

CULTURAL HISTORY OF LIQUOR IN THE MIZORAM

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF
PHILOSOPHY**

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CULTURAL HISTORY OF LIQUOR IN THE MIZORAM

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled '*Cultural History of Liquor in Mizoram*' submitted by *Zothankