of their culture and indigenous practices. It also resulted in the re-orientation of the people in the likeness of the Whiteman in appearance and re-shaped to think in their likeness with Christianity as the binding factor. The new Christian Mizo came to vehemently oppose liquor as it symbolised the cultural past they broke away from.

- ii. The problem also lay with the antics of oppression used by the Chiefs to subdue the changes happening around them. They persecuted the converts in various ways such as refusing of burial, forced to perform forced labour, falsely blamed, fined unnecessarily, giving the smallest or the least favourable patch of land for cultivation, husbands were encouraged to batter their Christian wives and women were stripped and paraded naked, expulsion from villages where they were made to leave at midnight, forced to make liquor for the Chiefs and his elders and at times had liquor shoved down their throats. This oppressive behaviour of the Chiefs also worked against their favour where subjects sought refuge in the new religion and the white missionaries who they identified as benevolent and representing their welfare.
- iii. The ban on making and consuming zu was prioritized by the church mainly because it evoked nostalgia. The saying ‘lunglen a kai chhuak thei’ (lit. it can make one feel nostalgic) represented a recognition that consumption of their zu could evoke (and had evoked) a deep sentimental yearning for their cultural past and had converts revert. It stood as a bastion of the old culture that it was felt that a total ban must be imposed upon it. This was to ensure that (people) would not pine for zu and in turn revert back to the age old practices. Therefore, ‘khap law law ni mai se’ (lit. let it be prohibited) was the decision of the Kohhran hruaitu hmasate. Thus, prohibition of the drink can be understood as a form of ‘preventative for a proselyte to revert to his original sakhua’.

The growth of Christian population beginning the first spiritual revival movement from 1906 to the fourth revival movement in 1930 and the subsequent

identification of the entire tribal population to the adopted religion by 1960 thus proved true the first hypothesis, 'Adoption of Christianity by the Mizos put an end to the opposition between the Chiefs and the Missionaries on the issue of liquor.'

Analysis is made below:

- f) Adoption of Christianity was identified as loss of subjects by the Chiefs, as it implied the loss of culture and the crumbling of the social foundation of the communal society.
- g) Zu became an important signifier in the struggle between the Chiefs and the missionaries. One fought to retain culture and the other to change it. This was so because the making and consumption of zu against abstinence also signified continuance or discontinuance of numerous religious and social rites.
- h) The chiefs retaliated the change by harshly persecuting the converts, this was done with the aim of blocking the spread of Christianity. However, the Chiefs recognized the superiority of the White men, both administrators and missionaries were identified as one belonging to the same power, facilitating each other's work.
- i) The growth of the spiritual revival which began in 1906 was snubbed by the Chiefs through persecution and the counter cultural revival movement represented by Puma zai. However, this movement faded as a result of the Mautam famine of 1911. The fragile agrarian economy crumbled, there was shortage of food and zu no longer could be produced with the shortage of grains, the spirit of the counter cultural movement was finally nipped in the bud as a result of the famine.
- j) Cognizance of the humanitarian works of the missionaries made them more popular and perception of them came to occupy a more positive light from 1911. The Chiefs though untrusting and disapproving of the missionaries were helpless of the changes happening around them as Christians grew in number. Since the passing of more than five decades from the Khandaih persecutions of 1906, the conflict eventually subsided, the mistrust on both ends eventually dissipated as the Chiefs too became Christians. Thus, conforming to the Christian edicts set by the missionaries. Thereby transforming the entire socio-cultural practices of the people from birth to death. Christian names began to be adopted, their appearances changed, men cut their hair short, began to wear pants, women no longer wore their *saiha bengbeh* (ivory earrings), they observed Sundays, gave up their *kelmei amulets*, changed the way they buried the dead, the

Zawlbuk slowly faded and could not be revived despite government effort to restart the institution. It did away with their socio-cultural practices and most important to the issue under study, zu came to be perceived as a sin and the people observed abstinence thus ending the social sanction to the making and consumption of indigenous liquor.

The Chiefs had done their absolute best to resist and held their own despite all the disadvantages. However, all attempts had been futile. Fifty years later, they too are seen conforming to the dictated norms of the new social construct. Liquor became an important signifier in the struggle between the Chiefs and the missionaries, one fought to retain culture and the other to change culture. This was so because the making and consumption of liquor or abstinence signified continuance or discontinuance of numerous religious and social rites. The first spiritual revival movement from 1906 to the fourth revival movement in 1930 led to the proliferation of Christian population and resulted in the subsequent identification of the entire tribal population as Christian by 1960. This put a rest to the opposing stance between the missionaries and the Village Chiefs as they became one in Christ.

II. The second hypothesis: The repeal of the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1995 in 2014 resulted in differences of opinion among the political regimes as well as the people of Mizoram.

The study of this hypothesis was done through analysis of the changing attitudes of the state and civil society on liquor policies and its consumption in the period (1995-2018). One must note that churches became central to the functioning of the society in the pre-political set up of the Mizo society with the gradual dissolution of Zawlbuk by 1938. It filled the vacuum as it became the centre of knowledge and action until the establishment of the Young Mizo Association (YMA). The Church in Mizoram has immense influence on the pinion of the people. It has played the role of a mediator between the Government of India and Mizo National Front (MNF) during the period of political turmoil in the history of Mizoram independence movement in 1966-1986. It continues to occupy a very important and influential position in the contemporary

Mizo society as Christianity has come to formulate a very important identity of the people.

A. Dominating the liquor narrative.

Study has unveiled official orders that supported sale, transport and consumption of liquor that dates as far back as 1923. It has also unravelled the control of liquor narrative found from cited cases of the official Standing Order No. 11, 1936 and the Standing Order No. 2, 1954 cited in *Zoram Hriattirna* and *Mizo leh Vai Chanchin Bu*.

The cases of the official Standing Order No. 11, 1936 and the Standing Order No. 2, 1954, confirm the Government Official stance on indigenous liquor where hints of leniency and conservationist tendency can be traced from official documents prior to their translation much like the 1950 Constitution of India under Sixth Schedule, Article 12B which helps preserve the indigenous drink particularly the ‘non-distilled alcoholic drink’ of the autonomous district councils. The following deduction can be made from inconsistencies exhibited from the two documents:

- g) There had been inconsistencies in the dissemination of Government orders regarding zu.
- h) The administration exhibits leniency to the ‘consumption’ of ‘indigenous zu’.
- i) The educated indigenous elites as Christians, working for the system had been responsible for the translation. As seen from both documents the editors back then: Makthanga, Editor, *Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu* and Biakluanga, Secretary, Executive Committee, Lushai Hills District Council were known to be both devout Christians.⁵⁴⁵
- j) The act of omission and commission by the Mizos exhibits unwillingness to preserve the cultural past and promotion of the Mizo Kristian propaganda to promote prohibition. Promotion of the Chirstian agenda of temperance by emphasizing the ‘prohibiting’ aspect of the orders.

545 Hluna, Prof. J.V., (retired Head, Department of History, Pachhunga University College) personal communication, 4/11/2020 & 25/3/2022

k) It also indicates the rejection of ‘*sorkar dan*’ (the ways of the Government) over their ‘*hnam dan*’ (the ways of the Mizo custom) as their hnam dan had come to be identified as the Mizo Kristian⁵⁴⁶ way.

l) The promotion of hnam dan shows attempts to negate the consumption of liquor.

As supportive sections of official’s order(s) on indigenous liquor gets lost in translation, filtered for general consumption, the public perception of the narrative on liquor is seen as promoting temperance by both the Church but also by the Government. Such actions on the part of the print media controlled by Mizo Kristian elites (working for the system) can only be sourced from the influence of the Church: both Zosap and the Mizo Kristian hmasate. This intent to negate the drink continues to persist. Therefore, the contemporary Church continue to show demand for more stringent laws against liquor.

However, it can be deducted that both the Mizo Kristian hmasate and the missionaries under the banner of the church had promoted prohibition. The prohibiting laws mitigated by the church served to promote the unified intent of both parties. It can be further deduced that to isolate the lone intent for prohibition of the Mizo Kristian hmasate would help ring true the claim that they had been the source of prohibition. However, the broader picture shows that the promotion of unified intents of both Kristian hmasate and the missionaries had helped percieve the drink as a ‘sin’, ‘un-Christian principle’ and a ‘source of social evil’. So to identify the church as the source of prohibition would provide the simplest understanding.

The negative perception on liquor promoted by the Church had consequently rubbed heavily on the psyche of the indigenized Mizo Christians. When the missionaries left the hills, their values and work was carried on by the Church they helped establish. The amalgamation of Chirstianity as a very important facet of the Mizo ethnic identity had further helped proliferate liquor prohibition. It is observed that the intent of the indigenized Kohhran hruaitute of the contemporary world for prohibition had come to represent a different intent of their own. i.e., the sustained projection of the Mizo identity as ‘Mizoram Kristian ram’ or Mizoram land of the Christians, thus, we see the continued promotion of prohibition narrative.

546 Mizo Kristian is translated as the Mizo Chirstian

B. An uncompromising disposition

The introduction of prohibition in December 1897 at Mission Veng, Aizawl under the lead of the Presbyterian British missionary D. E. Jones (Zosaphluia). This had been the first of its kind. This was followed by the formulation of stringent laws by the Church. The first Presbytery held on April 1910 passed the Agenda No. 7 following the same lines as the 1897 prohibition order. The Church continue to stand for the prohibition of brewing, selling and consumption of liquor. The consequences had been excommunication from the Church and expulsion from the area. Such uncompromising disposition of the Church continued to be followed until the late 1980s. By late 1980s the stance of the Church began to shift a little. It continued to stand against liquor brewing, selling and consumption of liquor, but it stopped excommunicating its members for drinking. It does not indicate the softening of their approach towards liquor. It continued to campaign against its proliferation and its stance against it was reaffirmed by the 1987 Synod Assembly as ‘the most destructive force to the Mizo society’. Again, the 2015 Synod Assembly passed a resolution to forbid the services of members with Liquor permit in the Church ministry.

A. Opposing sale laws

Sale laws formulated by ministries have been unflinching objected by the Church and vehemently campaigned against. The issue of liquor has caused ministries to rise and fall in Mizoram as a result of the Church’s reaction against it. Sale laws such as: a) the Mizoram Excise Act of 1973 passed by Ch.Chhunga led Mizo Union Ministry, b) the Mizoram Excise Rules, 1984 formulated and enforced under Lal Thanhawla led Congress Ministry and the continued use by the then celebrated leader Laldenga led MNF ministry in 1986 and c) the recent enforcement of the Mizoram Liquor Prohibition and Control Act, 2014 under the Lal Thanhawla led Congress Ministry have all led to their unpopularity and replacement by ministries that seem to promote temperance.

The Presbyterian Church’s campaign for enforcement of ‘total prohibition’ at the policy level began from 1991 to 1995. The delayed action of the Congress Government

tested the patience of Church leaders. Inaction on the Governments part to make prohibition law prompted the Synod Executive Committee (SEC) to establish a Common Front which included all denominations, organize: a walking demonstration, hunger strike, statewide prayer. However, the result of their undeterred lobby had been the formulation of the dry law, the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1995 and surprisingly, the ousting of the Congress ministry in the State General Election of 1998. However, the turn of 2014 saw the repeal of the dry law by the Congress ministry, in the latter part of their second term rule. This had cause re-visitation of the conflict. The Church mobilized its pastorates, Church members, YMA and other community organizations to stand against the bill. It mobilized its people with sermons preached against “zu” in various churches, dissemination of knowledge on “liquor literature”, putting up posters against the liquor bill, conducting mass prayers hoping for the reinstatement of prohibition or prayers for a new ministry. All this and its coordinated work with the NGOs against the repeal law had definitely caused a change in electoral behavior. Thus, proving the hypothesis “The repeal of the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1995 in 2014 resulted in differences of opinion among the political regimes as well as the people of Mizoram” true.

The study also revealed that the Church’s campaign against liquor has been effective in formulating opinions of the people particularly the women. Liquor policies have been a very important electoral determinant in Mizoram where adoption of anti-liquor stance provides a safe policy for any political party as the recurring theme of all community based NGOs have been *ruihhlo kan duh lo*.⁵⁴⁷

In a state where activities of the people is church-centric, on issues such as liquor, the churches in their capacity as a collective of different denominations through the Mizoram Kohhran Hruaitute Committee (MKHC) or as an individual Church have promoted measures to curb liquor consumption, rehabilitate members with dependencies to various intoxicants and promote prohibition. Thus the study has found that the continued conceptualization of liquor as a sin and a source of various social evils play a big role for the Church to lobby for prohibition and mobilize its

⁵⁴⁷ *ruihhlo kan duh lo* translates as ‘we don’t want intoxicants’.

community based social organizations, particularly the Young Mizo Association (YMA) to enforce its policy. One also has to mention that on the issue of liquor the voice of the minority is repressed as the community is policed by the Church through its social organizations. It has morphed into a society where illicit manufacturers and sellers gets expelled from their respective localities. One cannot be dismissive of the issue of liquor as it causes ministries to rise and fall and mobilises major actors to action in the state to promote their interests. It causes divide not only in families but also family of the larger unit: the state as a whole.

III. The third hypothesis: The issue of liquor has been used by political regimes in Mizoram to influence electorates.

This study was made through content analysis of research questionnaires and the Assembly debates of the Mizoram Legislative Assembly effecting liquor bills. Such debates had taken place on the introduction of bills such as the Mizoram Excise Bill, 1973, Mizoram Excise Bill 1992, Mizoram Prohibition of Liquors Bill 1995, Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Bill 1995 and the Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition & Control) Bill, 2014.

A. Politics of liquor prohibition

Liquor debates exposes the tug and pull for power between Church led civil society and the state. And how the issue is used by political regimes to influence electorates. It provides a good site for political regimes to promote politics of prohibition. Content Analysis of the Assembly debates from the Mizoram Excise Bill 1973 to the Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition & Control) Bill, 2014 clearly helps locate the centrality of the ‘prohibition narrative’ promoted by the Church on liquor debate in the state of Mizoram.

The debates clearly shows the change of positions political parties make depending on whether they are in a position to effect legislation or not. Political Party’s ulterior policy towards liquor are not reflected in their respective manifestos. However, the claim for prohibition had often been reflected in election campaigns and seem to help promote their cause as liquor had been identified as the most notorious intoxicating

substance by the Church lead civil society. 1973 saw the Congress oppose the Excise Bill but had been the ones to enforce the Bill in 1984. The MNF stance on liquor while underground had proved to be different from the over ground policy which had been quite tolerant. This too had contributed to the unpopularity of Laldenga and finally led to his inglorious oust from power.

The issue of liquor had helped expose and hamper reputations in the state. It is an issue which leads to finger pointing on the past liquor policies of political regimes. Despite its pro-liquor sentiment promoted, the MNF too had introduced an amendment to legalizing bill with the enforcement of the Mizoram Excise & Narcotics (Wine) Rules, 2008. This had caused concern to Church leaders as it filled them with apprehension that such a law will eventually lead to a legalizing law.

The study found that the Assembly debates on liquor narrative is predominantly centred round the lines posed by Christianity of the Mizo kind, where support and positive reasoning of liquor sale by a legislator would be blasphemy. Also analysis of the Assembly debates on liquor policies mentioned above including the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1995 reveal that political regimes on the opposing side often find themselves promoting and leading an anti-liquor campaign along religious lines. The appearance of divide fuels political agenda to work against each other. Liquor has been a very effective issue for legislators to sway opinion and promote their parties. It has led to the replacement of Ch.Chhunga by T.Sailo in 1978, Laldenga by Lal Thanhawla in 1989 and then Lal Thanhawla by Zoramthanga in 2018. It had also led to the unpopularity of the leaderships of T. Sailo and Lal thanhawla during their respective terms in the early 1980's and 1990's for their delayed response to the wishes of the civil society for prohibition.

On the issue of the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1995 though formulated and enforced by the reigning Congress party, their delayed response to the wishes of the Church had caused them their reputation. The MNF on the other hand wasted no opportunity to muddle their reputation with the introduction of the Mizoram Prohibition of Liquor Bill, 1995, a private bill of the opposition legislator, Lalrinchhana on the 29th September, 1995. They outgunned the Congress ministry in introducing the prohibition bill. They played well with the sentiment of the people.

This resulted in the introduction of Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Bill, 1995 by the Congress two months later on the 14th December, 1995. But harm had already been done, it led to the replacement of the Congress by the MNF in 1998. So more often than not, liquor issue has helped place opposing political regimes on the treasury bench thus, proving true the hypothesis “issue of liquor has been used by political regimes in Mizoram to influence electorates”. The political narrative of liquor continues to be dominated by the Church in Mizoram and is such an issue that radicalizes the Church as well. The liquor narrative helps deduce that:

- i. the issue exhibits schism between the Churches led civil society and the Government,
- ii. the Church and Government both wishes to dominate the narrative often resulting in clash of interests and exhibits power play,
- iii. it is an issue for political regimes to influence electorates,
- iv. the true stance of political regimes on liquor issue remains uncertain unless they remain in the position to effect legislation and
- v. the issue had been used by the Church to influence electorates as well.

The Church ‘In the midst of the absence of anti-incumbency wave in the last Congress ministry’ perceived the Congress President and former Chief Minister Lal Thanhawla, ‘pastors and revival speakers preached against the ministry from Church pulpits with ulterior motives; on the last Sunday before the General Election scheduled on Wednesday, the 28th November 2018, Churches had collectively preached against liquor and the ministry in places like Chhingchhip, Dawrlawn, Thenzawl and other places information had also been received of pastors promoting candidates of the upcoming Zoram Peoples’ Movement (ZPM) party’. Such action of the Church prove contradictory to its own preaching of ethical election conduct of campaigning as promoted through their Mizoram People Forum (MPF). He commented ‘liquor will continue to be present as long as there is people and its society, as a political leader, one has to ponder on how to live with it? How to go with it?’ had the MLPC not been

successful, the party had been prepared to repeal the law. It had been clear as related by the President, the party had not anticipated its downfall in 2018.

B. Stakeholders opinion

The politics surrounding the repeal of the dry law had clearly set the polarizing stance of the two main political parties. The enforcement of this act solidified the anti-prohibitionist stance of the Congress and the pro-prohibitionist position of the MNF party in Mizoram. Perception of stakeholder solidifies this belief as 157 (65%) of the respondents related the MNF party to being 'pro-prohibitionist', 12 (5%) to the Congress party, 21 (9%) to the Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP) and 50 (21%) identified others (Question 21 in research questionnaire). Majority of the stakeholders also perceive liquor as an issue which causes the rise and fall of ministries in Mizoram. It had been observed that many believe the issue of liquor had been a utilized by political regimes as a source of political play owing to lack of results during prohibition. Thus, liquor is seen as a good site for vote bank politics and that it should not be politicized.

Majority of respondents further felt happiness with the reinstatement of prohibition act as majority of them 183 (76.2%) agreed they were, whereas the majority 23 (9.6%) were not and 34 (14.2%) had no opinion on the issue. As an anonymous commentator had said, "Had the Congress continued to rule, my husband would have died from excessive drinking, therefore I voted for the MNF". The MNF who promised to reinstate prohibition during their election campaigns in 2018 seemed to resonate as a solution for many women to their domestic problems. The politics surrounding the repeal of the dry law had clearly set the polarizing stance of the two main political parties. The enforcement of the 2014 Act solidified the anti-prohibitionist stance of the Congress and the pro-prohibitionist position of the MNF party in Mizoram.

IV. The fourth hypothesis: Liquor consumption has negative effects on Mizo society.

Liquor itself if left untouched, unconsumed has no power over a person and is a mere 'thing' as Laldenga had once said. However, the addictive nature of the drink

has often been identified as the source of various social evils and fatalities. The controlled sale of liquor by the Congress ministry in Mizoram for four years between 2014-2018 had been a brave attempt to change the narrative, an experimental law which the then Chief Minister Lal Thanhawla avowed to repeal if it turned out to be an impediment for the people. It remains no secret that despite seventeen years of enforcing prohibition, illicit liquor has been available in various places within the state. That people habituated to drinking have had constant supply of illicit liquor for consumption despite enforcement of the prohibiting law. A retrospective analysis has been done to determine various implications of liquor law enforcement on the society, economy and health of the people which will help determine true or false if liquor consumption has negative effects on Mizo society.

A. The General Perception

It is determined that the Mizo population consist of quite a large number of people habituated to drinking, 134 (56%) respondents had identified to having family members who drank liquor, against 106 (44%) respondents who do not. However, on categorizing responses as heavy drinker and occasional drinker, it had been found that the high percentage of the drinking population is caused by the identification of ‘occasional drinkers’ from families of both rural and urban respondents, heavy drinkers formulate the minor percentage. From the interview of the drinking population, it has been determined that majority of them did not perceive their consumption as sinful, to them the notion of ‘drinking as a sin’ appears to be relational to one’s action, not having much to do with faith.

The study has also revealed that liquor is a factor that caused tension in communities and that learning to co-existing with liquor seems to find major disagreement with the people. On closer analysis it is determined that substantial number of youths aged 18-25 years and adult aged between 36-45 years tended to agree with the need to liberalize and co-exist with liquor. However, this makes it quite clear that the majority of Mizo respondents spanning all ages remain ‘un-open’ to the idea of liberalization of liquor and co-existence still a far-fetched ideal. Thus majority

continue to perceive prohibition as good for the Mizo society and disagreed to the move of the Government to regulated/controlled sale in 2014.

However, respondent's opinion on the MLPC Act 2014 despite appearing quite oriented towards prohibition, there also appears a crack. There is recognition by the majority that the solution to the drink problem is not embedded in prohibition, therefore, when asked what their considered solution to the dilemma of liquor consumption would be given the choice between total prohibition, regulated sale and no opinion, minority of 21 (8.7%) respondents opted for total prohibition, majority 168 (70%) had opted for regulated sale and 51 (21.2%) had no opinion on the issue. This indicates the complexity of the issue, where the data shows acknowledgement of the failure of total prohibition which a substantial percentage opting for a regulated sale. However, perception of respondents in the urban populace seem to be devoid of opinion on the issue.

B. The Financial implications of liquor

On closer analysis of liquor finances through interview of the drinking population, three types of drinkers were identified – the heavy drinker, the occasional drinker and the regular but moderate drinker. The majority consist of the occasional drinkers and the preferred drink of all had been identified as local zu (local liquor) and Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL). The average age of their first taste of liquor had been determined at 17 years for the urban consumers and 16 years for rural consumers. The average monthly expenditure on liquor of urban respondents is determined at Rs. 3468/- as against Rs. 1747/- average expenditure of rural drinkers making the average expenditure of rural residents 49.62% lower than the urban drinkers. It is also determined that the urban expenditure as highest among the middle income range of 10000-14999, where 16.35% from their monthly income goes to the purchase of liquor. However, in the rural drinking scenario, it is found that the lowest strata of income 4999 and below had the highest percentage of monthly expenditure with 70% of their income used for purchasing liquor. The total percentage of both urban and rural drinking expenditure can be determined to be 9.5 % with an average amount of Rs. 2631.53 spent monthly to procure liquor. It had been quite interesting to know that

some consumers in the rural areas were able to procure their drink in the dated form of 'barter' system.

C. Liquor tax on State Revenue

The revenue generated from liquor during the era of the ME Act to the MLPC era from 1985 to 2020 shows an overall contribution of 4.9% to the State Own Resources (SOR) of Mizoram. Liquor revenue generated during 1986-1987 was 33.16217 lakhs which led to the highest ever contribution made by liquor to SOR with a whopping 33.6% in the state. 2015-2016 saw liquor revenue contribute 15.8% to SOR with a total income of Rs.10365.30738/- lakhs and SOR standing at Rs. 65604.04/- lakhs. With the implementation of the legalizing law in 2015, the trajectory of the Finance Minister had shown hope for increase in revenue. However, it is seen that liquor revenue continued to drop in the consecutive years that followed. Since 2017, with the fixation of liquor tax to 16%, income received show a decline of taxes with a difference of Rs. 977.43326/- lakhs from the previous year. This was mainly due to refusal of tax payment by vendors and non-action on the part of the authority to push for payment. Years 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 show a contribution of liquor tax further decline to 9.7% and 9.1%.

The prospect of a higher contribution of liquor tax to SOR would have been a possibility had there been better co-ordination between the taxing agents viz., the Excise and the Taxation Department, exhibition of good governance from the Government and accountability from wine shop vendors. Eighteen years of prohibition enforcement from 1997 to 2015 had seen an income of 3240.942 lakhs from liquor which contributed a total of 18.5% during the period compared to the earnings of 40845.61 lakhs during the sale law from 2015 to 2020 which contributed to 47.3% of revenue to the state in a span of five years.

It can be seen that the liquor income during the enforcement of the sale law amounted to an earnings of 40845.61 lakhs in the span of five years from 2015-2020. Such earnings contributed a total of 2.23% to the state GDP. The total income of liquor during the enforcement of sales in the era of the Mizoram Excise Rules 1983 spanning

from 1985 to 1988 and the sale law under the MLPC Act from 2015 to 2020 resulted in a total income of 40948.01 lakhs which made a contribution of a total of 2.69% to the state GDP.

Calculation of liquor income during the enforcement of the MLTP Act, for eighteen years spanning the period 1997-2015 shows an income amounting to 3240.942 lakhs thus making a total contribution of 9.9% to the per capita income. On the other hand, the enforcement of the sale law under the MLPC Act from 2015-2020 shows a total earnings of 40845.61 lakhs from liquor which contributes 29% to per capita income in the state.

In the initial year of liquor sale in 2015-16, Liquor Revenue (LR) had an impact of 15.79% to the SOR. SOR this year stood at Rs. 65604.04/- lakhs whereas LL had been Rs. 76780.05467/- lakhs the very same year. This indicates the leakage percentage amounting to 117% of the SOR. This indicates the spending to procure liquor far surpassing the SOR. However, the leakage percentage in SOR declined thereon. The total years of MLPC era spanning from 2015-2020 shows a Liquor Leakage (LL) amounting to Rs. 267281.9727/- while the State Owned Resource (SOR) in the same time frame stood at Rs. 482960.3/- lakhs. Thus, the LL percent on SOR in the span of five years had culminated to a total of 55.34%. This shows a huge impact of leakage on the state's economy in these respective sale periods. Had these money been used within the state's economy, it would have huge positive economic impact like increase sales, production, generated employment and more.

There is no denying that liquor revenue proves a very good source of income for the state, as seen from the differences of the impact of liquor tax between prohibition and the sale law. One also has to take into account the number of illicit drinks sold in the black market that goes untaxed, which would have made a good source of revenue for the state with the right policy implementation. However, taxing liquor has been subjected to objections as seen in the Assembly debates as it is preached 'better to remain poor than rich from sin tax'.

D. Implication on the Justice System

The impact of liquor on Mizoram justice system was studied and conclusion arrived from the data acquired from the Excise and Narcotics Department, Government of India and the Police through its Crime Investigation Department (CID). The comparative span of five years between 2010 to 2014 (MLTP Act) and 2015 to 2019 (MLPC Act), have shown a surprising decrease in the overall liquor crime rate during the regulated sale period to 35 % as compared to the overall of 57% in the prohibition period making the overall difference 22%.

It has been understood that most cases which eventually end up under liquor crime data have mostly been consequences of reports given by individual of contraveners/contravention to authorities. Liquor show an unexpected lowering of crime percentage over the years despite being consistently high compared to other crimes. Despite the lowing percentage, it remains high as the provision of both acts; the MLTP, 1995 and MLPC, 2014 remained mostly the same as both ordered arrests of those 'drinking without permit, consuming liquor in public place, making nuisance under the influence of liquor and driving under influence of liquor. This provision of both acts kept afloat the liquor crime rates throughout.

It has been found that liquor laws put a strain on the justice system and law enforcement agencies. It also caused structural and managerial problems of prisons as a consequence of over population caused by these liquor acts. The only difference of the two acts from the enforcement point of view had been that 'arrests were not made on those who privately held their liquor drink'.

E. Implication of Liquor Consumption on Health

On the implication of liquor on one's health, the assumption had been that the sale of liquor would lead to a proportionate increase in the number of liquor related deaths. However data shows that the escalation of liquor death rates appears to be insignificant to as small a number as 3%. The overall recorded percentage of liquor related deaths over the span of seven years from 2013-2019 stands at 18%. While

according to the National Centre Disease Informatics and Research (NCDIR) the leading cause of death mentioned in 2018 had been disease of the circulatory system like heart attacks and strokes which overall presented 16% of deaths in Mizoram. Liquor consumption might be a lifestyle for some, a sustainable lifestyle for those moderate drinkers, but one cannot deny the harm caused on the health of a person habituated to excessive drinking. One also cannot ignore the physical, emotional and economic toll it takes on the family members involved in the process in their capacity as care providers.

F. Stakeholders perception

The study has found majority of the stakeholders continue to believe in abstinence from liquor as they continue to hold on to the perception of liquor as a sin. It is also believed that Liquor Prohibition is the right thing to do for a Christian majority state and this perception is held more by women. It is also determined through correlation coefficient that people with such predominant belief that drinking is morally unacceptable will most likely not vote for a party with pro-liquor advocacy and this opinion runs truer for the rural areas. The study finds that the Christian identity continues to remain deeply embedded in the Mizo psyche and to support such policies equates an un-Christian act. So liquor is identified as an important voting determinant that influence the voting behaviour of the Mizo people.

Liquor prohibition has been so deeply embedded in the psyche on the people that the very term 'prohibition' which by nature is a limitation on ones freedom, a prescription of what not to do is not recognised as such by the majority. Majority of 127 (53%) respondents disagreed that prohibitionist policy is an infringement on individual freedom, while 73 (30%) respondents agreed and 40 (17%) had no opinion regarding. Larger portion of stakeholders failed to identify it as a limitation to one's freedom. This indicates the extent to which people really had been indoctrinated to endorse prohibition. Where the state of limitation is not recognized as it is so.

The study has found that Community based NGOs continue to support the Churches on their pro-prohibitionist stance. However, people identify the MLTP 1995

as a failure, though they continue to opt for prohibition which gives them a sense of security. They do not identify the policy as a solution to the drink problem and this knowledge poses a dilemma to the stakeholders, where they would like the Government to come up with a different policy which will have a greater leanings towards prohibition.

It is found that the younger section of respondents would opt for a more liberal approach to liquor policy whereas the older stakeholders firmly believe that the Government should continue with the prohibitionist policy. Thus, more youths were unhappy with the reinstatement of prohibition than the older demographic of respondents. With this one can assume that more youths voted for the Congress in the 2018 election for their liquor policy as against the older generation. Thus, a prediction can be made that maybe in the next 50 to 60 years from now, the state may adopt a more liberal approach to liquor.

The retrospective study on the implications of the MLTP Act and MLPC Act indicates that liquor causes problems in communities and that people are generally intolerant to liquor consumption. The expenditure on liquor consumption also exhibit strain on income where 9.5 % of their earnings is utilized to purchase liquor which could otherwise go to personal savings. The contribution of liquor tax to state revenue had been highest in 1986-1987 in the Mizoram Excise Act, 1973 with an income of 33.16217 lakhs, leading to a contribution of 33.6% to the State Own Resources (SOR) in a single financial year. In the MLPC era for a period of five years spanning from 2015 to 2020 generated a total revenue of 40845.61 lakhs thus, contributing 47.3% to SOR. One cannot deny the huge revenue earnings of liquor sale but the study of the related cost associated to liquor like treatments for liquor induced illness, operating expense of police stations, prisons, judicial cost and more, the financial brunt carried on the expense of the public exchequer might present a different scenario. Liquor compared to other crime heads has consecutively been the highest contributor of crime rate in Mizoram, though it showed a surprising decrease in the overall liquor crime rate during the regulated sale period, it none the less remain the highest contributor to the crime rates over the years. However, on the issue of health, liquor induced deaths contribute a small percentage of deaths compared to diseases like heart attacks and

strokes but it none the less causes various health related issues. Thus, the implication study of liquor all points towards proving true the hypothesis “liquor consumption has negative effects on Mizo society” but it does not surpass the negative assumption of the ill effects of liquor as conceived by most.

Concluding Remarks

The study of the politics of liquor: state and civil society interventions exposes the tug and pull for power between the two to dominate the narrative. However, one has to really give it a deep thought as to what will be best for all stakeholders; the drinking as well as non-drinking population. The solution has to focus on less about the politics and more about the community. A total of almost eighteen years of prohibition enforcement had seen its failure. It appears that stakeholders recognize this failure, and are looking for a better alternative liquor law. Political parties have to really understand the impact of their policies, not just consider stakeholders as vote banks. Church led society also has to rethink their approach to liquor and learn to evolve according to the needs of the time. The study has shown that there are quite a substantial amount of stakeholders in a quest for a new liquor law more oriented towards a prohibition but devoid of the ‘total’ aspect, perhaps in the light of a ‘limited prohibition’.

There has to be acknowledgement on the failure of liquor prohibition policy and that there is also intolerance towards ‘open sale’ of liquor. With this acknowledgement, the Government could formulate a better law which could help bridge the gap between polarizing opinions of power arbiters in the Mizo society. The Government could also organize a state-wide referendum to determine people’s stance on either sale or no sale to ensure citizens voice is accounted for, to make people feel part of the decision-making process and implement liquor policy accordingly. This will help legitimize their stance on the issue.

Prohibition or not, there is continued demand for liquor which indicates continued supply of the demand. As the saying goes, despite all the restrictions put on liquor, ‘life finds a way’, in this case it has found a way for the supply to thrive illegally. The existence of demand for liquor will continue to generate the existence

of illicit brewers. The Government has to help provide alternative income for these poverty stricken illicit brewers if it really wishes for them to end brewing.

It is important for the Government to step-up in providing social defence. Rehabilitation drive in Mizoram has so far been taken as a collective, as the dependency is often clubbed together by society with other substance users. It will be more effective to have a separate rehabilitation centre for liquor dependents in order to specifically address their needs to recovery. The Government needs to concentrate its effort to rehabilitate people with liquor dependency by establishing the first ever rehabilitation centre for liquor dependents in Mizoram.

The study indicates that teenagers of 16 to 17 years have their first taste of liquor, they form a vital target age group to educate the negative effects of liquor which will help in demand reduction in the long run. As civil society through its various social organizations help enforce prohibition law, they should also be mobilized to help prevent demand. So far, Churches have organized many Gospel Campings for various target groups. Collaboration work of the Church with the Mizoram Social Defence & Rehabilitation Board (MSD&RB) which can offer systematic guidance to treating people with various dependencies. This can result in a well-rounded healing of both flesh and spirit. Collaboration with other NGOs and establishments will lead to better awareness in 'preventing demand'.

If the Government ever opt to sell liquor again, it will do well to promote indigenous alcoholic beverages or have liquor made locally by setting up liquor manufacturing distilleries in the state to prevent all economic leakages on liquor purchased from outside. This will tremendously help boost the state's economy.

It would not be wrong to assume that liquor will continue to be a source of debate in Mizo society by the simple fact that there continues to be 'demand' as pointed out by the MLTP Study Group. Whatever liquor laws Government enforces in the state, either total prohibition, limited prohibition or controlled sale, people have borne witness to the continued need for greater rehabilitation work particularly for liquor dependents. The subject of campaign has shifted over the years from the simple rice beer to liquor of various brands; so has the potent strength of the drink from mild to strong. This study in no way advocates the drink nor does it blindly criticize. It

simply acknowledges the existence of a greater debate on liquor linked to power arbiters in stages of the Mizo history. To quote Nicholls, “The questions drink poses are about much more than just the drink alone; because this is the case, the answers to many of those questions are political before they are anything else”. The person often becomes the most political.

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10. Mpom, Rev. Dr. Mongzeung., (Pastor Jalukie Town Baptist Church, Nagaland) telephone communication, 28/3/2022
11. Thanhawla, Lal. (President of the MPCC, Ex-Chief Minister of Mizoram 1986 to 1988, 1988 to 1993, 1993 to 1998, 2008 to 2013 and 2013 to 2018) personal communication, 22/12/2020
12. Lalsangliana, F. (Ex- Secretary, Mizoram Presbyterian Church Synod) personal communication, 6/2/2021, 19/2/2021 & 25/3/2022
13. Zomawia, R. (Executive Member, Central Executive Committee, Central YMA (2014-2017) & Former Secretary, Kupuan Committee, Central YMA), personal communication. Dated: 24/3/2021.
14. Chakma, Dr. B. D. (Former MLA, Seventh Mizoram Legislative Assembly), telephone communication. Dated: 12/4/2021.

15. Romawia, R. Assembly Debates Proceedings on The Mizoram Excise Bill 1992. Mizoram Legislative Assembly. Second Legislative Assembly. Tenth Sitting. Dated: 17/3/1992.
16. Vanlalhruii, [Field Staff, SLCA, Mizoram Social Defence & Rehabilitation Board (MSD&RB) Government of Mizoram], personal communication. Dated: 5/4/2021.
17. Zoramthanga. (Chief Minister & President of the Mizo National Front. Chief Minister From 1998 to 2008, 2018 till date) personal communication, 9/2/2021
18. Zoremawia. (Former Village Council President, 1999-2002, 2012-2015 & 2015-2020, Sialsuk Village Council) telephone interview. Dated: 24/11/2021.
19. Remthangi. (Aged 94) personal conversation. Dated: 3/8/2016

APPENDICES

Appendix I. Proposal contents for the sale of country spirit and import liquor shops in the Lushai Hills

Proposal contents for the sale of country spirit and import liquor shops in the Lushai Hills on the 15th May 1923.

The proposal statements made by the Superintendent of the Lushai hills to the Commissioner, Surma Valley and Hills Division in the Lushai Hills for the establishment of wine shop in Aijal is as written below (see Chapter III, Picture 1).

I leave this proposal for the establishment of an wine shop in aijal for your decision. There is no demand in Lungleh (Lunglei)

The principal points in my view are as follows:

- a. Within the canteen in the shop can sell liquor to outsiders.
- b. There is undoubtedly a genuine demand for spirits and if no legal supply is arranged, it is very difficult to check illegal distillation.
- c. I think it will be better for the battalion that a legal source of supply of spirits to outsiders should be supplied, than that outsiders should brew illicitly, in which case sales to men of the battalion are inevitable.
- d. In my opinion it will be advisable to the effect of licensing a shop to sell country spirit and imported liquors on the usual terms allowed in the plains. I should certainly prefer this to an out still system.
- e. I would not license a shop in the main bazaar, it would be necessary to find a site elsewhere.
- f. I do not think the Lushais would purchase the shop to many great extent. They prefer zu.

Appendix. II. Approval Statements for the establishment of wine shop in Aizawl

Approval Statements for the establishment of wine shop in Aizawl sent to the D.C. Cachar. No. 35/G/II-12. As can be deciphered from the document.

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that the Commissioner of Surma Valley and Hills Division and thein has appeared a proposal to open a shop in Aijal. The fee for this is 2/- per lit..... and for the latter our annual fee of 50/-. I should be very much obliged if you wouldwith your Amounts a reliable licenser for This would arrangements about findingto open the shop in the bazar itself. For your information

Appendix III. Mizo and Vai Chanchin Bu Standing Order No. 11 of 1986 – 1987

Mizo and Vai Chanchin Bu Standing Order No. 11 of 1986 – 87 given by Major. A.G. McCall, Superintendent, Lushai Hills as published in the *Mizo leh Vai Chanchin Bu (or The Mizo and Outsider Newspaper)*.

The order stipulates:

- a. Within 5 mile' radius of Aijal anyone found in possession of distilled zu on his person or in his house or of any apparatus used for distilling will be prosecuted and severely dealt with.
- b. The practice of conveying ordinary Zu from one village to another anywhere within the 5 mile radius of Aijal for any purpose whatsoever is prohibited and contravention of this order is punishable – except in the case of one bottle for personal consumption only.
- c. The owners of houses in which any breach of peace arises as a result of drunken brawls will be personally liable and Chiefs who have permitted such a state of affairs without taking steps to hold the party concerned responsible will themselves be held liable.

This area is an artificially populated one with a concentrated population and the above orders are passed for the purpose of preserving the general peace of the community and to emphasize the need for temperance and moderation. The Lushai would dislike being called uncivilised. In all civilised countries drunkenness causing a breach of the Peace and a nuisance, not drinking of alcohol is an offence punishable with Jail.

Appendix IV. Statement of liquor prohibition clubbed under VII. General Orders 9(a)

Statement of liquor prohibition clubbed under VII. General Orders 9(a) by Major. A.G. McCall, Superintendent, Lushai Hills as published in The Lushai Hills District Cover.

The order stipulates:

- a. Within 5 mile' radius of Aijal anyone found in possession of distilled zu on his person or in his house or of any apparatus used for distilling will be prosecuted and severely dealt with.
- b. The practice of conveying ordinary Zu from one village to another anywhere within the 5 mile radius of Aijal for any purpose whatsoever is prohibited and contravention of this order is punishable – except in the case of one bottle for personal consumption only.
- c. The owners of houses in which any breach of peace arises as a result of drunken brawls will be personally liable and Chiefs who have permitted such a state of affairs without taking steps to hold the party concerned responsible will themselves be held liable.

This area is an artificially populated one with a concentrated population and the above orders are passed for the purpose of preserving the general peace of the community and to emphasize the need for temperance and moderation. The Lushai would dislike being called uncivilised. In all civilised countries drunkenness causing a breach of the Peace and a nuisance, not drinking of alcohol is an offence punishable with Jail. There is no ban on persons making Lushai rice zu for their personal consumption.

Appendix V. Aims and objectives of the Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP).

The aims of the Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP) is as stipulated below (for more read *Annual Report 2019-2020*, Mizo Zirlai Pawl (Mizo Students' Association). Aizawl: MZP General Headquarters).

1. To unite all Mizo Students
2. To safeguard the rights and dignity of all Mizo Students
3. To support and promote labour
4. To stand against corruption
5. To prepare Mizo students to become helpful citizens of Mizoram
6. To promote and conserve good traditional values of the Mizos
7. To prevent Mizos from all assimilative forces
8. To lend a helping hand in cooperation with the Government to bring about development.
9. To prevent the downfall of the Mizos.
10. To unite all Mizo ethnicity.
11. To work for the establishment of a single administration of all lands once inhabited by our forefathers.

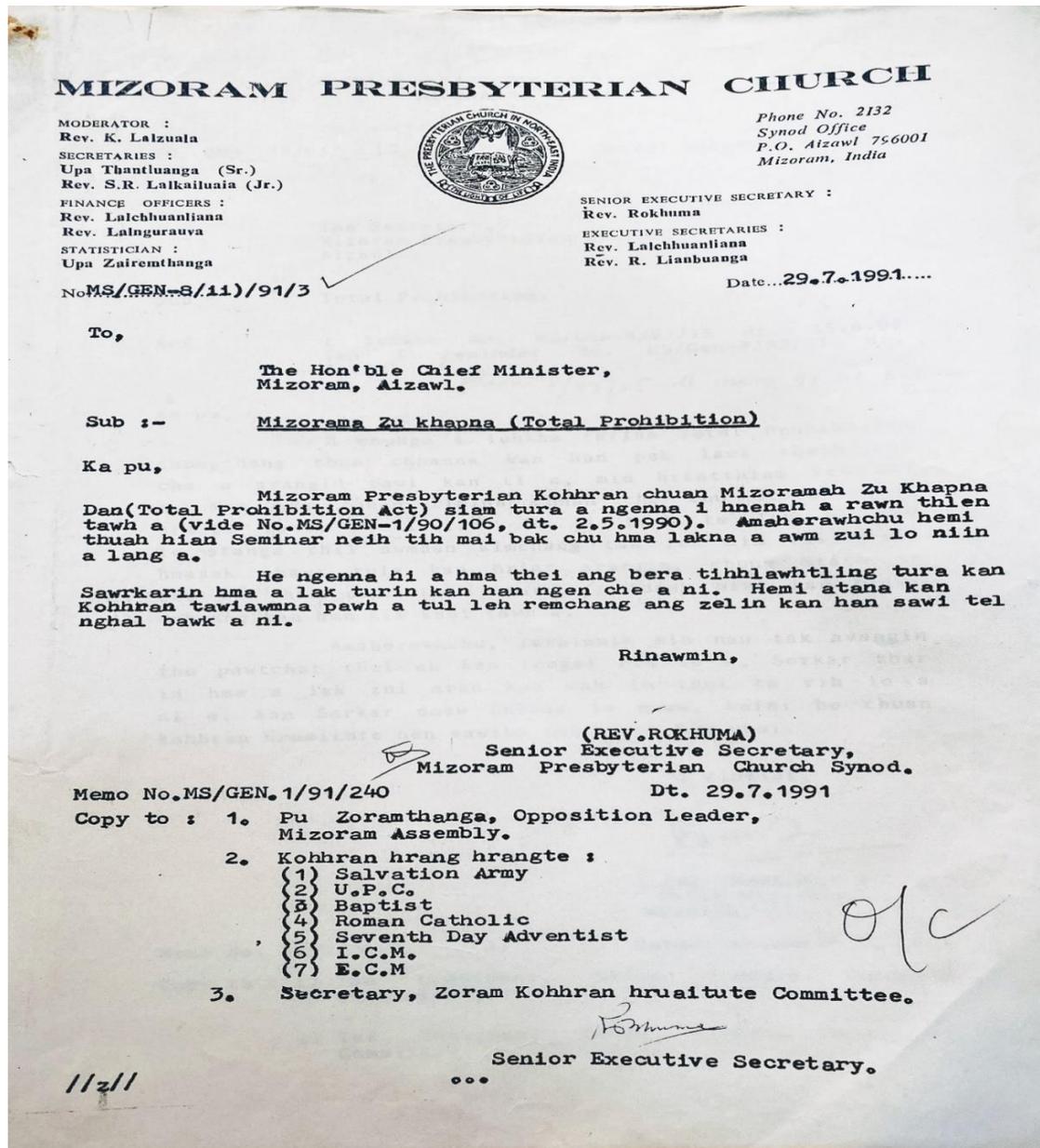
Appendix VI. Aims and objectives of the Mizoram Upa Pawl (MUP)

The Mizoram Upa Pawl (MUP) aims and objectives are as stated below (for more read Mizoram Upa Pawl Danpui)

1. To remain happy and healthy, and continue to be of utility to society.
2. To help, advice and assist anyone in need.
3. To uphold and protect custom and tradition, and help amend those that require amending.
4. To find measures for the rectification of socially and culturally detrimental practices.
5. To help determine ways to develop the state and provide council to officials.

6. To be of assistance to the government and offer council when deemed necessary.
7. To cooperate with other voluntary organizations in promoting a common good cause.
8. To conserve and teach the progeny the correct utilization of the Mizo language.

Appendix VII. Correspondences between the Mizoram Presbyterian Church and the Chief Minister of Mizoram.



Picture 1: The Mizoram Presbyterian Church (MPC) sends an application making a request to the Chief Minister for total prohibition of liquor, mention has been made that the only act on the part of the Government to their earlier request for prohibition is having organized a seminar on the issue. The MPC also probes for the earliest enforcement of prohibition and that the Church will render its full support. Dated: 29/7/1991

MIZORAM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

MODERATOR :
Rev. K. Lalzuala
SECRETARIES :
Upa Thantluanga (Sr.)
Rev. S.R. Lalkailuaia (Jr.)
FINANCE OFFICERS :
Rev. Lalchuanliana
Rev. Lalagurauva
STATISTICIAN :
Upa Zairemthanga



Phone No. 2132
Synod Office
P.O : Aizawl 796001
Mizoram, India

SENIOR EXECUTIVE SECRETARY :
Rev. Rokhuma
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIES :
Rev. Lalchuanliana
Rev. R. Lianbuanga

No. MS/GEN-8(11)/91/5

Date: 4.10.1991

To,

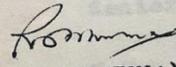
The Hon'ble Chief Minister,
Mizoram.

Subject : Mizorama zu khapna.

Ka pu,

Kan lehkha No. MS/GEN-8(11)/91/5 dt. 23.9.1991 chhunzawmna angin, Mizoram Presbyterian Konhranin Mizorama Zu Khapna Dan siam tura Mizoram sorkar a ngenna chungchanga Assembly thu tlukna Synod Executive Committee-in a hriat duh avangin ka han ngen nawn leh che a ni. Khawngah taka Mizoram Assembly Inkhawm 1-7, October, 1991-a in lo sawiho kan duh a, kan han ngen a ni.

Rinawmin,


(REV. ROKHUMA)
Senior Executive Secretary.

//z//

Picture 2: The MPCs letter to the Chief Minister which requests for a reply on behalf of the Synod Executive Committee on the decision of the Government regarding prohibition which will soon be put up for discussion at the Mizoram Legislative Assembly from the 1-7th October, 1991. Dated: 1/10/1991

MIZORAM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

MODERATOR :
Rev. K. Lalzuala
SECRETARIES :
Upa Thantluanga (Sr.)
Rev. S.R. Lalkailuaia (Jr.)
FINANCE OFFICERS :
Rev. Lalchhuanliana
Rev. Lalngurauva
STATISTICIAN :
Upa Zairemthanga



Phone No. 2132
Synod Office
P.O. Aizawl 756001
Mizoram, India

SENIOR EXECUTIVE SECRETARY :
Rev. Rokhuma
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIES :
Rev. Lalchhuanliana
Rev. R. Lianbuanga

No.....MS/GEN-8/113/91/4

Date...23.9.91.....

To,

The Hon'ble Chief Minister,
Mizoram.

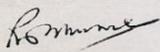
Subject : Mizorama Zu khapna.

Ka pu,

Mizoram Presbyterian Kohhranin Mizorama Zu Khapna Dan siam tura Mizoram serkar a ngenna chungchangah Seminar leh Sawihona te siama hma lak anih seknate avangin lawmawm kan ti hle a ni.

Tunah hian chak zawka he kan Kohhran ngenna hi tihlawhtling thuai turin kan beisei tlat che a; chumi atan chuan Mizoram Assembly Inkhawm 1-7, October, 1991-a lo awm turah hian Mizorama Zu Khapna Dan siam tura ngenna hi ngaituah tura tih a nih ngei kan beisei a ni.

Rinawain,


(REV.ROKHUMA)
Senior Executive Secretary.

- c.c. 1) Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee
MLA zawng zawng.
2) Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee Legislative
Party-a member te.

Picture 3: The MPCs letter to the Chief Minister which initially thanks the Government for organizing Seminars and Talks on the issue of liquor prohibition. It also further prompts the Government for a more positive and quicker initiation of the request of the Church for prohibition and the passage of the liquor prohibition law in the upcoming Mizoram Legislative Assembly from the 1-7th October, 1991. Dated: 23/9/1991

MIZORAM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

MODERATOR :
Rev. Lalpianga
SECRETARIES :
Rev. S.R. Lalkailuaia (Sr.)
Rev. C. Rosiama (Jr.)
FINANCE OFFICERS :
Rev. C. Biakmawia
Rev. Rokhuma
STATISTICIAN :
Upa Remkunga



Phone No. 2132
Synod Office
P.O - Aizawl 796001
Mizoram, India

SENIOR EXECUTIVE SECRETARY :
Rev. Lalchhuanliana
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIES :
Rev. C. Biakmawia
Rev. R. Lalthanmawia

No.....MS/GEN-8/92/15

Date... 25/6/92.....

To,

The Hon'ble Chief Minister,
Government of Mizoram.

Subj : Zu permit pek leh Excise Act chungchangah
Total Prohibition Bill Assembly Favang
Session-a thehltut ngei tura ngenna.

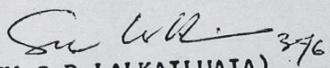
Ka pu,

I hnena kan thu thlen hi khawngaih taka min
hlawhtlintir turin kan ngen a che.

01. Mizoram Presbyterian Kohhran Synod Executive
Committee chuan Mizoram Sawrkarin Zu permit
Armed Forces (1st Bn.MAP) hnenah a pe niin kan lo hria
a. Hei hi Mizoram Presbyterian Kohhran chuan tha a ti
lova. Zu permit pek hi titawp nghal turin a ngen che
a ni.

02. Tin, Excise Act chungchang thu ngun takin a
ngaihtuah a. Zu lo hluar zel tihrem dan mu-
mal taka kawng zawng tura theih tawp a tan la nghal
turin kan ngen che a ni. Chuvangin Mizoram Assembly
Favang Session-ah Total Prohibition Bill thehltut tur
leh Pass a nih ngei theih nana theihtawp chhuah turin
kan ngen a che.

I rintlak,


(REV. S.R. LALKAILUAIA)
Secretary,
Mizoram Presbyterian Kohhran.

C.C : M.L.A. zawng zawngte.

Picture 4. The MPCs letter to the Chief Minister states two points: First, the letter stipulated the Church's knowledge of the granting of liquor permits to the Armed Forces (1st Bn. MAP) by the Government which was un-liked by the church and requests for the annulment of the permit it had granted. Second, request was made for the Government to make thorough consideration of the Excise Act and make efforts to curb the increasing flow of liquor, submission and passing of the Total Prohibition Bill in the next legislative session. Dated: 25/6/1992.

GOVERNMENT OF MIZORAM
CHIEF MINISTER'S SECRETARIAT

No.CMS 79/92/17

: Dated Aizawl, the 15th July, 1992.

To,

Rev. S.R. Lalkailuaia,
Secretary,
Mizoram Presbyterian Kohhran.

Ka pu,

I lehkha No.MS/GEN-8/92/15 dt 25/6/92,
'Zu permit pek leh Excise Act chungchangah total
prohibition Bill Assembly fovang session a thelut
ngei tura ngenna' chu Chief Minister in a lo hmu e.

I rintlak,

(C.HMINGTHANZUALA)
Private Secretary to Chief Minister,
Mizoram.

Picture 5: An acknowledgment reply from the Chief Minister's office that Chief Minister has seen their letter No. MS/GEN-8/92/15. Dated: 25/6/92 to the MPC.

The Presbyterian Church of India
MIZORAM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

MODERATOR :
Rev. Lairotluanga
SECRETARIES :
Rev. C. Rosiama (Sr.)
Upa F. Lalsangliana (Jr.)
FINANCE OFFICERS :
Rev. C. Biakmawia
Rev. Rokhuma
STATISTICIAN :
Rev. R. Lalengkima

MS/GEN_8/93/31
No.....



Phone No. 2132
Synod Office
P.O. Aizawl—796001
Mizoram, India.

SENIOR EXECUTIVE SECRETARY :
Rev. Lalchhuanliana
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIES :
Rev. C. Biakmawia
Rev. R. Lalthamawia

3.5.93
Date.....

To,

The Hon'ble Chief Minister
Mizoram.

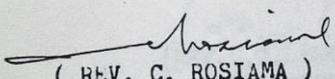
Subject :-

Total Prohibition Bill chungchanga
Synod Secretary ngenna bawhzui dan

Ka pu,

Total Prohibition Bill Assembly favang session-a
thlen tura Synod Secretary ngenna (a lehkha No. MS/Gen-8/92/15,
dated 25/6/1992), nang pawhin a lo dawn tawh (Ref. P.S. to Chief
Minister lehkha No. CMS/79/92/17 of 15th July 1992) chu eng ang
chiahin nge in lo bawhzui tak tih Synod Executive Committee-ah
report a tul a, khawngaih takin in bawhzui dan leh in thlen chin
min han-hriattir thei la ka lawm em em ang.

I rintlak


(REV. C. ROSIAMA) 3/5/93
Secretary
Mizoram Presbyterian Church.

Picture 6: The Presbyterian Church of India (PCI) sends a letter to the Chief Minister again asking for answer to any work done on behalf of their request for prohibition which will then be reported to the Synod Executive Committee. Dated: 3/5/1993

The Presbyterian Church of India
MIZORAM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

MODERATOR :
Rev. Lairotluanga
SECRETARIES :
Rev. C. Rosiama (Sr.)
Upa F. Lalsangliana (Jr.)
FINANCE OFFICERS :
Rev. C. Biakmawia
Rev. Rokhuma
STATISTICIAN :
Rev. R. Lalengkima



Phone No. 2132
Synod Office
P.O. Aizawl-796031
Mizoram, India.

SENIOR EXECUTIVE SECRETARY :
Rev. Lalchhuanliana
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIES :
Rev. C. Biakmawia
Rev. R. Lalthanmawia

No. MS/GEN-8/93/35

Date 14/7/93

To,
The Hon^{ble} Chief Minister
Government of Mizoram

Subj : **Total Prohibition Bill chung chang**

Ka pu,

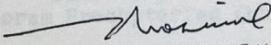
I hnena thu ka rawn thlen hi khawngaih taka
tihlawhtling turin ka ngen a che.

Total Prohibition Bill chung chang thua kan
lekhka MS/GEN-8/92/15 dated 25th June, 1992 i lo hmuh thu kan
lo hria a. (Ref. P.S. to Chief Minister No. CMS/79/92/17 of 15th
July, 1992). He thu hi Sawrkar-in hma a lak zel dan engmah kan
hre zui ta lova; i hneneh vek lekhka hran kan rawn zlak leh a
(MS/GEN-8/93/31 of 3rd May 1993). Chumi in hmuh thu kan lo hre
leh a, amaherawhchu i chhanna chu kan la hmu ta chuang lova.

Synod Executive Committee-ah Sawrkar-in hma a
lak zel dan report a tul si avangin in bawhzui dan leh hma in
lak zel dan khawngaih taka min rawn hriattir turin kan ngen
nawn leh a che. *min lo hriattir theh hkan ta dawm hle ang.*

Ka lawm e.

I rintlak


(REV. C. ROSIAMA)
Secretary

14/7/93

Picture 7: The Mizoram Presbyterian Church (MPC) sends a letter to the Chief Minister again asking for answer to any work done on behalf of their request for prohibition. Dated: 14/7/93

The Presbyterian Church of India
**MIZORAM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
 SYNOD**

MODERATOR :
 Rev. H. Remthanga
 SECRETARIES :
 Upa F. Lalsangliana (Sr.)
 Rev. Lairinawma (Jr.)
 FINANCE OFFICERS :
 Rev. C. Biakmawia
 Rev. Rokhuma
 STATISTICIAN :
 Upa Lalhrangluaiia



Phone No. 2132
 Synod Office
 P.O. Aizawl-796001
 Mizoram, India.

SENIOR EXECUTIVE SECRETARY :
 Rev. Lalchuanliana
 EXECUTIVE SECRETARIES :
 Rev. C. Biakmawia
 Rev. R. Lalthanmawia

No. MS/GEN-8/94/82

Date: 18.5.1994

To,

The Hon'ble Chief Minister
 Mizoram, Aizawl

Subject : Total Prohibition Bill chung chang

Ka pu,

Khawngaih takin ka thu rawn thlen hi min tih
 hlawhtlin sak turin ka ngen a che.

Total Prohibition Bill chung chang thua kan
 lehkha MS/GEN-8/93/35 of 14th July 1993 i lo hmuh thu leh a
 chhanna kan lo hria a (Ref. : CMS 79/93/212 Dated December
 3, 1993). I lehkhaah chuan, State hrang hranga Total Prohi-
 bition lo ti tawh leh ti mek te in dawx kual thu leh in
 hriat duh ang in hmuh kim khat tawh thu tarlangin "Inthlanin
 min nan tak avangin thu pawtchat thelah kan inngai xih lo a,
 Sorkar thar-in hma a lak zui atan kan dah lo thei ta xih lo
 a ni e. Kan Sorkar emaw Sorkar lo emaw, keini ho chuan Koh-
 hran hruaitute nen sawiho zel turah kan ngai," tiin i hnen
 atangin chhanna lawnawma tak kan hmu a.

Tunah hian Sorkar thar chu a lo piangin nang-
 mah ngei Chief Minister i ni zui leh ta hlahn bawk a, Total
 Prohibition chung changa kan thu rawn thlen pawh a hlawhtlin
 thuai ringin nghakhlel takin kan lo thlir reng a ni.

Synod Executive Committee-ah Sorkarin hma a
 lak zel dan report a tul avangin in bawhzui dan leh hma in
 lak dan te khawngaih taka min hriattir turin ka han ngen leh
 che a ni e.

Ka lawn e.

I rintlak

F. Lalsangliana 18/5/94
 (UPA F. LALSANGLIANA)
 Secretary

c.c. : Synod Moderator - A lo hriat atan

Picture 9: The letter reminds the Chief Minister of their pre- election correspondence where mention had been made that a study was made on prohibition and data collected from various states who have enforced prohibition and now have the necessary information they need. That the upcoming General Election had made it not possible of the current Government to further pursue the issue and that the issue of prohibition will be left in the hands of the new Government and the Congress if they win or not will continue to discuss the matter with the Church. The letter then states its business since a new Government is formed and the new Chief Minister being the same, the Church is looking forward for the Government to fulfill the formulation and passing of the prohibition law. It also asks the Government for a report for any work initiated on the matter which will then be reported back to the Synod Executive Committee. Dated: 8/5/1994

The Presbyterian Church of India
**MIZORAM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
SYNOD**

MODERATOR :
Rev. H. Remthanga
SECRETARIES :
Upa F. Lalsangliana (Sr.)
Rev. Lairinawma (Jr.)
FINANCE OFFICERS :
Rev. C. Blakmawia
Rev. Rokhuma
STATISTICIAN :
Upa Lalthrangluai



Phone No. 2132
Synod Office
P.O. Aizawl-796001
Mizoram, India.

SENIOR EXECUTIVE SECRETARY :
Rev. Lalthuanliana
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIES :
Rev. C. Blakmawia
Rev. R. Lalthamawia

No. MS/GEN-8/95/83

Date 28.7.94

To,

The Hon'ble Chief Minister
Mizoram, Aizawl

Subject : Total Prohibition Bill chungchang
Ref. : MS/GEN-3/94/82 Dt. 18.5.1994

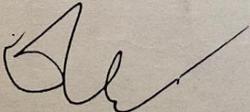
Ka pu,

Khawngaih takin ka thu rawn thlen hi min ngaihtuah
sak turin ka ngen nawn leh a che.

A chung reference tarlan ang hian Total Prohibition
Bill, Assembly-a pulut tur leh Pass tura ngenna kan rawn siam tawh
thin a, in hmalak dan pawh beisei takin kan lo thli thin a. Amah-
erawh chu tun thlengin engmah kan la hre ta lova, hriat tur a awm
mumal lo a nih kan ring.

Kan dilna hi a hlawhtlin ringa beisei taka kan nghah
lain tunhnaiah Chanchin bu hrang hrangah Zu zawh phalna (Wine
Shop permit) Sorkarin pek chhuah a tum hnal nin an rawn tarlang
leh ta hlah mai a. Hengte avang hian ngaih a ngam lovin, Mizoram
Presbyterian Kohhran chuan, Zu hi kan hnam leh khawtlang nunin a
chhiatpui ngei nia a hriat avangin Total Prohibition Act hi siam
ngei turin kan han ngen nawn leh che a ni e.

I rintlak


(UPA F. LALSANGLIANA)
Secretary

Picture 10: The letter requests the Chief Minister to kindly take their request under consideration. It mentions that the Church has repeatedly requested for the formulation and the passage of Total Prohibition Bill but no work has materialized from the Government. Words have also been published in newspapers where the Government plans to issue liquor permits (wine shop permit) which leaves the Church in a state of unrest. The Mizoram Presbyterian Church believed that liquor destroys the Mizo ethnic race and society thus the request for Total Prohibition Act is requested again. Dated: 28/7/1994

19/8/94
627

GOVERNMENT OF MIZORAM
CHIEF MINISTER'S SECRETARIAT

No.CMS.79/94/56

Dated: 8th August '94.

To

The Secretary,
Mizoram Presbyterian Church Synod,
Aizawl, Mizoram.

Subj: Total Prohibition Bill .

Sir,

With reference to your letter No.MS/GEN
-8/94/82 dt 18/5/'94 addressed to the Chief Minis-
ter. Mizoram regarding Total Prohibition Bill, I am
directed to inform you that the matter is now under
active consideration of the Government and the
information mentioned in your letter at Para 2 is
not correct.

This is for favour of your information.

Yours faithfully,

(ZOTHANKHUMA)
Private Secretary to Chief Minister,
Mizoram.

Picture 11: The Chief Minister's office had responded with a letter stipulating that the Total Prohibition Bill is now under active consideration and that the information regarding the grant of wine shop permit is not correct. Dated: 8/8/1994.

MIZORAM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SYNOD

(Presbyterian Church of India)

MODERATOR :
Rev. R. Lalengkima
SECRETARIES :
Rev. Lalrinawma (Sr.)
Upa R. Lalmalsawma (Jr.)
FINANCE OFFICERS :
Rev. H. Remthanga
Rev. Rokhuma
STATISTICIAN :
Upa Lalbiakliana



Fax &
Phone No. 2132
Synod Office
P.O. Aizawl—796001
Mizoram, India.

SENIOR EXECUTIVE SECRETARY :
Rev. C. Biakmawia
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIES :
Rev. R. Lalthanmawia
Rev. H. Remthanga

No.....

Date.....

To
The Hon'ble Chief Minister
Government of Mizoram

Subject : Total Prohibition Bill chungchang

Ka pu,
I hnena ka rawn thlen nawn leh hi khawngaih taka min tihhlawhtlin sak turrin ka ngen a che.

Tun lain natin chanchinbu leh kartin chanchinbu, Vanglaini, Aizawl Times. Zoeng-ah te Mizoram Sawrkarin Zu zawrh phalna permit pek chhuah tum hnai nia hriat theihin report a lo lang leh ta a. Law Department lama enfel tura awm mek nia sawi lan a ni bawka.

Mizoram Presbyterian Kohhran chuan kum 1991 atang tawh khan Zu zawrh phalna pek loh mai ni lo, a khapa khapna dan (Total Prohibition) siam turin Mizoram Sawrkar hnenah wavi duai lo kan thlenin ngenna kan theh lut tawh a. I chhanna lawmawm tak tak, sawrkarin chak taka a ngaihtuah mek thu te, State danga Prohibition thua an lo tih tawh thin leh an tih mek dan pawh in hriat kim tawh thu te (Ref. No. CMS/79/93/212 dt. 3.12.93) Chanchinbu lama Sarkarin Zu zawrh phalna (Wine Shop Permit) pek leh tum anga sawite pawh dawt leh thudik lo a nih thute (Ref. No. CMS/79/94/56 dt. 8.8.94) kan lo dawng thin a. Tin, nikuma i awm loh hlana mawhpurhna lo latu Minister zahawm tak. Pu J. Lalsangzuala kan kawmnaah pawh zu zawrh phalna pek tumna a awm loh thu min hrihlin in lehkhah pawh Total Prohibition Bill thuah "The matter is now under active consideration of the Government," tih a ni a (Ref. No. CMS-79/94/56 dt. 8.8.1994).

Kum 1991 atang tawha kum tina Total Prohibition Bill hi Assembly Session-a pu lut tura nasa taka kan ngen chung pawha Chanchinbu hrang hranga Sawrkar thu kal vel chiang taka hria ni awnten zu zawrh phalna permit pek tuma chak taka bawhzui ni anga a lo lang leh mai hian mi a barakhaih hle a ni. Kan ngenna anga Zu zawrh khapna dan Mizoram Assebbly-a ngaihtuah tura thlen a nih thu ni lova, zu zawrh phalna pek tum thu kan lo hre thar leh thin hian kan ngaih a titha thei ngang lo a ni.

He zu zawrh khapna dan (Total Prohibition Bill) siam tura ngenna hi keini Mizoram Presbyterian Kohhran mal pakhatin kan duhna leh ngenna mai ni lovin, Mizoram Kohhran Hruaitute Committee (ZKHC) pawhin, lungruah taka Sawrkar an thlen tawh a ni a. Kum 1993-a nangma lehkhah ngeiah "Kan Sawrkar emaw Sawrkar lo emaw, keini ho chuan Kohhran hruaitute nena sawiho zel turah kan ngai" (Ref. No. CMS/79/93/212 dt. 3.12.1993) i tih lai leh, kan ngenna ding reng awm laia sawihona pawh kum khat lai a awm zui tak loh hnua zu zawrh phalna pek tum thu lo lang leh mai hi hriat thiam pawh harsa kan ti a ni.

Picture 12: Letter to the Chief Minister from the Mizoram Presbyterian Church. (also see the continuation of the letter in picture 13, interpretation is also presented in Picture 13)

**MIZORAM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
SYNOD**

(Presbyterian Church of India)

MODERATOR :
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EXECUTIVE SECRETARIES :
Rev. R. Lalthanmawia
Rev. H. Remthanga

No.....

Date.....

Keini Mizoram Presbyterian Kohhran chuan zu hi kan hnam leh khawtlangin a lo chhiatpui mek tawh leh zalen taka zawrh phalna pek a nih lek phe chuana nasa lehzuala kan chhiatpui tur ngei nia kan hriat avangin Total Prohibition Bill hi siam turin Sawrkar kan ngen a ni ber. Tunah pawh hian kan rawn thlen fo tawh thin angin, Mizoramah hian zu zawrh phalna pek loh mai ni lovin a khapa khap dan (Total Prohibition Bill) siam zawk tura kan ngenna kha kan Kohhran duhdan ding lai nghet tak a la ni reng tih min lo hriatsak kan duh a ni. (Ref. Synod 1994 Gen. No. 48). Tin, i sawrkar hian he bill hi in siam theih ngei nia kan hriat baw avangin tuna Assémbly Monsoon Session in neih turah ngei hian kan ngenna min tihhlawhtlin saka he Bill hi pass tura min thlensak ngei kan han ngen nawh leh a ni e.

Kan lehkha hmasate leh in mi chhanna copy-te pawh kan han thil tel e).

I rintlak,

(REV. LALRINAWMA)
Secretary
Mizoram Presbyterian Church

Memo No. MS/GEN-46/95/65 Dated Aizawl the 21st Aug., 1995

Copy to :-

- 1) Finance Minister,
Government of Mizoram
- 2) Excise Minister,
Government of Mizoram
- 3) Law Minister,
Government of Mizoram
- 4) Pu Zoramthanga, Leader Opposition Party
- 5) Secretary, Zoram Kohhran Hruaitute Committee (ZKHC)
- 6) Vice President, M.P.C.C.
- 7) Secretary, Excise Department
- 8) Mizoram M.L.A. zawng zawng

Lalrinawma
21/8/95
Secretary,
Mizoram Presbyterian Church

Picture 13: The Mizoram Presbyterian Church (MPC) responds to the previous reply from the Chief Minister's letter Ref. No. CMS. 79/93/212. Dated: 3/12/1993. The Church mentions the resurfacing information published by newspapers such as Vanglaini, Aizawl Times and Zoeng which states the intention of the Government to grant liquor permits and that the issue lay in the Law Department for detailed consideration. It also mentions the Church had requested not just for regulation but for prohibition since 1991. It also makes a recap of the previous correspondences in which the Chief Minister had reassured of active consideration regarding the matter. J. Lalsangzuala the acting CM had also then reassured the Church in their meeting that the Government does not intend to grant liquor permits. The letter also stipulates that the resurfacing of such information from various news sources puts the Church at a state of distress and perplexing, it further states that prohibition is not just the what the Presbyterian church wants but the wish of the Mizoram Kohhran Hruaitute Committee (MKHC). The wish of the Church for prohibition is clearly stipulated in the Synod 1994 Gen. No. 48 and firmly stands by the belief that liquor is the source of decay for the Mizo ethnicity and the society. Dated: 21/8/1995

Appendix VIII. Prohibition Components of the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1995.

Chapter III of the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, contains the prohibition and punishment components. It prohibits the following:

- i. Prohibition of all individuals to transport, import, export, possess, sell, manufacture, to keep materials, utensils or apparatus for the manufacture of liquor or construct distillery or brewery 7(a)(i) to (v).
- ii. Consumption of liquor had been prohibited except on a prescription of a registered medical practitioner, or on a permit granted under the provisions of the Act (section 7(b).
- iii. The publication of advertisements of liquor (section 9),
- iv. The alteration and possession of denatured spirit (section 11),
- v. The alteration of denatured spirituous preparation (section 13),
- vi. Prohibition of issuing prescription for liquor except by a Registered Medical practitioner (section 15),
- vii. Prohibition of possession of denatured spirituous preparation in excess of prescribed limit (section 17)
- viii. Prohibition of sale of denatured spirit (section 19),
- ix. Permit holders are regulated to drink or consume liquor in public place or institution (section 21),
- x. Contravention to the law against knowingly permitting the utility of premises or property for commission of an offence is liable to punishment (section 24),
- xi. Prohibition of misconduct by permit holder or person in the employ of such holder on failure to produce permit, pass or authorisation on demand by Excise Officer of the rank of sub-Inspector and above (section 25).

Appendix IX. Punishment Components of the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1995.

Chapter III of the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, also contains the punishment components as mentioned below:

- i. Contravention of section 7 would lead to imprisonment for a term extended to five (5) years but not less than three (3) months and a fine which may extend to ten thousand (10, 000) rupees but not less than one thousand (1000) rupees; what the opposition argued during the debates as ‘inconsiderate of the repercussions it will cause for the future life of youths’ was the immediate punishment provision made for person(s) under twenty-one (21) years of age, with no previous conviction, would be awarded a sentence of less than three (3) months and a fine less than one thousand (1000) rupees (section 8(1)),
- ii. Consumption of liquor without medical license, on conviction would lead to imprisonment for a term of one (1) month not less than twenty-four (24) hours or a fine up to one thousand (1000) rupees but not less than five (5) hundred rupees or with both (section 8(b)),
- iii. Any registered medical practitioner shall be competent to examine and prove that a person has consumed liquor or has been in a state of intoxication (section 8 (5)),
- iv. Disorderly conduct in a state of drunkenness, on conviction be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three months but not less than seven days and with fine which may extend to one (1000) thousand rupees but not less than five (5000) hundred rupees (section 8 (3)),
- v. Contravention of prohibition of advertisement soliciting the use of liquor in any print or social media, announcements, neon signs would lead to

imprisonment may extend to six (6) months or with fine which may extend to one (1000) thousand rupees or with both (section 10),

- vi. The alteration and possession of denatured spirit leads to imprisonment for a term which may extend to three (3) years and with fine which may extend to five (5) thousand rupees. In the absence of special and adequate reasons to the contrary to be mentioned in the judgement of the Court, such imprisonment shall not be less than two (2) months and fine shall not be less than five (500) hundred rupees (section 12),
- vii. The alteration of denatured spirituous preparation makes it liable to punishment with imprisonment for a term which may extend to two (2) years and a fine of five (5000)¹ thousand rupees. In the absence of special and adequate reasons to the contrary to be mentioned in the judgement of the Court, imprisonment shall not be less than two (2) months and fine shall not be less than five (500) hundred rupees (section 14),
- viii. If the Registered Medical practitioner prescribes with the intention that the person will use the prescription issued for the sole purpose of consuming liquor in contravention of the provision of the Act or rules shall be liable to be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to six (6) months or with fine which may extend to one (1000) thousand rupees or with both (section 16),
- ix. Punishment for possession of denatured spirituous preparation in excess of prescribed limit liable to be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three (3) years and with fine which may extend to five (5000) thousand rupees. In the absence of special and adequate reasons to

¹ Govt. of Mizoram. (2008). *The Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1995 (with Amendments) The Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Rules, 1996 The Mizoram Excise & Narcotics (Wine) Rules, 2008*. Mizoram Excise & Narcotics Department: Aizawl. p. 11. Retrieved from <https://excise.mizoram.gov.in/uploads/attachments/a574872c0783fe21e367de349a45c341> Retrieved from Retrieved /MLTP Act 1995 Rules 1996 and Wine Rules 2008 and amendment.pdf.

the contrary: to be recorded in the judgement of the Court, such imprisonment shall not be less than three (3) months and fine shall not be less than five (500) hundred rupees (section 18),

- x. The sale of denatured spirit despite prohibition will be liable to punishment with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three (3) years and with fine which may extend to five (5000) thousand rupees. In the absence of special and adequate reasons to the contrary: to be recorded in the judgement of the Court, such imprisonment shall not be less than three (3) months and fine shall not be less than five (5000) hundred rupees (section 20),
- xi. Contravention on regulation against drinking or consuming liquor in public place or institution by permit holders will lead to punishment with the imprisonment for a term which may extend to six (6) months but not less than seven (7) days or with fine which may extend to five (500) hundred of rupees but not less than two (200) hundred rupees or with both. Any holder of a permit for consumption of liquor, purchases liquor from an illegal source in contravention of the provision of section 28 of this Act (whereby permit holders on health ground are required to purchase liquor only from Department store established by the Government) shall be liable to punishment with imprisonment for a term which may extend to six (6) months or with fine which may extend to five (500) hundred rupees or with both section (section 22),
- xii. Contravention to the law against knowingly permitting the utility of premises or property for commission of an offence is liable to punishment with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years but not less than two months and with fine which may extend to five thousand (5000) rupees but not less than one thousand (1000) rupees. A person who is under 21 years of age and against whom no previous conviction is proved, may

be awarded a sentence of less than two months and a fine less than one thousand rupees for reasons to be recorded in the judgement that in consideration of the age, character and antecedents of the person concerned, a lesser sentence is justified (section 24). The amendment of 2013 to the Principal Act made a substitution of the words 'knowingly permits' with "unless he satisfactorily proved that he did not know' in section 24 to distinguish the 'known' and 'unknown' compliance of the owner of property which makes him/her either an accomplice or not to the crime.

- xiii. On failure to produce permit, pass or authorisation on demand by Excise Officer of the rank of sub-Inspector and above by permit holder or a person in the employ of such holder can lead to punishment of imprisonment for a period of six (6) months or a fine of ten thousand (10,000) rupees or both (section 25).
- xiv. Any person giving false information to any person exercising powers under the Act shall on conviction be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to six (6) months or with a fine which may extend to one (1000) rupees or with both (section 37).
- xv. punishment for offence for which no punishment is separately provided be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to six (6) months or with a fine which may extend to one (1000) rupees or with both (chapter IV, section 38).
- xvi. As stipulated in chapter IV, section 39, the Act does not allow any sentence awarded to be suspended or remitted or commuted. Also, section 43 states that the punishment for a person having been previously convicted of an offence punishable under any of the provisions of the Act subsequently commits and is convicted of an offence punishable under any of these sections, that person will be awarded twice the punishment which might be

imposed on a first conviction under the Act, for the third and subsequent offences, the punishment stands to not be less than one (1) year imprisonment with a fine of rupees two (200) thousand.

Appendix X. Prevention, Detection, Investigation under the Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition & Control) Act, 2014

Chapter VII Section 29 under the Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition & Control) Act, 2014 grants enforcing authority the power to:

- i. enter and inspect, at any time by day or night, any place in which any licenced manufacturer carries on the manufacture of, or bottling, or stores any intoxicating liquor;
- ii. may enter and inspect, at any time by day or night, any place in which any intoxicating liquor is sold or kept for sale by any licenced person;
- iii. may examine the accounts, registers, passes and such other documents maintained, as may be prescribed by the Government by rules made under the act;
- iv. may examine, test, measure or weight materials, stills, utensils, implements, apparatus or intoxicating liquor found in any such place as aforesaid;
- v. may seize any intoxicating liquor, materials, stills, utensils, implements together with any accounts, registers, passes and other documents referred to, or connected with those referred to in clause (iii) found in any such place as aforesaid.
- vi. may examine or test and seize any measures, weights or testing instruments, found in any such place as aforesaid, which he has reason to believe to be false.

Section 30 grants the power of entry, search, seizure and arrest of any Excise & Narcotics Officer or Police Officer not below the rank of Sub-Inspector is further elaborated. If officers have reasons to believe from personal knowledge or from information received from any person that any liquor, material, utensil, implement or

apparatus in respect of which an offence punishable under the act or rules made is kept or concealed in any building, vehicle, vessel, or enclosed place, may at any time during day or night –

- i. enter into any such building, vehicle, vessel or place and conduct search and in case of resistance, break open any door and remove any other obstacle to such entry;
- ii. seized such liquor, material, utensil, implement, or apparatus, and any document or apparatus, or other articles which may furnish evidence of the commission of the offence;
- iii. detain, search and arrest any person whom there is reason to believe he/she have committed an offence relating to liquor, material, utensil, implement or apparatus.

According to section 31, the power of any Excise & Narcotics Officer or Police Officer to seize and arrest in public places may without warrant –

- i. seize, in any public place or in transit any liquor, material, utensil, implement or apparatus in respect of which they have reasons to believe that an offence punishable has been committed, and along with it, any document or other article which may furnish evidence of the commission of the offence;
- ii. stop, rummage and search any vehicle, vessel or conveyance. If necessary they can stop the vehicle, vessel or conveyance, utilizing all lawful means for stopping it and
- iii. detain, search and arrest any person whom there is reason to believe to have committed an offence.

Appendix XI. Mobilization of stakeholders under the Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition & Control) Act, 2014

Chapter VII of the MLPC Act 2014 includes stakeholders in their various capacities to help enforce the law. The law makes it inclusive as under:

a) Section 35 bounds every officer of the Government, every member of a Village/Local Council, and Village Defence Party to give immediate information to the nearest Excise & Narcotics or Police Station of the commission of any offence and of the intention or preparation to commit any offence under this Act which may come to his knowledge.

b) Section 36 also allows the arrest of any person who commits a non-bailable offence without unnecessary delay by a private person or group of persons, such person arrested should be handed over to the nearest authority.

c) Section 37 also expects every person who owns or occupies any land or building, or who is a landlord of an estate or the agent of such owner, occupier or landlord of the land, building or estate, in which there has been any unlawful manufacture of any liquor or any owner of a vessel or vehicle in which liquor is manufactured or carried on shall in the absence of reasonable excuse, be bound to give information of the same to the Excise & Narcotics officer or Police officer immediately after the same have come to his knowledge.

Appendix XII. Prohibition provision of the MLPC Act 2014.

The Act prohibits the functioning of certain actions as mentioned in section 42 which prohibits the following:

1) It prohibits anyone, without licence, permit or pass to -

(a) transport, import, export, or possess liquor;

(b) sell or buy liquor;

(c) manufacture liquor;

(d) use or keep for use any material, utensil, implement or apparatus whatsoever for manufacture of liquor; and

(e) construct any distillery, brewery, winery, bottling plant and bonded warehouse;

(2) prohibits the consumption of liquor except on a permit granted under the provisions of this Act or the rules.

- (3) prohibits consumption of liquor in public place.
- (4) prohibits to make nuisance under the influence of liquor.
- (5) prohibits to drive any motor vehicle while under the influence of liquor.
- ii) Prohibition of illegal possession in small quantity for personal consumption of liquor (section 44)
- iii) Prohibition of alteration of denatured alcohol (section 45)
- iv) Alteration of denatured alcohol etc. (section 45)
- v) Prohibition of the sale spurious liquor (section 47)
- vi) Prohibition for mixing other substance with liquor (section 48)
- vi) Prohibition for allowing premises to be used for the commission of an offence (section 49)
- vii) Prohibition of obtaining liquor from illicit sellers (section 50)
- viii) Prohibition of employing under aged children (section 56)

Legislators relied on this segment of prohibition to control the peoples conduct and to subdue the ‘anticipated negativity that will be attached to the Act’. The lawful conduct of affairs through permits granted by the Government was encouraged as opposed to what had been illegally so done under prohibition.

Appendix XIII. Penal provisions under the Mizoram Liquor Prohibition & Control Act. 2014.

H. Penalties: The Act makes stringent punishment for the contravention of the prohibition provision of the Act. The consequences of contravening the law which makes a person liable to punishments various punishments as mentioned in chapter VIII are as mentioned below-

- i) Section 43 lists out the punishment for the contravention of the law specified in section 42 will be liable to punishments as listed below –

1. Whoever, if without licence, permit or pass transport, import, export, or possess liquor, sell or buy liquor, manufacture liquor, use or keep for use any material, utensil, implement or apparatus whatsoever for manufacture of liquor; and construct any distillery, brewery, winery, bottling plant and bonded warehouse on conviction, be punished with imprisonment for a term of not less than six (6) months which may extend to five (5) years and also with fine of not less than five (5000) thousand rupees which may extend to ten (10,000) thousand rupees;

2. Whoever, consume liquor without permit, consume liquor in public place, make nuisance under the influence of liquor and drive under influence of liquor on conviction, be punished with imprisonment for a term of not less than one (1) month which may extend to two (2) years or with fine of not less than one (1000) thousand rupees which may extend to five (5000) thousand rupees, or with both.

If the trying magistrate after convicting the accused and in lieu of imprisonment and fine, pass order by which the convict is released and is compelled to do social work for not more than five (5) working days under the supervision of the Excise & Narcotics officer or Police officer as per the terms and conditions as may be passed by the trial court in the order or prescribed in the rules. Further if the convict absconds or violates the terms and conditions passed by the trial court in the order or the rules except on sufficient ground, he shall be liable to the prescription of further sentences.

3) The permit of a person convicted or penalised for public consumption, making nuisance under the influence and drunken driving may be liable to be cancelled.

4) Any registered medical practitioner shall be competent to examine and prove that a person has consumed liquor or has been in a state of intoxication.

5) Breath analyser may also be used for proof of liquor consumption.

ii) The illegal possession in small quantity for personal consumption of liquor is punishable with imprisonment for a term of not less than five (5) days which may

extend to one (1) month with a fine of not less than five (500) hundred rupees which may extend to one (1000) thousand rupees or with both (section 44).

iii) Prohibition of alteration of denatured alcohol is liable to punishment with imprisonment for a term of not less than six (6) months which may extend to five (5) years and with fine of not less than five (5) thousand rupees which may extend to ten (10,000) thousand rupees (section 46).

iv) The sale of spurious liquor is punishable with imprisonment of not less than three (3) months which may extend to three (3) years and fine of not less than five (5000) thousand rupees which may extend to ten (10,000) thousand rupees (section 47).

v) The mixing other substance with liquor which may cause disability or unconsciousness or hurt is punishable with imprisonment for a term of not less than six (6) months which may extend to five (5) years and with fine of not less than five (5000) thousand rupees which may extend to ten (10,000) thousand rupees (section 48).

vi) For allowing the commission of premises like house, room enclosure, space, vessel, compound, place or vehicle, knowingly by the owner or occupier to be used for the commission of an offence is made punishable with imprisonment for a term of not less than three (3) months which may extend to three (3) years, or with fine of not less than two (2000) thousand rupees which may extend to five (5000) thousand rupees, or with both (section 49).

vii) Prohibition of obtaining liquor from illicit sellers shall be liable to cancellation of licence, permit or pass (section 51).

viii) Adulteration of liquor by any licenced manufacturer, bottler, bonded warehouse owner, or vendor, or any person in his employment and acting on his behalf will be liable to imprisonment for a term of not less than two (2) months which may extend to two (2) years, or to fine of not less than two (2000) thousand rupees which may extend to five (5) thousand rupees, or with both (section 57).

ix) Unlawful acts by vendors or their servants will be penalised according to section 58 –

(1) If a licenced vendor, or any person in his employment and acting on his behalf—

(a) sells any intoxicating liquor to a person who is drunk or intoxicated; or

(b) sells or delivers any liquor to any person under the age of eighteen years, whether for consumption by such person or by any other person on or off the premises of such vendor; or

(c) permits drunkenness, intoxication, create nuisance or gambling on the premises of such vendor; he shall be liable to imprisonment for a term of not less than one (1) month which may extend to one (1) year, or fine of not less than five (500) hundred rupees which may extend to two (2000) thousand rupees, or with both. The licence, permit or pass of such offender shall be liable to cancellation by the issuing authority.

(2) When any licenced vendor, or any person in his employment and acting on his behalf, is charged with permitting drunkenness or intoxication on the premises of such vendor and it is proved that any person was drunk or intoxicated on such premises, it shall lie on the person charged to prove that the vendor and the persons employed by him took all reasonable steps for preventing drunkenness or intoxication on such premises.

(x) The unlawful possession on any quantity of liquor with the knowledge of unlawful import, transport or manufacture, without payment of duty is liable to imprisonment for a term of not less than six (6) months which may extend to five (5) years and shall also be liable to fine of not less than five (5000) thousand rupees which may extend to ten (10,000) thousand rupees (section 59).

(xi) Failure to produce licence, permit or pass on demand by licensee will be liable to a fine of not less than five (500) hundred rupees which may extend to one (1000) rupees (section 60).

(xii) Vexatious search, seizure or arrest by any offer in exercising powers under the Act,

- a) on malicious entry for search into any building,
- b) unnecessary seizure of property of any person in the pretence of seizing,
- c) vexatious and unnecessary detainment, searches or arrests any person or
- d) in any other way maliciously exceeds or abuses his lawful powers

shall, on conviction, be punished with imprisonment for a term of not less than ten (10) days which may extend to three (3) months or with fine of not less than one (100) hundred rupees which may extend to five (500) hundred rupees or with both (section 64).

(xiii) Any person, after having been previously convicted of an offence punishable under any of the provisions of this Act subsequently commit and is convicted of an offence punishable under this Act, he shall be awarded punishment to twice the punishment which might be imposed on a first conviction under this Act and so on for the subsequent convictions (section 66).

(xiv) No sentence awarded under the Act could suspended or remitted or commuted (section 67)

Appendix XIV. Contribution of Liquor Tax

Table 5.0. Contribution of Liquor Tax on State Own Resource (1985-2020)

Year	Liquor Revenue Collected (Excise Dept.)	Liquor Fines Collected (Excise Dept.)	Other Fines (Excise Dept.)	Excise Total (in lakhs)	Office of Commissioner of State Tax	Total (in lakhs)	Total (Excise & Taxation)	Tax Revenue (Actuals), State Owned Resources	Non-Tax Revenue (Actuals), State Owned Resources	Total of State Owned Resources	Contribution of Liquor to the state revenue (in %)
April 1985 – March 1986	1272785	1703189		29.75974			29.75974	178.62	439.73	618.35	4.8
April 1986 – March 1987	1591009	1725208		33.16217			33.16217	39.57	59.04	98.61	33.6
April 1987 – March 1988	2158715	1788168		39.46883			39.46883	391.51	1124.36	1515.87	2.6
April 1991 – March 1992	5640418	657965		62.98383			62.98383	702.6	2999.9	3702.5	1.7
April 1992 – March 1993	5909179	2149925		80.59104			80.59104	882.37	3132.01	4014.38	2.0
April 1993 – March 1994	5329313	1935391		72.64704			72.64704	1053.1	3122.52	4175.62	1.7
April 1994 – March 1995	5081240	9959486		150.40726			150.40726	1083.27	3447.3	4530.57	3.3
April 1995 – March 1996	6123145	1703189		78.26334			78.26334	2228.9	4585.84	6814.74	1.1
April 1996 – March 1997	6878250	1725208		86.03458			86.03458	2685.91	4641.82	7327.73	1.2

April 1997 - March 1998	8607823	201385		88.09208			88.09208	3932	4584.1	8516.1	1.0
April 1998 - March 1999	8197897	380270		85.78167			85.78167	3080	3616.36	6696.36	1.3
April 1999 - March 2000	7977843	456763		84.34606			84.34606	3539.1	4140.03	7679.13	1.1
April 2000 - March 2001	8932570	398590		93.3116			93.3116	1442.94	4037.34	5480.28	1.7
April 2001 - March 2002	12754825	736108		134.90933			134.90933	1911.75	4487.22	6398.97	2.1
April 2002 - March 2003	12287888	660890		129.48778			129.48778	2295.03	5262.88	7557.91	1.7
April 2003 - March 2004	13351623	412445		137.64068			137.64068	3385.19	5800.84	9186.03	1.5
April 2004 - March 2005	13335473	639140		139.74613			139.74613	3956.14	11516.26	15472.4	0.9
April 2005 - March 2006 (13.5% Tax was levied on liquor since 2005)	14164610	374155		145.38765			145.38765	5505.57	17514.43	23020	0.6
April 2006 - March 2007	15764720	507620		162.7234			162.7234	6762.2	20100.21	26862.41	0.6

April 2007 - March 2008	16090881	761490		168.52371			168.52371	7751.54	20781.37	28532.91	0.6
April 2008 - March 2009	17244558	1234355		184.78913			184.78913	9461.61	15867.33	25328.94	0.7
April 2009 - March 2010	18513394	2207308		207.20702			207.20702	10757.53	12650.24	23407.77	0.9
April 2010 - March 2011	19297024	4017780		233.14804			233.14804	13007.64	14670.83	27678.47	0.8
April 2011 - March 2012	16524493	6345245		228.69738			228.69738	17866.77	16803.47	34670.24	0.7
April 2012 - March 2013	16790872	11356322		281.47194			281.47194	22314.6	21280.04	43594.64	0.6
April 2013 - March 2014	19085185	11507680		305.92865			305.92865	22977.96	19426.1	42404.06	0.7
April 2014 - March 2015	27087186	15887825		429.75011			429.75011	26653.1	24196.34	50849.44	0.8
April 2015 - March 2016	572767278	2573113	29997347	6053.37738	4311930 00	4311.93	10365.30738	35840.6	29763.44	65604.04	15.8
April 2016 - March 2017 (16% Tax was levied on liquor since 2017)	708373873	530395	10809609	7197.13877	2190735 35	2190.735 35	9387.87412	44180.74	36521.47	80702.21	11.6
April 2017 - March 2018	635782608	163868	20912220	6568.58696	2529857 68	2529.857 68	9098.44464	54591	39065	93655.94	9.7

April 2018 – March 2019	639684229	301516	14262341	6542.48086	4214943 43	4214.943 43	10757.42429	72669.97	44995.43	117665.4	9.1
April 2019 – March 2020	25595869	98190	75981517	1016.75576	2198080 8	219.8080 8	1236.56384	73098.18	52234.53	125332.7	1.0
TOTAL	2888196776	85100182	151963034	31252.5999 2	1346727 454	13467.27 454	44719.87446	456227	452867.7	909094.7	4.9

Source: Revenue data sourced from Excise & Narcotics Department, Government of Mizoram, Tax data from 2015-2020 is also sourced from Office of Commissioner of State, Govt. of Mizoram, State Owned Resources (Tax and Non-Tax Revenue) data sourced from Annual Financial Statement (Budget) Statements, Government of Mizoram, 1987-88 to 1998-1999, Finance Department, Government of Mizoram.

Table 5.1. Contribution of Liquor Tax on GSDP in Mizoram (1985-2020)

Year	Liquor Revenue Collected (Excise Department)	Liquor Fines Collected (Excise Department)	Other Fines (Excise Department)	Excise Total (in lakhs)	Office of Commissioner of State Tax	Total (in lakhs)	Total (Excise & Taxation)	GSDP	Contribution of liquor on GSDP (%)
April 1985 – March 1986	1272785	1703189		29.75974			29.75974	18126	0.164182611
April 1986 – March 1987	1591009	1725208		33.16217			33.16217	21435	0.15471038
April 1987 – March 1988	2158715	1788168		39.46883			39.46883	28559	0.138201022
April 1991 – March 1992	5640418	657965		62.98383			62.98383	46511	0.135417063

April 1992 – March 1993	5909179	2149925		80.59104			80.59104	53276	0.151270816
April 1993 – March 1994	5329313	1935391		72.64704			72.64704	71146	0.102109802
April 1994 – March 1995	5081240	9959486		150.4073			150.40726	73877	0.203591456
April 1995 – March 1996	6123145	1703189		78.26334			78.26334	93654	0.083566468
April 1996 – March 1997	6878250	1725208		86.03458			86.03458	107234	0.080230692
April 1997 – March 1998	8607823	201385		88.09208			88.09208	112317	0.078431653
April 1998 – March 1999	8197897	380270		85.78167			85.78167	124590	0.068851168
April 1999 – March 2000	7977843	456763		84.34606			84.34606	155006	0.054414707
April 2000 – March 2001	8932570	398590		93.3116			93.3116	173742	0.053706991

April 2001 - March 2002	12754825	736108		134.9093			134.90933	194653	0.069307604
April 2002 - March 2003	12287888	660890		129.4878			129.48778	216579	0.059787782
April 2003 - March 2004	13351623	412445		137.6407			137.64068	232498	0.059200802
April 2004 - March 2005	13335473	639140		139.7461			139.74613	268197	0.052105777
April 2005 - March 2006 (13.5% Tax was levied on liquor since 2005)	14164610	374155		145.3877			145.38765	297115	0.048933124
April 2006 - March 2007	15764720	507620		162.7234			162.7234	328998	0.049460301
April 2007 - March 2008	16090881	761490		168.5237			168.52371	381551	0.044168069
April 2008 - March 2009	17244558	1234355		184.7891			184.78913	457711	0.040372447
April 2009 - March 2010	18513394	2207308		207.207			207.20702	525985	0.039394093

April 2010 - March 2011	19297024	4017780		233.148			233.14804	638788	0.0364985
April 2011 - March 2012	16524493	6345245		228.6974			228.69738	725869	0.031506702
April 2012 - March 2013	16790872	11356322		281.4719			281.47194	836193	0.033661121
April 2013 - March 2014	19085185	11507680		305.9287			305.92865	1029337	0.029720942
April 2014 - March 2015	27087186	15887825		429.7501			429.75011	1350940	0.031811191
April 2015 - March 2016	572767278	2573113	29997347	6053.377	431193000	4311.93	10365.30738	1513886	0.684682161
April 2016 - March 2017 (16% Tax was levied on liquor since 2017)	708373873	530395	10809609	7197.139	219073535	2190.735	9387.87412	1719191	0.546063475
April 2017 - March 2018	635782608	163868	20912220	6568.587	252985768	2529.858	9098.44464	1938533	0.469346905
April 2018 - March 2019	639684229	301516	14262341	6542.481	421494343	4214.943	10757.42429	2228741	0.48266821

April 2019 – March 2020	25595869	98190	75981517	1016.756	21980808	219.8081	1236.56384	2650256	0.046658279
TOTAL	2888196776	85100182	151963034	31252.6	1346727454	13467.27	44719.87446	18614494	0.240242224

Source: Revenue data sourced from Excise & Narcotics Department, Government of Mizoram, Tax data from 2015-2020 is also sourced from Office of Commissioner of State, Govt. of Mizoram & GSDP (at current) data sourced from Directorate of Economics & Statistics.

Table 5.2. Contribution of Liquor Tax on Per Capita Income in Mizoram (1985-2020)

Year	Liquor Revenue Collected (Excise Department)	Liquor Fines Collected (Excise Department)	Other Fines (Excise Department)	Excise Total (in lakhs)	Office of Commissioner of State Tax	Total (in lakhs)	Total (Excise & Taxation)	Per Capita Income	Contribution of liquor on Per Capita Income (%)
April 1985 – March 1986	1272785	1703189		29.75974			29.75974	2658	1.119629044
April 1986 – March 1987	1591009	1725208		33.16217			33.16217	3165	1.047777883
April 1987 – March 1988	2158715	1788168		39.46883			39.46883	4077	0.968085112
April 1991 – March 1992	5640418	657965		62.98383			62.98383	5941	1.060155361
April 1992 – March 1993	5909179	2149925		80.59104			80.59104	6599	1.221261403
April 1993 – March 1994	5329313	1935391		72.64704			72.64704	8319	0.873266498

April 1994 – March 1995	5081240	9959486		150.40726			150.40726	8793	1.710534061
April 1995 – March 1996	6123145	1703189		78.26334			78.26334	10953	0.714537935
April 1996 – March 1997	6878250	1725208		86.03458			86.03458	12210	0.704623915
April 1997 - March 1998	8607823	201385		88.09208			88.09208	12393	0.71082127
April 1998 - March 1999	8197897	380270		85.78167			85.78167	13479	0.636409748
April 1999 - March 2000	7977843	456763		84.34606			84.34606	16443	0.512960287
April 2000 - March 2001	8932570	398590		93.3116			93.3116	16635	0.560935377
April 2001 - March 2002	12754825	736108		134.90933			134.90933	17245	0.782309829
April 2002 - March 2003	12287888	660890		129.48778			129.48778	18429	0.702630528
April 2003 - March 2004	13351623	412445		137.64068			137.64068	18555	0.741798329
April 2004 - March 2005	13335473	639140		139.74613			139.74613	24662	0.566645568
April 2005 - March 2006	14164610	374155		145.38765			145.38765	26698	0.544563825

April 2006 - March 2007	15764720	507620		162.7234			162.7234	28764	0.565718954
April 2007 - March 2008	16090881	761490		168.52371			168.52371	32488	0.518726022
April 2008 - March 2009	17244558	1234355		184.78913			184.78913	38582	0.478951661
April 2009 - March 2010	18513394	2207308		207.20702			207.20702	42715	0.485091935
April 2010 - March 2011	19297024	4017780		233.14804			233.14804	50956	0.457547767
April 2011 - March 2012	16524493	6345245		228.69738			228.69738	57654	0.396672182
April 2012 - March 2013	16790872	11356322		281.47194			281.47194	65013	0.432947164
April 2013 - March 2014	19085185	11507680		305.92865			305.92865	77584	0.394319254
April 2014 - March 2015	27087186	15887825		429.75011			429.75011	103049	0.417034721
April 2015 – March 2016	572767278	2573113	29997347	6053.37738	431193000	4311.93	10365.30738	114055	9.087990338
April 2016 – March 2017	708373873	530395	10809609	7197.13877	219073535	2190.735	9387.87412	127107	7.385804181
April 2017 – March 2018	635782608	163868	20912220	6568.58696	252985768	2529.858	9098.44464	155222	5.861569004

April 2018 – March 2019	639684229	301516	14262341	6542.48086	421494343	4214.943	10757.42429	176620	6.090716957
April 2019 – March 2020	25595869	98190	75981517	1016.75576	21980808	219.8081	1236.56384	204018	0.606105265
TOTAL	2888196776	85100182	151963034	31252.59992	1346727454	13467.27	44719.87446	1501081	2.97917797

Source: Revenue data sourced from Excise & Narcotics Department, Govt. of Mizoram, Tax data from 2015-2020 is sourced from Office of Commissioner of State, Govt. of Mizoram & Per Capita Income (Rupees in Lakhs) data sourced from Directorate of Economics & Statistics.

Table: 5.3. Impact of Liquor Leakage on State Own Resource (SOR) and state Gross Domestic Product (GDP) under MLPC Act, 2014.

LEAKAGE OF REVENUE FROM STATE ECONOMY DURING MLPC ACT, 2014												
Year	Liquor Revenue Collected (Excise Department)	Liquor Fines Collected (Excise Department)	Other Fines (Excise Department)	Excise Total (in lakhs)	Office of Commissioner of State Tax	Total (in lakhs)	Total (Excise & Taxation in lakhs)	Liquor Leakage (in lakhs)	State Own Resource	Liquor Leakage & SOR (%)	GDP	Liquor Leakage & GDP (%)
April 2015 – March 2016 (13.5 % Tax was levied on liquor till May 2017)	572767278	2573113	29997347	6053.37738	431193000	4311.93	10365.30738	76780.05467	65604.04	117.0355586	1513886	5.07172
April 2016 – March 2017 (16% Tax was levied on liquor since June 2017)	708373873	530395	10809609	7197.13877	219073535	2190.73535	9387.87412	58674.21325	80702.21	72.70459291	1719191	3.412897
April 2017 – March 2018	635782608	163868	20912220	6568.58696	252985768	2529.85768	9098.44464	56865.279	93655.94	60.71721559	1938533	2.933418
April 2018 – March 2019	639684229	301516	14262341	6542.48086	421494343	4214.94343	10757.42429	67233.90181	117665.4	57.13990843	2228741	3.016676
April 2019 – March 2020	25595869	98190	75981517	1016.75576	21980808	219.80808	1236.56384	7728.524	125332.71	6.1664062	2650256	0.291614
TOTAL	2582203857	3667082	151963034	27378.33973	1346727454	13467.27454	40845.61427	267281.9727	482960.3	55.3424314	10050607	2.659361

Source: Revenue data sourced from Excise & Narcotics Department, Govt. of Mizoram, Tax data from 2015-2020 is sourced from Office of Commissioner of State, Govt. of Mizoram & Per Capita Income (Rupees in Lakhs) data sourced from Directorate of Economics & Statistics and State Owned Resources (Tax and Non-Tax Revenue) data sourced from Annual Financial Statement (Budget) Statements, Government of Mizoram, 1987-88 to 1998-1999, Finance Department, Government of Mizoram.

Appendix XV. Year wise arrest seizure and arrest made by the Mizoram Excise & Police Department, Govt. of Mizoram.

YEAR-WISE SEIZURE AND ARREST MADE BY THE MIZORAM EXCISE & NARCOTICS AND POLICE DEPARTMENTS UNDER MLPC Act, 2014											
Sl. No.	Year	2015 Excise Dept.	2015 Police Dept.	2016 Excise Dept.	2016 Police Dept.	2017 Excise Dept.	2017 Police Dept.	2018 Excise Dept.	2018 Police Dept.	2019 Excise Dept.	2019 Police Dept.
1	Liquor Seized										
	Zu/Country Liquor (in ltr)	36154.14	345	16095.565	373 ltrs	16616.035	975 ltrs	34607.12	2542.5 ltrs & 1017 packets	95664.945	2233 ltrs & 922 packets
	Zu bilhlai/Fermented Rice (in tin)	58447 1/2		38586		36361		62524		137733 1/2	
	Dawidim/Yest (in kg)	39.518		220.008		23.05		204.9		566.518	
	IMFL										
	750 ml	31967 & 20 loose bottle	288 bottles	5261 & 10 loose bottles	1628 bottles & 4 1/2 bottles	4465 & 12 loose bottles	482 bottles & 144 half bottles	1956 & 180 loose bottles	958 bottles & 249 half bottles	14209 & 2 loose bottles	3506 bottles & 323 1/2 bottles
	375 ml	243		8769		8063 & 11 loose bottles		7283 & 12 loose bottles		14770 & 2 loose bottles	
	350 ml	0		0		0		0		0	
	300 ml	0		0		0		0		0	
	180 ml	177		4		2		8		12047	
	150 ml	0		0		0		0		0	
	Beer 650 ml (in bottle)	177	70 cans	710 & 2 bots of breezer beer (275ml)	1124 cans	255 & 12 bottles of breezer (275 ml)	296 cans	95	2600 cans	4089	2375 cans
	Beer 600 ml (in can)	0		114		0		0		0	
	Beer 500 ml (in can)	801		3485		7155		5666		10186	
	Beer 330 ml (in can)	0		90		0		0		48	
	Foreign (imported) liquor (in bottle)	61		194		14		3		664	
	Foreign (imported) beer (in bottle)	1		16		0		3		8	
	Foreign (imported) canned beer	7128		1138		2736		5033		2704	
	Grape Wine (in litre)	25 bots of grape win		0		0		0		452 bottles of Grape Wine (750 ml)	
Apple Wine (in litre)	723		0		0		0		3630.8 and Apple wine 2640 bottle		
2	Utensil										
	Pot (in number)	382		394		279		513		1253	
	Plastic Can (in number)	12		0		5		0		7	
	Others (in number)	0	130 ltrs BEDC & 420 packets	0	420 packets BEDC & 28 bags	2 bots. Vodka (275ml) & 15 bots. portwine	209 ltrs BEDC & 1 bottle & 2 ltrs	Breezer beer 275ml - 5 nos	1562 ltrs BEDC & 136 packets	10 bots of Foreign FML(350ml) & 14 bots of Foreign FML(175ml) 29 nos. syntex barrel 552 litres of BEDC	1646 ltrs
3	Vehides seized										
	Two Wheeler	23		6		6		28		80	
	Three Wheeler	9		0		5		4		12	
	LMV	46		36		29		39		110	
	MMV	0		0		0		0		0	
HMV	2		0		0		2		6		

Figure. 1. Official data of year wise seizure and arrest made by the Mizoram Excise & Narcotics Department and the Mizoram Police Department under MLPC Act, 2014 (2015-2019)

YEAR-WISE SEIZURE AND ARREST MADE BY THE MIZORAM EXCISE & NARCOTICS DEPARTMENT UNDER MLTP Act, 1995							
Sl. No.	Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
1	Liquor Seized						
	Zu/Country Liquor (in ltr)	46181.78	52828.475	49353.545	37714.082	38561.24	
	Zu bilhlai/Fermented Rice (in tin)	97823	110659 1/2	89355 1/2	98815	80476 1/2	
	Dawidim/Yest (in kg)	503.605	310.262	194.157	382.92	61.431	
	IMFL						
	750 ml	38079 & 20 loose bottle & 700ml loose	64396 & 29 loose bottle	93691 & 20 bot loose & 4 bots of 90m	89377 & 23 loose bots & 16 bots of 1000ml & 3 bots of 700ml	112440 & 17 loose bottle	
	375 ml	261	222	234	347	1107	
	350 ml	1	3	76	0	0	
	300 ml	113			0	0	
	180 ml	871	285 & 1 loose	225	319	1044	
	150 ml	1			0	0	
	Beer 650 ml (in bottle)	194	99	27	25	27	
	Beer 600 ml (in can)		2		0	0	
	Beer 500 ml (in can)	33	67	346	210	988	
	Beer 330 ml (in can)		2		0	909	
	Foreign (imported) liquor (in bottle)	426 & 192 packs of BEDC	2		34	312	737 & 2200 litres
	Foreign (imported) beer (in bottle)	477	342	206	548	61	
	Foreign (imported) canned beer	155	328	6168	12023	10569	
	Grape Wine (in litre)						
	Apple Wine (in litre)				2309 and 6162 bots.	1365	
2	Utensil						
	Pot (in number)	1038	850	658	609	696	
	Plastic Can (in number)	89	34	40	19	74	
	Others (in number)		15500 litres of liquid juice containing alcohol	45 tins of Fermented juice & 65 litres of pineapple juice	3 plastic bucket		
3	Vehicles seized						
	Two Wheeler	56	72	74	57	28	
	Three Wheeler	15	8	12	17	15	
	LMV	145	113	164	148	65	
	MMV	0	0	2	4	0	
	HMV	4	6	18	4	9	

Figure. 2. Official data of year wise seizure and arrest made by the Mizoram Excise & Narcotics Department under MLTP Act, 1995 (2010-2014)

Appendix XVI. The MSJ&E funded centers known as Integrated Rehabilitation Centre (IRCAs)

MSJ&E Funded NGOs Integrated Rehabilitation Centre for Addicts (IRCAs)		
Sl.No	Name of De-Addiction Centre/NGO	Location
1.	Agape Moral Reformation Organization	Ropaia Bawk, Chawlhmun, Aizawl
2.	ZDRB(Damna In)	Zuangtui, Aizawl
3.	Social Guidance Agency	PTC Lungverh, Aizawl
4.	Blessing Home	Sakawrtuichhun, Aizawl
5.	Jeriko Khualbuk (New Life Home Society) Hmeichhe enkawlna (center for women)	Durtlang, Aizawl
6.	Pisgah Reformatory	Aichalkawn, Thingsulthliah
7.	Women Anti-Drug Association(WADA)	Chanmari, Lunglei
8.	Reformation Centre	Jail Veng, Champhai
9.	Thutak Nunpuitu Team(TNT)	Khuangpuilam, Kolasib
10.	Calvary Healing Ministry	Tlangkawn, Siaha
11.	Faith Home Society	Venghlun, Chhingchhip

Source: Mizoram Social Defence & Rehabilitation Board (MSD&RB)

Appendix XVII. Research Questionnaire

Research

on

The Politics of Liquor in Mizoram: A Study of State and Civil Society
Interventions

For the award of Doctor of Philosophy under the Department of Political
Science, Mizoram University

Instruction to Respondents

I am currently carrying on research work for the Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Political Science, Mizoram University under the supervision of Pro. K.V. Reddy, Head of Department, Political Science, Mizoram University. In this regard, I need your kind cooperation in furnishing information. Your response is confidential, highly valued and will be used for research purpose only. I appreciate your kind cooperation in offering your valuable responses and time.

(LAL LAWZUALI)

Research Scholar

Department of Political Science

Mizoram University

NAME (In block letters) : _____

Gender : Male () Female ()

Age : Below 18 ()
18-25 ()
26-35 ()
36-45 ()
46-55 ()
56-65 ()
66 and above ()

Locality (Veng/Khua) : _____

Religion : _____

Denomination : _____

(If Christian)

Educational Qualification : Primary School ()
Middle School ()
High School ()
10+2/PU ()
Under Graduate ()
Post Graduate ()
M.Phil. ()
Ph.D. ()
Post-Doctoral ()

Phone No. : _____

Occupation : Student ()
Government Servant ()
Self-Employed ()
Unemployed ()

Did you cast your vote in
the last general election? : Yes () No ()

Active member of : YMA ()
(Tick all if applicable to your
Involvement) Church ()
MHIP ()
MUP ()
Other NGOs ()

1. “*Drinking alcohol is a sin*”. Do you agree or disagree?

Agree ()
Disagree ()
No opinion ()

2. Do you believe that the Church should excommunicate drunkards from the church?

Yes ()
No ()
No opinion ()

3. Do you believe that drinking liquor disqualifies a person from going to heaven?

Yes ()
No ()
No comment ()

4. What in your opinion is the solution for anyone to overcome any addiction?

Gospel camping ()
Rehabilitation Centre ()
Both ()
None ()

5. Do you think that prohibition is the solution to solving liquor addiction?

Yes ()
No ()
No comment ()

6. Do you think that prohibition is the right thing to do for a Christian majority state?

Yes ()
No ()
No opinion ()

7. Do you think that the collective attitude towards liquor is relative to the values taught by civil society in Mizoram?

Yes ()
No ()
No comment ()

8. Kindly indicate in numerical order (1, 2, 3, 4.....) the agencies as mentioned below which has been first to give you awareness on the effects of liquor

Family : _____
School : _____
Church : _____
Friends : _____
NGO (YMA/MHIP/KTP etc) : _____
Others : _____

9. Do you believe drinking is morally unacceptable?

Yes ()
No ()
Neutral ()

10. Are you against the consumption of liquor?

Yes ()
No ()
No opinion ()

11. Are you in support of total abstinence even from the consumption of beer and wine?

Yes ()
No ()
No opinion ()

12. Do you think liquor should be prohibited?

Yes ()
No ()
No opinion ()

13. Is liquor a source of problem in your family?

Yes ()
No ()
No idea ()

14. Is there any drinker in your family? (You can tick all if applicable to your situation)

No ()
If Yes (kindly indicate the options below)
Occasional drinker ()
Heavy drinker ()

15. Is liquor a factor that causes tension in your community/neighborhood?

Yes ()
No ()
No opinion ()

16. “Liquor should be liberalized, we should learn to co-exist with it” Do you agree or not?

I agree ()

I do not agree ()

No opinion ()

17. What did the Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition and Control) Act, 2014 signify to you?

Freedom of choice ()

A source of various social evil ()

No opinion ()

18. Do you think that drinking is an ‘art that can be mastered’?

Yes ()

No ()

No opinion ()

19. Do you think that making Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) available for people to purchase is the solution to fixing the drink problem?

Yes ()

No ()

Neutral ()

20. Do you think prohibitionist policy is an infringement on an individual freedom?

Yes ()

No ()

No opinion ()

21. Which political party in Mizoram do you think is pro-prohibitionist?

MNF ()

MPCC ()

ZNP ()

Others ()

22. Does the implementation of prohibition make you feel safer?

Yes ()
No ()
No opinion ()

23. Do you think prohibition benefits all stakeholders?

Yes ()
No ()
No opinion ()

24. Do you have any knowledge of the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition (MLTP) Act, 1995?

Yes ()
No ()
I have not heard of it ()

25. In your opinion was the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition (MLTP) Act, 1995 a success?

Yes ()
No ()
No opinion ()

26. Is prohibition good for the Mizo society?

Yes ()
No ()
No opinion ()

27. Do you think the Government should continue with the prohibition policy?

Yes ()
No ()
No opinion ()

28. Are you aware of the liquor found in the black market in Aizawl, Mizoram?

Yes ()
No ()
No I do not ()

29. Do you think that alcohol is an issue which causes the rise and fall of ministries in Mizoram?

Yes ()
No ()
No opinion ()

30. Do you believe that it is Value Added Tax (VAT) collected from liquor sales by the Government is in conflict with your concept of morality?

Yes ()
No ()
No opinion ()

31. Do you believe that the opinion of the people is reflected in the Government policies ?

Yes ()
No ()
No opinion ()

32. Do you hold a Liquor License issued under the MLPC Act?

Yes ()
No ()
No opinion ()

33. Do you believe that the community based NGOs are doing good work in helping the government implement prohibitionist policy?

Yes ()
No ()
No opinion ()

34. Do you think that it is the work of the Church to address social issues/problems?

Yes ()
No ()
No opinion ()

35. Is the government doing enough to find institutional solution that addresses drinking problems?

Yes ()
No ()
No opinion ()

36. Do you think Mizoram will ever be a liquor free state? If not why?

Yes ()
No ()
No opinion ()

37. Do you consider prohibitionist policy of Government the solution to many problems in the society?

Yes ()
No ()
No opinion ()

38. Do you agree with the statement '*Mizos like to drink*'?

Yes ()
No ()
No opinion ()

39. Do you think that your opinion on liquor is represented by the civil society like the church, the YMA, the MHIP etc.?

Yes ()
No ()
No opinion ()

40. Are you happy with the reinstatement of the prohibition act?

Yes ()
No ()
No Opinion ()

41. What would be your solution to liquor consumption?

- Total prohibition ()
- Partial Prohibition/controlled prohibition ()
- No opinion ()

42. Would you vote for a political party with a manifesto which openly campaign to lift the dry law?

- Yes, I will vote for ()
- No, will not vote for ()
- Neutral ()

43. Do you think that liquor is an issue that should be politicized?

- Yes ()
- No ()
- No opinion ()

PARTICULARS OF THE CANDIDATE

NAME OF CANDIDATE : LAL LAWMZUALI
DEGREE : Ph. D
DEPARTMENT : POLITICAL SCIENCE
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Ph.D. REGISTRATION No. & DATE : MZU/Ph.D/983 OF 22.05.2017
EXTENSION (IF ANY) : NO

(Dr. LALLIANCHHUNGA)

Head

Department of Political Science

BRIEF BIO-DATA

NAME : LAL LAWMZUALI

FATHER'S NAME : BIAKLIANA

D.O.B : 08. 01. 1987

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION : M.A. (MIZORAM UNIVERSITY)

ADDRESS : M-45D, TLANG VENG, MISSION VENGTHLANG
AIZAWL, MIZORAM, 796005.

RELIGION : CHRISTIAN

OCCUPATION : ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
PACHHUNGA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

GENDER : FEMALE

MARITAL STATUS : MARRIED

SPOUSE : Dr. C. LALHMANGAIHZUALA

Ph.D Reg. No. & Date : MZU/Ph.D/983 of 22.05.2017

DEPARTMENT : POLITICAL SCIENCE, MIZORAM UNIVERSITY

TITLE OF THESIS : THE POLITICS OF LIQUOR IN MIZORAM: THE
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INTERVENTIONS

SUPERVISOR : PROF. K.V. REDDY

ABSTRACT

ON

**THE POLITICS OF LIQUOR IN MIZORAM: A STUDY OF THE STATE AND
CIVIL SOCIETY INTERVENTIONS**

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

LAL LAWMZUALI

MZU REGISTRATION NO.: 3661 of 2008-09

Ph.D REGISTRATION NO.: MZU/Ph.D/983 of 22.05.2017



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SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

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**THE POLITICS OF LIQUOR IN MIZORAM: A STUDY OF THE
STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY INTERVENTIONS**

BY

LAL LAWMZUALI

Department of Political Science, Mizoram University

Name of Supervisor: Prof. K.V. Reddy

Submitted

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
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INTRODUCTION

Liquor divides opinions; families, civil societies and political regimes. In the state of Mizoram, the issue of liquor represents a schism between powers arbiters. Political regimes tend to politicise liquor as a response to the unyielding lobby for prohibition by the church led civil society with the aim of winning suffrage. The study of its political dimension delves into how the ‘issue became a problem’ and how it has been ‘used as a tool by the power arbiters of the Mizo society to influence people’ with the ultimate goal of winning suffrage. With the aim of locating how it came to be a problem, ethnographic study was made on the history of drink culture of the early Mizos. This helped locate the centrality of the drink and exposes of tug and pull for power between power arbiters in the colonial and post-colonial era. This study classifies two opposing sets of power arbiters representing two eras. It studies the tug and pull for power between the British Missionaries & Village Chiefs in the colonial era, and between the Church led civil society & Government in the post-colonial era. It also studies the tension of managing the idealism of temperance by advocates and the response of policy actors in the contemporary Mizo society.

RESEARCH GAP

Literature Review had shown that liquor issue had undergone studies under the initiatives of the Government where the focus of the exploration is concentrated on the outcomes or implications of liquor consumption in Mizoram. The study of liquor as a political narrative remained quite untouched. Literature review helped locate that most local writings on liquor had been written to basically help reduce demand. There had been no proper study undertaken to explore the political narrative of liquor with the aim of answering questions as to how liquor became a problem, how the negative perception came to proliferate, how the issue actually plays out in the larger political framework of the Mizos. Clues have been found in ethnographic writings that require binding from a critical and analytical perspective. One can say, the questions have been fragmented and so have been the writings. A critical analysis of the social, cultural and political past to the present is required to help locate an understanding.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Liquor happens to be a very controversial issue which sparks debate in various societies. In fulfilment of campaign promises Governments at times impose interventionist policies that fail to bring solution to the drink problem. They have also been consequently seen reverting to liquor sale policies time and again. Indian states like Andhra Pradesh and Haryana (in mid 1990's) and of recent Mizoram (in 2014) lifted their dry status while some states continue to impose prohibition despite its failure. States like Kerala (since 2014) followed by Bihar (since 2015) and have also recently introduced phase wise prohibition. However, Kerala reverted to its sale in 2017 while Mizoram reclaimed its dry status in 2019.

Today, states like Gujarat, Lakshadweep, Mizoram and Nagaland continue to enforce total ban despite its failure while partial ban has been imposed in Manipur and Maharashtra. Prohibition promises and enforced policies by political parties have been used to woo voters, particularly women voters.

In the Lushai Hills, it was seen that the British with their paternalistic system of administration consolidated their political rule through the missionaries. Though consumption of zu was cultural in the old Mizo tradition, their cultural elements were rejected as anti-Christian and were marginalised as godless by the British Missionaries. Zu came to be identified in a negative light, necessitating one to cut ties with it. This adopted view continues to be the shared values of the present Mizo Christians. Therefore, the orthodox opposition of any form of alcoholic beverages and foreign brands of liquor can be seen sourced from the Church. In 1993, when the Coalition of the Congress and the Mizoram Janata Dal (MJD) came to power, pressures from different corners of the civil society resulted in the enforcement of the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1995 by the Congress party which was enforced on the 20th February 1997 to the immense pleasure of the Church and NGO's.

Once again, the debate on this issue has resurfaced in Mizoram with its legalisation in 2014. The paradigm of this debate continues to follow the same pattern with precedence given to religious views, economic factors (loss or gain) relative to drinking and assumed social consequences of liquor liberalization. It has become clear through the Report of the Study Group of the Mizoram Total Prohibition Act 1995 that prohibition was considered a clear failure by various local associations such as

the Central Young Mizo Association (CYMA), Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP), Mizo Upa Pawl (MUP), Mizo Journalist Association (MJA), Mizo Academy of Letters (MLA), Mizo College Teachers Association (MCTA), Zoram Taxi Owners Association (ZTOA) and Zoram Drivers Union (ZDU) but most preferred the continuity of prohibition. Subduing the opinion of the various associations, the government responded with the enforcement of Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition & Control) Act, 2014. This act on the part of the government was opposed by the church and it shows a visible trend of changing attitudes of state and church emulating from the issue of liquor. Focus of the study will be made on ministries that have effected liquor legislations from the days of Union Territory to the most recent 2014 liquor legislation for analysis of the changing attitude of policy makers on this issue.

The narrative of liquor ethnography has often been side-lined in the exploration of the issue. Religious perspective of the people has put a veil on certain considerations like the heavy price of prohibition enforcement, negating the slightest light shown to the prospect of liquor sale and curbing the freedom of those that think otherwise. Prohibition enforcement is at times considered a wasted effort with the apparent availability of illicit liquor in the state. The time has come to reread the course of this debate on liquor with an attempt to understanding the debate and thereby exposing the relationship between the arbiters of power in the society. This study will provide a different view on liquor by exploring the issue from a post-colonial lens.

SCOPE

The scope of research is on liquor politics of the Mizos. The word liquor is inclusive of all alcoholic beverages: traditionally brewed, foreign made and foreign brand of liquors. The study is focused on exposing the liquor issue and contextualizing it to the socio-political structure of the Mizo society. Analysis is made on the colonial history to understand the tug and pull for greater power between the Missionaries and the Village Chiefs through the issue of liquor. Available literature, records and documents will be traced and reviewed to locate meaning to the study. It also traces those political regimes that had effected legislation on liquor from the times of the Union Territory (UT) till the repeal of the dry law in 2014. This also brings an understanding to the changing attitude of the Congress on liquor policies and societal interventions. Opinions of stakeholders is analysed to determine their perception on sale and prohibition of liquor.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study provides an insight to the issue of liquor in the following ways:

1. It adds to the existent body of knowledge an understanding of the relational development and changes in political agenda between society and the Government of Mizoram with liquor as the looking glass.
2. It throws light to understanding the tug and pull for greater power between the civil society and state.
3. Provides a new insight to the debate regarding liquor.
4. It helps to identify markers for future research.

OBJECTIVES

Objectives of the study are as stated below:

1. To enhance understanding on the role of liquor in the traditional Mizo society and contextualize it to the larger issue of Mizo socio-political structure to add its meaning.
2. To analyse the changing attitudes of the state and civil society on liquor policies and its consumption in the period (1995-2018).
3. To study the policy perspectives of both the prohibiting and legalizing Acts viz., the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1995 and the Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition & Control) Act 2014 respectively.
4. To analyse the multiple implications of liquor policies in Mizo society.

HYPOTHESES

1. Adoption of Christianity by the Mizos put an end to the opposition between the Chiefs and the Missionaries on the issue of liquor.
2. The repeal of the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1995 in 2014 resulted in differences of opinion among the political regimes as well as the people of Mizoram.
3. The issue of liquor has been used by political regimes in Mizoram to influence

electorates.

4. Liquor consumption has negative effects on Mizo society.

METHODOLOGY

The nature of this research is both qualitative and quantitative. It is both descriptive and analytical. Qualitative technique had been utilized for in-depth analysis and interpretation of the historical and contemporary context to the subject under study. It describes the policy effects as experienced by the civil society. Content analysis of policy documents, legislative debates and acts have been done. It is descriptive as it systematically describes the socio-political perceptions of stakeholders on liquor policy through interviews and questionnaires. The use of these methods also make the study quantitative in nature. It is also analytical as it tries to understand the cause-effect relationships between the Government and civil society within the context of liquor. The study employs statistical interpretation of data collected. SPSS is further used to help interpret research questionnaires. Statistical analysis was done on certain questionnaires using Pearson Correlation-coefficient. The details of the methodology is as described below:

CLASSIFICATION OF DATA

The research is carried out based on two sets of data: primary and secondary data.

PRIMARY DATA

Primary data had been collected from:

1. Policy documents, assembly debates, official records, official notifications of concerned Departments of the Mizoram state Government viz., Excise & Narcotics Department, Taxation Department, Finance Department, Record Room Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Library Mizoram Assembly Annex, Police Headquarters, Civil Hospital Aizawl Record Unit, Mizoram Social Defence & Rehabilitation Board (MSD&RB). Important documents were also procured from Synod Archives and individuals.
2. Questionnaire collected from opinions representing perceptions of stakeholders.

3. Observation of Mizo socio-economic-political environment and the working relation between representatives of civil society and Government, a result of policy change on liquor.
4. Personal and telephone interview of liquor consumers.
5. A semi-structured interview conducted with –
 - a) Leaders of political regimes: The Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC), Mizo National Front (MNF) and People’s Conference Party (PC)
 - b) Key NGO functionaries: Secretary, Central Young Mizo Association (YMA), Secretary, Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkawm Pawl (MHIP) and Vice President, Mizo Upa Pawl (MUP), Secretary of Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP)
 - c) Church functionaries: Former Coordinator, Synod Social Front, Presbyterian Church of Mizoram and Pastors.
 - d) Government functionaries: Former Commissioner of Excise and Narcotics Department and workers, Police Department workers.
 - e) Liquor consumers: 72 liquor consumers.

SECONDARY DATA

While secondary data had been collected from both offline and online resources available from books, magazines, newspaper articles, journals and websites.

TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION

For successful attainment of the objectives of the study, data had been collected using interview, questionnaire and observation. Data had been collected from different categories of respondents. The tools employed for the collection of data had been as elaborated below:

i) Interview schedule: Interview schedule had been utilised to determine necessary information from political leaders who had affected liquor legislation viz., the Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC), Mizo National Front (MNF), People’s Conference (PC), leaders of civil society organizations who had been knowledgeable on the subject of liquor viz., Presbyterian Church leaders, the YMA, MHIP, MUP and MZP and people habituated to drinking. Interview schedule was

conducted for clarification and elaboration of questions which need greater attention for the achievement of the objectives of the study. Interview was also conducted on the drinking population to study the financial implications of their sustained liquor consumption habit.

ii) Questionnaire: Closed ended questionnaire was prepared which would reflect the perceptions of different categories of respondents. The population had been divided in homogenous strata representing rural perception and urban perception, gender, age group, education qualification and profession.

iii) Observation: Observation had also been employed as a tool to collect data to determine the cause and effect of liquor policy on civil society.

SAMPLE SELECTION/SIZE/TECHNIQUE

The sample for the questionnaire method which determined the perceptions of the stakeholders on the issue of liquor had been collected using stratified random sampling. The population had been divided into homogenous strata representing urban and rural perceptions, gender, age, religion, educational qualification and employment. Sample size of 240 was collected from three districts viz., Aizawl District, Mamit District and Kolasib District. Closed ended questionnaire had been prepared using Google Form and distribution of questionnaire hard copy had been done. Responses each representing opinion of rural and urban populace had been collected from the following areas:

1. 144 (24 each from a single area) responses representing rural perception had been collected from the following three districts:
 - a. Aibawk and Sialsuk from Aizawl District
 - b. Rawpuichhip and Lengpui from Mamit District
 - c. Lungdai and Zanlawn from Kolasib District.
2. 96 (24 each from a single area) responses from Aizawl localities representing urban perception had been collected from the following:
 - a. Durtlang

- b. Mission Veng
- c. Tanhril
- d. College Veng

As for Interview of the drinking population, sample was drawn from response of research questionnaire. The research questionnaire helped identify the drinking population. Question 14 (of the research questionnaire) had asked to identify if the respondents had family members who consumed liquor. From a total of 240 questionnaire respondents, a significant percentage 56% (134) had identified to having they do. From that sample, drinking population to be interviewed was determined.

From the Aizawl district, respondents had identified to having a total of 64 drinkers from 96 respondents. Rural respondents identified to having a total of 70 drinkers from a total of 144 respondents. This helped map liquor consumers for interview.

Table: 1.0. Sample for Research Interview of drinking population.

District	Sample Area	Occasional Drinkers (from 240)	Heavy Drinkers	Total	Interviewed
Urban Aizawl	Durtlang	12	5	17	9
	College Veng	17	0	17	9
	Mission Veng	11	2	13	10
	Tanhril	14	3	17	9
Rural Aizawl	Aibawk	6	1	7	5
	Sialsuk	10	3	13	6
Mamit	Rawpuichhip	5	3	8	5
	Lengpui	13	4	17	6
Kolasib	Zanlawn	9	4	13	5
	Lungdai	6	6	12	5

Source: Survey conducted from September to November 2020

Representing a little over half the identified sample of 134 (56%) both from the urban and rural respondents, seventy-two (72) were randomly selected and interviewed. Thirty-seven (37) from the urban and thirty-five (35) from rural areas

were interviewed personally and on telephone (see Table 1.0). This helped determine the monthly expenditure of the drinking population of Mizoram.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

1. Qualitative content analysis: Content analysis of the collected primary was done from policy documents, assembly debates, official records of concerned Departments of the State Government, important information collected from the voluntary organisations. Content analysis of secondary data collected from books, magazines, newspaper articles, journals and websites was also done. All data collected from primary and secondary sources will be crossed examined and analysed.
2. Quantitative analysis: Analysis of the 240 responses collected from the questionnaire received was done. Respondents answered a total of 43 questions and data scoring of each response was done using Microsoft excel and interpreted using simple percentage analysis and Pearson correlation coefficient analysis to selected questions. Responses to these questions have been coded as 1 to agree, 2 as no opinion and 3 to disagree. The details of statistical analysis of data is as mentioned below:
 - i) Simple percentage analysis on all 39 response statements out of 43 response statements of the questionnaire (Excluding: Q. 4, 8, 17, 21)
 - ii) Response Frequency analysis on age variable on items Q.10 16
 - iii) Pearson Correlation Coefficient on
 - a) Demographic variables of Gender and Domicile with items Q.1, 3, 6, 12, 22, 27, 32, 39, 40, 42, 43 and
 - b) Between response items such as Q. 1&11, 9&42, 25&27, 9&42 to help determine the relation between the response data.

LIMITATIONS

The major limitation faced during this study can be summarised as below:

1. The Covid 19 pandemic during field work was a major obstacle which restricted movement. Access to rural areas was prohibited by their respective Local Task Force (LTF) which led to the distribution of most questionnaires through social media.
2. Respondents of older age-groups found it difficult to navigate through the questionnaire as it was circulated using Google Form, however they were given proper guidance.
3. The society's sense of belonging to the collective: the YMA who ardently support and helps enforce prohibition might have led to the respondent's untruthful response.
4. Most official respondents who were interviewed both retired and serving opted for anonymity.
5. The biggest obstacle met was regarding poor maintenance of data by respective Government Departments. This makes it difficult to have a conclusive deduction to understand the actual scenario in the implication study.

CHAPTERIZATION

Chapter I – Introduction

This chapter introduces the reader to the subject under study which begins with an insight to the contemporary socio-political debated on liquor where much of the debate is concentrated on the negative impact of liquor abuse. It also introduces the concept of civil society and locates the major actors in Mizoram. Description is made on how the simple tribal worldview had come to be contested by the greater worldview with the annexation of Lushai Hills by the British in 1891. The presence of a foreign element gave birth to the existence of two conflicting view, where the conflict is analysed through the issue of liquor. It also mentions the times of awakening; of political consciousness among Mizos to the present political scenario. Political leaders have taken prohibitionist and anti-prohibitionist stances which evoked responses from the civil society. An introduction to a new kind of debate is also traced, where conflicting ideas on liquor have been presented by the Government on one hand and the Church on the other. Civil society's view as represented by the Church is made who continue to dominate the prohibitionist lobby till date. This chapter provides a blueprint of the methodology adopted for the study.

Chapter II – Locating Liquor

Chapter II provides the geographical, political, historical context required for a better understanding of the indigenous peoples. It provides meaning to the indigenous liquor brewed by the early Mizos contextualizing the role it had played in the larger cultural life of the Mizo people. Classification of the liquor produced by the people in the pre-colonial and post-colonial communal society is made. The chapter brings out an understanding of the simple tribal culture and their world view, the *sakhua* practised by them which highlights the significance of the role played by the liquor they brewed. The chapter explains the various drinking occasions and cultural dictates of consumption practised by the people through the festivities and rituals performed. It goes on to highlight how liquor consist an important signifier for Mizo identity as it was positively embraced in the olden days. It further explains the tug and pull for power between the British missionaries and the Village Chiefs from the lens of liquor; the result of the struggle had been the cultural annihilation of the Mizos. It provides an understanding of how the adoption of the new religion brought to an end the conflict between the two. It further elaborates the changes brought about by both the British administration and the missionaries.

Chapter III – State and Civil Society on Liquor

This Chapter provides insight to civil society organizations in Mizoram as they play a very important representational role in formulating Mizo identity in the contemporary world. This civil society organizations led by the Church and the Young Mizo Association (YMA) has been identified as remnants of the British missionaries. The Mizo way of thinking is exposed, highlighting the deep embedded teachings of the British missionaries on liquor. It explores the transition of community's attitude on liquor from the positive to the negative. It explains the perception of the political regimes both ruling and opposition and their political stance on the issue. It also explores the perception of the civil society on liquor and its attitude towards it. The interaction of political regimes and leaders of civil society associations which throws light to their relationship has also been highlighted. The chapter also presents the perception of other stakeholders.

Chapter IV – The Liquor Narrative

This chapter analyses the work of the Presbyterian Church in pushing for prohibition through the detailed correspondence that took place between them and the Government. It also highlights the perception of the Church and the various liquor orders and laws issued by the Government spanning from 1972 to 2014. Content analysis of Assembly debates on various liquor bills is also made in this chapter. This clearly brings to light how the issue had been used by political regimes to influence electorates in Mizoram beginning from the Mizoram Excise Act 1973 to the Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition & Control) Act, 2014. It also presents the policies of political regimes on liquor, providing an explanation to their prohibitionist or anti-prohibitionist stances. The chapter further elaborates the changing attitude of civil society with the enactment of the wet law in 2014 as compared to the dry law in 1995. It elaborates the circumstances that brought about differences in opinion among the political regimes themselves and between the stakeholders in Mizoram. It also describes the socio-political-economic effects of liquor on Mizo society through comparisons made on data collected during the MLTP and the MLPC Acts from concerned Government departments.

Chapter V – Understanding the Consequences of Liquor Policies

This chapter elaborates the socio-political implications of liquor on Mizo society. Stress has been given to the impact liquor has on women and youths as they represent a more vulnerable section of the society; most impacted by liquor. It also dwells on the political implications of liquor in Mizo society; how it influenced the society during elections. It explains how the issue has been used by political regimes to influence electorates to vote in their favour thus leading to change in ministries time and again.

Chapter VI – Conclusion & Findings

The final chapter summarizes the study and highlights the analysis and findings made from the pre-political era to the contemporary society. The chapter contains details that help deduce true or false the hypothetical assumptions of the study.

The upcoming chapters will be an elaborate study which will either help prove true or negate the hypotheses through dissection of liquor issue in a critical light beginning from the colonial period. To sum up, the study enables one to have an awareness of how the simple tribal culture became a contested culture and progressed thereon. It further attempts to locate understanding to the political narrative of Mizo people with liquor as the looking glass. With this knowledge, one will have a glimpse of the direction the research aims to navigate.

FINDINGS

The debatable issue of liquor has often been used by political regimes to influence electorates where most campaign promises have been directed towards formulation and enforcement of prohibiting policies. State Governments in India have time and again changed their wet or dry state status through adoption or repeal of liquor policies. Recent transitions were made by Kerala and Mizoram, the former from dry to wet and the latter vice versa. However, Kerala in a short span of three years (2014-2017) reverted to selling liquor again and then Mizoram went from sale to prohibition in five years (2014-2019). This transition in Mizoram rekindled the liquor controversy between Government and Church led civil society that had been dormant for the past nineteen years.

Liquor issue remain a persistent subject of conflict between power arbiters in Mizo society. The fight had been for prohibition on one hand and sale on the other. Civil society's disposition on liquor issue in contemporary society has been unwavering. While the paradigm of liquor debate continued to follow the same pattern with precedence given to religious views, economic factors (loss or gain) relative to drinking and assumed social consequences of liquor liberalization. The narrative of liquor ethnography has often been side-lined in exploration of the issue. Instead, the debate is shrouded with religious dogmatism which puts a veil to basic considerations

like heavy price of enforcing prohibition, negating the notion of liquor tax and the least consideration given to individual freedom. Enforcement cost is an appendage to the state's treasury and at times considered a wasted effort as its failure is marked by the apparent availability of illicit liquor throughout the state. Civil Society has considered prohibition a failure but continues to lobby for its continued enforcement. Contrary to the wishes of the Church, the Mizoram Government repealed the dry law in 2014. This puts both Government and Church led civil society on opposite ends tussling once again to have the ball on their court.

The genesis of liquor problem is explored with a throwback to the past, with a critical lens analysing the socio-cultural and political history of the Mizos thus, aiming to provide further insight to the present liquor debate. It aims to answer how the narrative came to be, how it had been contextualized to the larger socio political structure and exposes the power play between arbiters of power. Analysis of the history of disrupted past of the indigenous narrative, the consequences of interjection of the colonial power can provide a link to a better understanding of the present stance of the Government and civil society. Resurfacing of the debatable liquor issue demands a critical retrospective view to help provide a better understanding in its entirety through a post-colonial lens.

Findings

Study of the issue on liquor politics: state and civil society interventions has led to the exploration of liquor narrative from pre-colonial era to the present. The study had been directed with the aim of proving or disproving four hypotheses. Findings have been made through qualitative research, interview schedule and quantitative analysis of research questionnaires from Aizawl, Mamit and Kolasib Districts. The research findings are as presented below:

I. The first hypothesis: Adoption of Christianity by the Mizos put an end to the opposition between the Chiefs and the Missionaries on the issue of liquor.

The study of liquor politics in Mizoram required a recollection of the cultural past. Navigating the past had shined a light to the central role played by indigenous liquor. It can be seen that the existence of liquor predates the arrival of the Whiteman;

to times prior to 1890's that exhibited the presence of Zobel in every household and also the very natural existence of liquor in the indigenous cultural society of the Mizos.

A. Back to the past with liquor as the looking glass:

The unfiltered past had seen liquor as a binding agent that invited community mobilization and participation in its making for various cultural festivities and occasions. The number of Zobel stored in the household was a marker of one's social standing, symbolic of the prestigious Nopui award bestowed to recognize altruism viz., *tlawmngahna* and its consumption also regulated by social status and tradition. Also, the customary regulations of liquor consumption acknowledged of the past appeared to be better observed than the written laws enforced today. The disruption of the Mizo narrative by the colonial rule and the enforcement of their paternalistic system of administration had been rendered successful in the Hills with aid from the British missionaries. Studies have shown that the work of the British missionaries consolidated the rule of colonial power in the Lushai Hills. The missionaries could be identified as legitimizing agents of the colonial rule. Writings of Joy and Sajal Nag have attributed to the proliferation of the new religion to factors as:

- i. the existence of fluidity of structure through the practice of *Saphun* where one was allowed to change tribe and reformulate identity by adopting a new religion naturally made it easy for the indigenous Mizos to embrace a new religion such as Christianity
- ii. the occurrence of natural calamity of bamboo flowering viz., *Mautam* (1911-12 and 1929) endemic to the Mizo Hills inflicted famine, which resulted in hunger and deaths that weakened the resolve of the people to resist the colonial power, thus setting the site for philanthropic work of the British missionaries thereby making them and their work more acceptable and the resultant embrace of the new religion. The lack of rice grains during the famine had left them starving, unable to make rice beer that added fuel to their celebrations and had left them unable to perform many of their festive celebrations and practice their *sakhua* as it required giving feasts and providing *zu* to the community. It had dimmed their spirits and made them look for new hope which they found in the new religion.
- iii. the spiritual revival movement that came in different phases starting from 1906 to 1930 raised the Christian percentage. Fuelled by the spiritual revival movements that

followed in the wake of the famine, by 1960, all had endorsed Christianity, thus, bringing to an end the opposition that existed between the Village Chiefs and the missionaries; after all they had become one in Christ.

The present study with liquor as a looking glass has identified three power arbiters in the colonial era viz., the Village Chiefs, the Colonial Administrators and the British Missionaries. The once powerful Village Chiefs had been reduced to do the biddings of the Colonial Administrators. The Chiefs who had lost their power to the Empire had resolved to safeguard their culture and social structure, thus, resisting change advocated by the new religion. The new religion advocated the rejection of the indigenous culture and its practices as they were abhorred by the missionaries. As Lloyd writes, of the two indicators for a man to show his earnestness in becoming a Christian:

- i. First, to give up drinking zu because it involves the discontinuing of numerous religious and social rites.
- ii. Second, surrendering the *kelmei* amulet they wore around the neck, they considered it to provide protection from evil spirits, to set it aside showed serious intention to become a Christian free of superstitions.

They were expected to groom themselves in the likeness of the Whiteman, men were expected to cut their hair as against the long tresses they were used to wearing as a bun, women who used to wear *saiha bengbeh* or ivory earrings were expected not to wear it anymore. The early converts were 'introduced and educated to the concept of sin' as they were seen to be 'ignorant' on such conception. Christianity insisted a break with the old traditions, customs and habits. The simple proselyte tribes had to re-learn to exist as a Christian, re-orient themselves to the practices taught by the missionaries, like the observance of Sabbath, regular attendance at Church. So among many other things insisted for a Christian, consumption of liquor became notable as a 'sin'. This was so done as liquor represented a very deep link to the cultural practices of the past. The conceptualization of 'liquor as a sin' and 'to give up drinking to show earnestness in becoming a Christian' can only be identified as the beginning of negative conception towards liquor for the simple proselyte tribes.

The struggle on the issue of liquor had come to concentrate between the Village Chiefs and the British missionaries, the former resisted change and the latter advocated

complete transformation in the western light. History has shown true to the saying of Sajal Nag “the administration governed them and the missionaries made them governable. One conquered them politically; the other consolidated it by conquering them morally and culturally”. The study also indicates that the proliferation of Christianity can be attributed to the recognition of supplementing relations between the missionaries and the Colonial Administrators. This rendered the Village Chiefs helpless in their fight to resist change. The supplementing relation between two can be seen in the colonial narratives cited under certain circumstances as:

- i. The resultant release of Thankunga, a keen Christian and son in law of Dawrphawka imprisoned at Lunglei prison in 1901 on the plea of missionary D.E. Jones.
- ii. The 1906 Lungpher incident where D.E Jones felt unfairly treated and threatened to report the Chief’s action in directing his subjects to refrain from listening to his preaching which caused the Chief to rescind his order.
- iii. Donation of Colonel G.H. Loch to the Welsh Mission which enabled the purchase of a treadle operated printing machine in 1914. This afforded the mission to continue its printing work.
- iv. Stern criticism of the legalizing act of liquor by the officials in 1923 which prompted missionary J.H. Lorrain to question the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills to the Commissioner, Surma Valley and Hills Division and the daring request for the annulment of the order.

The above elaboration helps deduce that:

- i. Both belonging to the same identity, there is a recognition of the greater relations between the British missionaries and the colonial administrators that rendered the Village Chiefs powerless to fully protest and retaliate the works of the missionaries. This leaves them ineffective to block out the changes imposed by the missionaries as it threatened their very essence of life.
- ii. The aid of the apex power arbiter viz., the colonial administrators afforded the missionaries to subdue the opposing Chiefs thereby supplementing the mission work and the proliferation of Christianity.

The only souring glitch shown in their relation had been on the issue of Dr. Peter Fraser and his humanitarian work to liberate bawis (slaves) which led to his expulsion from his mission in the hills. The study had also brought an understanding to the

conceptual factors behind the success of proselytization.

- i. The ultimate aim of the indigenous people had been the attainment of the coveted title of Thangchhuah which is bestowed only on complete performance of the various series of Khuangchawi ceremony. They believed the complete performance of this ceremony would usher them to heaven they called Pialral. This however was attained only by the skilled hunter or the rich, one ultimately toiled hard during his lifetime and many a times to no avail. The new religion propagated salvation, did not discriminate but promised entry to heaven for all by the simple act of accepting Jesus Christ as the saviour. Such a promise was antithetical to their prior belief. Thus, the acceptance of Christ and all the practices that came along with the new religion ultimately led to the demise of their culture and indigenous practices. It also resulted in the re-orientation of the people in the likeness of the Whiteman in appearance and re-shaped to think in their likeness with Christianity as the binding factor. The new Christian Mizo came to vehemently oppose liquor as it symbolised the cultural past they broke away from.
- ii. The problem also lay with the antics of oppression used by the Chiefs to subdue the changes happening around them. They persecuted the converts in various ways such as refusing of burial, forced to perform forced labour, falsely blamed, fined unnecessarily, giving the smallest or the least favourable patch of land for cultivation, husbands were encouraged to batter their Christian wives and women were stripped and paraded naked, expulsion from villages where they were made to leave at midnight, forced to make liquor for the Chiefs and his elders and at times had liquor shoved down their throats. This oppressive behaviour of the Chiefs also worked against their favour where subjects sought refuge in the new religion and the white missionaries who they identified as benevolent and representing their welfare.
- iii. The ban on making and consuming zu was prioritized by the church mainly because it evoked nostalgia. The saying ‘lunglen a kai chhuak thei’ (lit. it can make one feel nostalgic) represented a recognition that consumption of their zu could evoke (and had evoked) a deep sentimental yearning for their cultural past and had converts revert. It stood as a bastion of the old culture that it was felt that a total ban must be imposed upon it. This was to ensure that (people) would not pine for zu and in turn revert back to the age old practices. Therefore, ‘khap law law ni mai se’ (lit. let it be prohibited) was the decision of the Kohhran hruaitu hmasate. Thus,

prohibition of the drink can be understood as a form of 'preventative for a proselyte to revert to his original sakhua'.

The growth of Christian population beginning the first spiritual revival movement from 1906 to the fourth revival movement in 1930 and the subsequent identification of the entire tribal population to the adopted religion by 1960 thus proved true the first hypothesis, 'Adoption of Christianity by the Mizos put an end to the opposition between the Chiefs and the Missionaries on the issue of liquor.' Analysis is made below:

- a) Adoption of Christianity was identified as loss of subjects by the Chiefs, as it implied the loss of culture and the crumbling of the social foundation of the communal society.
- b) Zu became an important signifier in the struggle between the Chiefs and the missionaries. One fought to retain culture and the other to change it. This was so because the making and consumption of zu against abstinence also signified continuance or discontinuance of numerous religious and social rites.
- c) The chiefs retaliated the change by harshly persecuting the converts, this was done with the aim of blocking the spread of Christianity. However, the Chiefs recognized the superiority of the White men, both administrators and missionaries were identified as one belonging to the same power, facilitating each other's work.
- d) The growth of the spiritual revival which began in 1906 was snubbed by the Chiefs through persecution and the counter cultural revival movement represented by Puma zai. However, this movement faded as a result of the Mautam famine of 1911. The fragile agrarian economy crumbled, there was shortage of food and zu no longer could be produced with the shortage of grains, the spirit of the counter cultural movement was finally nipped in the bud as a result of the famine.
- e) Cognizance of the humanitarian works of the missionaries made them more popular and perception of them came to occupy a more positive light from 1911. The Chiefs though untrusting and disapproving of the missionaries were helpless of the changes happening around them as Christians grew in number. Since the passing of more than five decades from the Khandaih persecutions of 1906, the conflict eventually subsided, the mistrust on both ends eventually dissipated as the Chiefs too became Christians. Thus, conforming to the Christian edicts set by the missionaries. Thereby transforming the entire socio-cultural practices of the people from birth to death. Christian names began to be adopted, their appearances changed, men cut their hair short, began to

wear pants, women no longer wore their *saiha bengbeh* (ivory earrings), they observed Sundays, gave up their *kelmei amulets*, changed the way they buried the dead, the Zawlbuk slowly faded and could not be revived despite government effort to restart the institution. It did away with their socio-cultural practices and most important to the issue under study, zu came to be perceived as a sin and the people observed abstinence thus ending the social sanction to the making and consumption of indigenous liquor.

The Chiefs had done their absolute best to resist and held their own despite all the disadvantages. However, all attempts had been futile. Fifty years later, they too are seen conforming to the dictated norms of the new social construct. Liquor became an important signifier in the struggle between the Chiefs and the missionaries, one fought to retain culture and the other to change culture. This was so because the making and consumption of liquor or abstinence signified continuance or discontinuance of numerous religious and social rites. The first spiritual revival movement from 1906 to the fourth revival movement in 1930 led to the proliferation of Christian population and resulted in the subsequent identification of the entire tribal population as Christian by 1960. This put a rest to the opposing stance between the missionaries and the Village Chiefs as they became one in Christ.

II. The second hypothesis: The repeal of the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1995 in 2014 resulted in differences of opinion among the political regimes as well as the people of Mizoram.

The study of this hypothesis was done through analysis of the changing attitudes of the state and civil society on liquor policies and its consumption in the period (1995-2018). One must note that churches became central to the functioning of the society in the pre-political set up of the Mizo society with the gradual dissolution of Zawlbuk by 1938. It filled the vacuum as it became the centre of knowledge and action until the establishment of the Young Mizo Association (YMA). The Church in Mizoram has immense influence on the opinion of the people. It has played the role of a mediator between the Government of India and Mizo National Front (MNF) during the period of political turmoil in the history of Mizoram independence movement in 1966-1986.

It continues to occupy a very important and influential position in the contemporary Mizo society as Christianity has come to formulate a very important identity of the people.

A. Dominating the liquor narrative.

Study has unveiled official orders that supported sale, transport and consumption of liquor that dates as far back as 1923. It has also unravelled the control of liquor narrative found from cited cases of the official Standing Order No. 11, 1936 and the Standing Order No. 2, 1954 cited in *Zoram Hriattirna* and *Mizo leh Vai Chanchin Bu*.

The cases of the official Standing Order No. 11, 1936 and the Standing Order No. 2, 1954, confirm the Government Official stance on indigenous liquor where hints of leniency and conservationist tendency can be traced from official documents prior to their translation much like the 1950 Constitution of India under Sixth Schedule, Article 12B which helps preserve the indigenous drink particularly the ‘non-distilled alcoholic drink’ of the autonomous district councils. The following deduction can be made from inconsistencies exhibited from the two documents:

- a) There had been inconsistencies in the dissemination of Government orders regarding zu.
- b) The administration exhibits leniency to the ‘consumption’ of ‘indigenous zu’.
- c) The educated indigenous elites as Christians, working for the system had been responsible for the translation. As seen from both documents the editors back then: Makthanga, Editor, *Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu* and Biakluanga, Secretary, Executive Committee, Lushai Hills District Council were known to be both devout Christians.¹
- d) The act of omission and commission by the Mizos exhibits unwillingness to preserve the cultural past and promotion of the Mizo Kristian propaganda to promote prohibition. Promotion of the Chirstian agenda of temperance by emphasizing the ‘prohibiting’ aspect of the orders.

¹ Hluna, Prof. J.V., (retd. Head, Department of History, Pachhunga University College) personal communication, 4/11/2020 & 25/3/2022

e) It also indicates the rejection of '*sorkar dan*' (the ways of the Government) over their '*hnam dan*' (the ways of the Mizo custom) as their hnam dan had come to be identified as the Mizo Kristian² way.

f) The promotion of hnam dan shows attempts to negate the consumption of liquor.

As supportive sections of official's order(s) on indigenous liquor gets lost in translation, filtered for general consumption, the public perception of the narrative on liquor is seen as promoting temperance by both the Church but also by the Government. Such actions on the part of the print media controlled by Mizo Kristian elites (working for the system) can only be sourced from the influence of the Church: both Zosap and the Mizo Kristian hmasate. This intent to negate the drink continues to persist. Therefore, the contemporary Church continue to show demand for more stringent laws against liquor.

However, it can be deduced that both the Mizo Kristian hmasate and the missionaries under the banner of the church had promoted prohibition. The prohibiting laws mitigated by the church served to promote the unified intent of both parties. It can be further deduced that to isolate the lone intent for prohibition of the Mizo Kristian hmasate would help ring true the claim that they had been the source of prohibition. However, the broader picture shows that the promotion of unified intents of both Kristian hmasate and the missionaries had helped percieve the drink as a 'sin', 'un-Christian principle' and a 'source of social evil'. So to identify the church as the source of prohibition would provide the simplest understanding.

The negative perception on liquor promoted by the Church had consequently rubbed heavily on the psyche of the indigenized Mizo Christians. When the missionaries left the hills, their values and work was carried on by the Church they helped establish. The amalgamation of Chirstianity as a very important facet of the Mizo ethnic identity had further helped proliferate liquor prohibition. It is observed that the intent of the indigenized Kohhran hruaitute of the contemporary world for prohibition had come to represent a different intent of their own. i.e., the sustained projection of the Mizo identity as 'Mizoram Kristian ram' or Mizoram land of the Christians, thus, we see the continued promotion of prohibition narrative.

² Mizo Kristian is translated as the Mizo Chirstian

B. An uncompromising disposition

The introduction of prohibition in December 1897 at Mission Veng, Aizawl under the lead of the Presbyterian British missionary D. E. Jones (Zosaphluia). This had been the first of its kind. This was followed by the formulation of stringent laws by the Church. The first Presbytery held on April 1910 passed the Agenda No. 7 following the same lines as the 1897 prohibition order. The Church continue to stand for the prohibition of brewing, selling and consumption of liquor. The consequences had been excommunication from the Church and expulsion from the area. Such uncompromising disposition of the Church continued to be followed until the late 1980s. By late 1980s the stance of the Church began to shift a little. It continued to stand against liquor brewing, selling and consumption of liquor, but it stopped excommunicating its members for drinking. It does not indicate the softening of their approach towards liquor. It continued to campaign against its proliferation and its stance against it was reaffirmed by the 1987 Synod Assembly as ‘the most destructive force to the Mizo society’. Again, the 2015 Synod Assembly passed a resolution to forbid the services of members with Liquor permit in the Church ministry.

A. Opposing sale laws

Sale laws formulated by ministries have been unfailingly objected by the Church and vehemently campaigned against. The issue of liquor has caused ministries to rise and fall in Mizoram as a result of the Church’s reaction against it. Sale laws such as: a) the Mizoram Excise Act of 1973 passed by Ch.Chhunga led Mizo Union Ministry, b) the Mizoram Excise Rules, 1984 formulated and enforced under Lal Thanhawla led Congress Ministry and the continued use by the then celebrated leader Laldenga led MNF ministry in 1986 and c) the recent enforcement of the Mizoram Liquor Prohibition and Control Act, 2014 under the Lal Thanhawla led Congress Ministry have all led to their unpopularity and replacement by ministries that seem to promote temperance.

The Presbyterian Church’s campaign for enforcement of ‘total prohibition’ at the policy level began from 1991 to 1995. The delayed action of the Congress Government tested the patience of Church leaders. Inaction on the Governments part to make

prohibition law prompted the Synod Executive Committee (SEC) to establish a Common Front which included all denominations, organize: a walking demonstration, hunger strike, statewide prayer. However, the result of their undeterred lobby had been the formulation of the dry law, the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1995 and surprisingly, the ousting of the Congress ministry in the State General Election of 1998. However, the turn of 2014 saw the repeal of the dry law by the Congress ministry, in the latter part of their second term rule. This had cause re-visitation of the conflict. The Church mobilized its pastorates, Church members, YMA and other community organizations to stand against the bill. It mobilized its people with sermons preached against “zu” in various churches, dissemination of knowledge on “liquor literature”, putting up posters against the liquor bill, conducting mass prayers hoping for the reinstatement of prohibition or prayers for a new ministry. All this and its coordinated work with the NGOs against the repeal law had definitely caused a change in electoral behavior. Thus, proving the hypothesis “The repeal of the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1995 in 2014 resulted in differences of opinion among the political regimes as well as the people of Mizoram” true.

The study also revealed that the Church’s campaign against liquor has been effective in formulating opinions of the people particularly the women. Liquor policies have been a very important electoral determinant in Mizoram where adoption of anti-liquor stance provides a safe policy for any political party as the recurring theme of all community based NGOs have been *ruihhlo kan duh lo*.³

In a state where activities of the people is church-centric, on issues such as liquor, the churches in their capacity as a collective of different denominations through the Mizoram Kohhran Hruaitute Committee (MKHC) or as an individual Church have promoted measures to curb liquor consumption, rehabilitate members with dependencies to various intoxicants and promote prohibition. Thus the study has found that the continued conceptualization of liquor as a sin and a source of various social evils play a big role for the Church to lobby for prohibition and mobilize its community based social organizations, particularly the Young Mizo Association (YMA) to enforce its policy. One also has to mention that on the issue of liquor the voice of the minority is repressed as the community is policed by the Church through

³ *ruihhlo kan duh lo* translates as ‘we don’t want intoxicants’.

its social organizations. It has morphed into a society where illicit manufacturers and sellers gets expelled from their respective localities. One cannot be dismissive of the issue of liquor as it causes ministries to rise and fall and mobilises major actors to action in the state to promote their interests. It causes divide not only in families but also family of the larger unit: the state as a whole.

III. The third hypothesis: The issue of liquor has been used by political regimes in Mizoram to influence electorates.

This study was made through content analysis of research questionnaires and the Assembly debates of the Mizoram Legislative Assembly effecting liquor bills. Such debates had taken place on the introduction of bills such as the Mizoram Excise Bill, 1973, Mizoram Excise Bill 1992, Mizoram Prohibition of Liquors Bill 1995, Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Bill 1995 and the Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition & Control) Bill, 2014.

A. Politics of liquor prohibition

Liquor debates exposes the tug and pull for power between Church led civil society and the state. And how the issue is used by political regimes to influence electorates. It provides a good site for political regimes to promote politics of prohibition. Content Analysis of the Assembly debates from the Mizoram Excise Bill 1973 to the Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition & Control) Bill, 2014 clearly helps locate the centrality of the ‘prohibition narrative’ promoted by the Church on liquor debate in the state of Mizoram.

The debates clearly shows the change of positions political parties make depending on whether they are in a position to effect legislation or not. Political Party’s ulterior policy towards liquor are not reflected in their respective manifestos. However, the claim for prohibition had often been reflected in election campaigns and seem to help promote their cause as liquor had been identified as the most notorious intoxicating substance by the Church lead civil society. 1973 saw the Congress oppose the Excise Bill but had been the ones to enforce the Bill in 1984. The MNF stance on liquor while underground had proved to be different from the over ground policy which had been

quite tolerant. This too had contributed to the unpopularity of Laldenga and finally led to his inglorious oust from power.

The issue of liquor had helped expose and hamper reputations in the state. It is an issue which leads to finger pointing on the past liquor policies of political regimes. Despite its pro-liquor sentiment promoted, the MNF too had introduced an amendment to legalizing bill with the enforcement of the Mizoram Excise & Narcotics (Wine) Rules, 2008. This had caused concern to Church leaders as it filled them with apprehension that such a law will eventually lead to a legalizing law.

The study found that the Assembly debates on liquor narrative is predominantly centred round the lines posed by Christianity of the Mizo kind, where support and positive reasoning of liquor sale by a legislator would be blasphemy. Also analysis of the Assembly debates on liquor policies mentioned above including the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1995 reveal that political regimes on the opposing side often find themselves promoting and leading an anti-liquor campaign along religious lines. The appearance of divide fuels political agenda to work against each other. Liquor has been a very effective issue for legislators to sway opinion and promote their parties. It has led to the replacement of Ch.Chhunga by T.Sailo in 1978, Laldenga by Lal Thanhawla in 1989 and then Lal Thanhawla by Zoramthanga in 2018. It had also led to the unpopularity of the leaderships of T. Sailo and Lal thanhawla during their respective terms in the early 1980's and 1990's for their delayed response to the wishes of the civil society for prohibition.

On the issue of the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1995 though formulated and enforced by the reigning Congress party, their delayed response to the wishes of the Church had caused them their reputation. The MNF on the other hand wasted no opportunity to muddle their reputation with the introduction of the Mizoram Prohibition of Liquor Bill, 1995, a private bill of the opposition legislator, Lalrinchhana on the 29th September, 1995. They outgunned the Congress ministry in introducing the prohibition bill. They played well with the sentiment of the people. This resulted in the introduction of Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Bill, 1995 by the Congress two months later on the 14th December, 1995. But harm had already been done, it lead to the replacement of the Congress by the MNF in 1998. So more often than not, liquor issue has helped place opposing political regimes on the treasury bench

thus, proving true the hypothesis “issue of liquor has been used by political regimes in Mizoram to influence electorates”. The political narrative of liquor continues to be dominated by the Church in Mizoram and is such an issue that radicalizes the Church as well. The liquor narrative helps deduce that:

- i. the issue exhibits schism between the Churches led civil society and the Government,
- ii. the Church and Government both wishes to dominate the narrative often resulting in clash of interests and exhibits power play,
- iii. it is an issue for political regimes to influence electorates,
- iv. the true stance of political regimes on liquor issue remains uncertain unless they remain in the position to effect legislation and
- v. the issue had been used by the Church to influence electorates as well.

The Church ‘In the midst of the absence of anti-incumbency wave in the last Congress ministry’ perceived the Congress President and former Chief Minister Lal Thanhawla, ‘pastors and revival speakers preached against the ministry from Church pulpits with ulterior motives; on the last Sunday before the General Election scheduled on Wednesday, the 28th November 2018, Churches had collectively preached against liquor and the ministry in places like Chhingchhip, Dawrlawn, Thenzawl and other places information had also been received of pastors promoting candidates of the upcoming Zoram Peoples’ Movement (ZPM) party’. Such action of the Church prove contradictory to its own preaching of ethical election conduct of campaigning as promoted through their Mizoram People Forum (MPF). He commented ‘liquor will continue to be present as long as there is people and its society, as a political leader, one has to ponder on how to live with it? How to go with it?’ had the MLPC not been successful, the party had been prepared to repeal the law. It had been clear as related by the President, the party had not anticipated its downfall in 2018.

B. Stakeholders opinion

The politics surrounding the repeal of the dry law had clearly set the polarizing stance of the two main political parties. The enforcement of this act solidified the anti-prohibitionist stance of the Congress and the pro-prohibitionist position of the MNF party in Mizoram. Perception of stakeholder solidifies this belief as 157 (65%) of the

respondents related the MNF party to being ‘pro-prohibitionist’, 12 (5%) to the Congress party, 21 (9%) to the Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP) and 50 (21%) identified others (Question 21 in research questionnaire). Majority of the stakeholders also perceive liquor as an issue which causes the rise and fall of ministries in Mizoram. It had been observed that many believe the issue of liquor had been a utilized by political regimes as a source of political play owing to lack of results during prohibition. Thus, liquor is seen as a good site for vote bank politics and that it should not be politicized.

Majority of respondents further felt happiness with the reinstatement of prohibition act as majority of them 183 (76.2%) agreed they were, whereas the majority 23 (9.6%) were not and 34 (14.2%) had no opinion on the issue. As an anonymous commentator had said, “Had the Congress continued to rule, my husband would have died from excessive drinking, therefore I voted for the MNF”. The MNF who promised to reinstate prohibition during their election campaigns in 2018 seemed to resonate as a solution for many women to their domestic problems. The politics surrounding the repeal of the dry law had clearly set the polarizing stance of the two main political parties. The enforcement of the 2014 Act solidified the anti-prohibitionist stance of the Congress and the pro-prohibitionist position of the MNF party in Mizoram.

IV. The fourth hypothesis: Liquor consumption has negative effects on Mizo society.

Liquor itself if left untouched, unconsumed has no power over a person and is a mere ‘thing’ as Laldenga had once said. However, the addictive nature of the drink has often been identified as the source of various social evils and fatalities. The controlled sale of liquor by the Congress ministry in Mizoram for four years between 2014-2018 had been a brave attempt to change the narrative, an experimental law which the then Chief Minister Lal Thanhawla avowed to repeal if it turned out to be an impediment for the people. It remains no secret that despite seventeen years of enforcing prohibition, illicit liquor has been available in various places within the state. That people habituated to drinking have had constant supply of illicit liquor for consumption despite enforcement of the prohibiting law. A retrospective analysis has been done to determine various implications of liquor law enforcement on the society,

economy and health of the people which will help determine true or false if liquor consumption has negative effects on Mizo society.

A. The General Perception

It is determined that the Mizo population consist of quite a large number of people habituated to drinking, 134 (56%) respondents had identified to having family members who drank liquor, against 106 (44%) respondents who do not. However, on categorizing responses as heavy drinker and occasional drinker, it had been found that the high percentage of the drinking population is caused by the identification of 'occasional drinkers' from families of both rural and urban respondents, heavy drinkers formulate the minor percentage. From the interview of the drinking population, it has been determined that majority of them did not perceive their consumption as sinful, to them the notion of 'drinking as a sin' appears to be relational to one's action, not having much to do with faith.

The study has also revealed that liquor is a factor that caused tension in communities and that learning to co-existing with liquor seems to find major disagreement with the people. On closer analysis it is determined that substantial number of youths aged 18-25 years and adult aged between 36-45 years tended to agree with the need to liberalize and co-exist with liquor. However, this makes it quite clear that the majority of Mizo respondents spanning all ages remain 'un-open' to the idea of liberalization of liquor and co-existence still a far-fetched ideal. Thus majority continue to perceive prohibition as good for the Mizo society and disagreed to the move of the Government to regulated/controlled sale in 2014.

However, respondent's opinion on the MLPC Act 2014 despite appearing quite oriented towards prohibition, there also appears a crack. There is recognition by the majority that the solution to the drink problem is not embedded in prohibition, therefore, when asked what their considered solution to the dilemma of liquor consumption would be given the choice between total prohibition, regulated sale and no opinion, minority of 21 (8.7%) respondents opted for total prohibition, majority 168 (70%) had opted for regulated sale and 51 (21.2%) had no opinion on the issue. This indicates the complexity of the issue, where the data shows acknowledgement of the failure of total prohibition which a substantial percentage opting for a regulated

sale. However, perception of respondents in the urban populace seem to be devoid of opinion on the issue.

B. The Financial implications of liquor

On closer analysis of liquor finances through interview of the drinking population, three types of drinkers were identified – the heavy drinker, the occasional drinker and the regular but moderate drinker. The majority consist of the occasional drinkers and the preferred drink of all had been identified as local zu (local liquor) and Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL). The average age of their first taste of liquor had been determined at 17 years for the urban consumers and 16 years for rural consumers. The average monthly expenditure on liquor of urban respondents is determined at Rs. 3468/- as against Rs. 1747/- average expenditure of rural drinkers making the average expenditure of rural residents 49.62% lower than the urban drinkers. It is also determined that the urban expenditure as highest among the middle income range of 10000-14999, where 16.35% from their monthly income goes to the purchase of liquor. However, in the rural drinking scenario, it is found that the lowest strata of income 4999 and below had the highest percentage of monthly expenditure with 70% of their income used for purchasing liquor. The total percentage of both urban and rural drinking expenditure can be determined to be 9.5 % with an average amount of Rs. 2631.53 spent monthly to procure liquor. It had been quite interesting to know that some consumers in the rural areas were able to procure their drink in the dated form of ‘barter’ system.

C. Liquor tax on State Revenue

The revenue generated from liquor during the era of the ME Act to the MLPC era from 1985 to 2020 shows an overall contribution of 4.9% to the State Own Resources (SOR) of Mizoram. Liquor revenue generated during 1986-1987 was 33.16217 lakhs which led to the highest ever contribution made by liquor to SOR with a whopping 33.6% in the state. 2015-2016 saw liquor revenue contribute 15.8% to SOR with a total income of Rs.10365.30738/- lakhs and SOR standing at Rs. 65604.04/- lakhs. With the implementation of the legalizing law in 2015, the trajectory

of the Finance Minister had shown hope for increase in revenue. However, it is seen that liquor revenue continued to drop in the consecutive years that followed. Since 2017, with the fixation of liquor tax to 16%, income received show a decline of taxes with a difference of Rs. 977.43326/- lakhs from the previous year. This was mainly due to refusal of tax payment by vendors and non-action on the part of the authority to push for payment. Years 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 show a contribution of liquor tax further decline to 9.7% and 9.1%.

The prospect of a higher contribution of liquor tax to SOR would have been a possibility had there been better co-ordination between the taxing agents viz., the Excise and the Taxation Department, exhibition of good governance from the Government and accountability from wine shop vendors. Eighteen years of prohibition enforcement from 1997 to 2015 had seen an income of 3240.942 lakhs from liquor which contributed a total of 18.5% during the period compared to the earnings of 40845.61 lakhs during the sale law from 2015 to 2020 which contributed to 47.3% of revenue to the state in a span of five years.

It can be seen that the liquor income during the enforcement of the sale law amounted to an earnings of 40845.61 lakhs in the span of five years from 2015-2020. Such earnings contributed a total of 2.23% to the state GDP. The total income of liquor during the enforcement of sales in the era of the Mizoram Excise Rules 1983 spanning from 1985 to 1988 and the sale law under the MLPC Act from 2015 to 2020 resulted in a total income of 40948.01 lakhs which made a contribution of a total of 2.69% to the state GDP.

Calculation of liquor income during the enforcement of the MLTP Act, for eighteen years spanning the period 1997-2015 shows an income amounting to 3240.942 lakhs thus making a total contribution of 9.9% to the per capital income. On the other hand, the enforcement of the sale law under the MLPC Act from 2015-2020 shows a total earnings of 40845.61 lakhs from liquor which contributes 29% to per capita income in the state.

In the initial year of liquor sale in 2015-16, Liquor Revenue (LR) had an impact of 15.79% to the SOR. SOR this year stood at Rs. 65604.04/- lakhs whereas LL had been Rs. 76780.05467/- lakhs the very same year. This indicates the leakage percentage amounting to 117% of the SOR. This indicates the spending to procure

liquor far surpassing the SOR. However, the leakage percentage in SOR declined thereon. The total years of MLPC era spanning from 2015-2020 shows a Liquor Leakage (LL) amounting to Rs. 267281.9727/- while the State Owned Resource (SOR) in the same time frame stood at Rs. 482960.3/- lakhs. Thus, the LL percent on SOR in the span of five years had culminated to a total of 55.34%. This shows a huge impact of leakage on the state's economy in these respective sale periods. Had these money been used within the state's economy, it would have huge positive economic impact like increase sales, production, generated employment and more.

There is no denying that liquor revenue proves a very good source of income for the state, as seen from the differences of the impact of liquor tax between prohibition and the sale law. One also has to take into account the number of illicit drinks sold in the black market that goes untaxed, which would have made a good source of revenue for the state with the right policy implementation. However, taxing liquor has been subjected to objections as seen in the Assembly debates as it is preached 'better to remain poor than rich from sin tax'.

D. Implication on the Justice System

The impact of liquor on Mizoram justice system was studied and conclusion arrived from the data acquired from the Excise and Narcotics Department, Government of India and the Police through its Crime Investigation Department (CID). The comparative span of five years between 2010 to 2014 (MLTP Act) and 2015 to 2019 (MLPC Act), have shown a surprising decrease in the overall liquor crime rate during the regulated sale period to 35 % as compared to the overall of 57% in the prohibition period making the overall difference 22%.

It has been understood that most cases which eventually end up under liquor crime data have mostly been consequences of reports given by individual of contraveners/contravention to authorities. Liquor show an unexpected lowering of crime percentage over the years despite being consistently high compared to other crimes. Despite the lowering percentage, it remains high as the provision of both acts; the MLTP, 1995 and MLPC, 2014 remained mostly the same as both ordered arrests of those 'drinking without permit, consuming liquor in public place, making nuisance

under the influence of liquor and driving under influence of liquor. This provision of both acts kept afloat the liquor crime rates throughout.

It has been found that liquor laws put a strain on the justice system and law enforcement agencies. It also caused structural and managerial problems of prisons as a consequence of over population caused by these liquor acts. The only difference of the two acts from the enforcement point of view had been that 'arrests were not made on those who privately held their liquor drink'.

E. Implication of Liquor Consumption on Health

On the implication of liquor on one's health, the assumption had been that the sale of liquor would lead to a proportionate increase in the number of liquor related deaths. However data shows that the escalation of liquor death rates appears to be insignificant to as small a number as 3%. The overall recorded percentage of liquor related deaths over the span of seven years from 2013-2019 stands at 18%. While according to the National Centre Disease Informatics and Research (NCDIR) the leading cause of death mentioned in 2018 had been disease of the circulatory system like heart attacks and strokes which overall presented 16% of deaths in Mizoram. Liquor consumption might be a lifestyle for some, a sustainable lifestyle for those moderate drinkers, but one cannot deny the harm caused on the health of a person habituated to excessive drinking. One also cannot ignore the physical, emotional and economic toll it takes on the family members involved in the process in their capacity as care providers.

F. Stakeholders perception

The study has found majority of the stakeholders continue to believe in abstinence from liquor as they continue to hold on to the perception of liquor as a sin. It is also believed that Liquor Prohibition is the right thing to do for a Christian majority state and this perception is held more by women. It is also determined through correlation coefficient that people with such predominant belief that drinking is morally unacceptable will most likely not vote for a party with pro-liquor advocacy and this

opinion runs truer for the rural areas. The study finds that the Christian identity continues to remain deeply embedded in the Mizo psyche and to support such policies equates an un-Christian act. So liquor is identified as an important voting determinant that influence the voting behaviour of the Mizo people.

Liquor prohibition has been so deeply embedded in the psyche on the people that the very term 'prohibition' which by nature is a limitation on ones freedom, a prescription of what not to do is not recognised as such by the majority. Majority of 127 (53%) respondents disagreed that prohibitionist policy is an infringement on individual freedom, while 73 (30%) respondents agreed and 40 (17%) had no opinion regarding. Larger portion of stakeholders failed to identify it as a limitation to one's freedom. This indicates the extent to which people really had been indoctrinated to endorse prohibition. Where the state of limitation is not recognized as it is so.

The study has found that Community based NGOs continue to support the Churches on their pro-prohibitionist stance. However, people identify the MLTP 1995 as a failure, though they continue to opt for prohibition which gives them a sense of security. They do not identify the policy as a solution to the drink problem and this knowledge poses a dilemma to the stakeholders, where they would like the Government to come up with a different policy which will have a greater leanings towards prohibition.

It is found that the younger section of respondents would opt for a more liberal approach to liquor policy whereas the older stakeholders firmly believe that the Government should continue with the prohibitionist policy. Thus, more youths were unhappy with the reinstatement of prohibition than the older demographic of respondents. With this one can assume that more youths voted for the Congress in the 2018 election for their liquor policy as against the older generation. Thus, a prediction can be made that maybe in the next 50 to 60 years from now, the state may adopt a more liberal approach to liquor.

The retrospective study on the implications of the MLTP Act and MLPC Act indicates that liquor causes problems in communities and that people are generally intolerant to liquor consumption. The expenditure on liquor consumption also exhibit strain on income where 9.5 % of their earnings is utilized to purchase liquor which could otherwise go to personal savings. The contribution of liquor tax to state revenue

had been highest in 1986-1987 in the Mizoram Excise Act, 1973 with an income of 33.16217 lakhs, leading to a contribution of 33.6% to the State Own Resources (SOR) in a single financial year. In the MLPC era for a period of five years spanning from 2015 to 2020 generated a total revenue of 40845.61 lakhs thus, contributing 47.3% to SOR. One cannot deny the huge revenue earnings of liquor sale but the study of the related cost associated to liquor like treatments for liquor induced illness, operating expense of police stations, prisons, judicial cost and more, the financial brunt carried on the expense of the public exchequer might present a different scenario. Liquor compared to other crime heads has consecutively been the highest contributor of crime rate in Mizoram, though it showed a surprising decrease in the overall liquor crime rate during the regulated sale period, it none the less remain the highest contributor to the crime rates over the years. However, on the issue of health, liquor induced deaths contribute a small percentage of deaths compared to diseases like heart attacks and strokes but it none the less causes various health related issues. Thus, the implication study of liquor all points towards proving true the hypothesis “liquor consumption has negative effects on Mizo society” but it does not surpass the negative assumption of the ill effects of liquor as conceived by most.

Concluding Remarks

The study of the politics of liquor: state and civil society interventions exposes the tug and pull for power between the two to dominate the narrative. However, one has to really give it a deep thought as to what will be best for all stakeholders; the drinking as well as non-drinking population. The solution has to focus on less about the politics and more about the community. A total of almost eighteen years of prohibition enforcement had seen its failure. It appears that stakeholders recognize this failure, and are looking for a better alternative liquor law. Political parties have to really understand the impact of their policies, not just consider stakeholders as vote banks. Church led society also has to rethink their approach to liquor and learn to evolve according to the needs of the time. The study has shown that there are quite a substantial amount of stakeholders in a quest for a new liquor law more oriented towards a prohibition but devoid of the ‘total’ aspect, perhaps in the light of a ‘limited prohibition’.

There has to be acknowledgement on the failure of liquor prohibition policy and that there is also intolerance towards 'open sale' of liquor. With this acknowledgement, the Government could formulate a better law which could help bridge the gap between polarizing opinions of power arbiters in the Mizo society. The Government could also organize a state-wide referendum to determine people's stance on either sale or no sale to ensure citizens voice is accounted for, to make people feel part of the decision-making process and implement liquor policy accordingly. This will help legitimize their stance on the issue.

Prohibition or not, there is continued demand for liquor which indicates continued supply of the demand. As the saying goes, despite all the restrictions put on liquor, 'life finds a way', in this case it has found a way for the supply to thrive illegally. The existence of demand for liquor will continue to generate the existence of illicit brewers. The Government has to help provide alternative income for these poverty stricken illicit brewers if it really wishes for them to end brewing.

It is important for the Government to step-up in providing social defence. Rehabilitation drive in Mizoram has so far been taken as a collective, as the dependency is often clubbed together by society with other substance users. It will be more effective to have a separate rehabilitation centre for liquor dependents in order to specifically address their needs to recovery. The Government needs to concentrate its effort to rehabilitate people with liquor dependency by establishing the first ever rehabilitation centre for liquor dependents in Mizoram.

The study indicates that teenagers of 16 to 17 years have their first taste of liquor, they form a vital target age group to educate the negative effects of liquor which will help in demand reduction in the long run. As civil society through its various social organizations help enforce prohibition law, they should also be mobilized to help prevent demand. So far, Churches have organized many Gospel Campings for various target groups. Collaboration work of the Church with the Mizoram Social Defence & Rehabilitation Board (MSD&RB) which can offer systematic guidance to treating people with various dependencies. This can result in a well-rounded healing of both flesh and spirit. Collaboration with other NGOs and establishments will lead to better awareness in 'preventing demand'.

If the Government ever opt to sell liquor again, it will do well to promote indigenous alcoholic beverages or have liquor made locally by setting up liquor manufacturing distilleries in the state to prevent all economic leakages on liquor purchased from outside. This will tremendously help boost the state's economy.

It would not be wrong to assume that liquor will continue to be a source of debate in Mizo society by the simple fact that there continues to be 'demand' as pointed out by the MLTP Study Group. Whatever liquor laws Government enforces in the state, either total prohibition, limited prohibition or controlled sale, people have borne witness to the continued need for greater rehabilitation work particularly for liquor dependents. The subject of campaign has shifted over the years from the simple rice beer to liquor of various brands; so has the potent strength of the drink from mild to strong. This study in no way advocates the drink nor does it blindly criticize. It simply acknowledges the existence of a greater debate on liquor linked to power arbiters in stages of the Mizo history. To quote Nicholls, "The questions drink poses are about much more than just the drink alone; because this is the case, the answers to many of those questions are political before they are anything else". The person often becomes the most political.

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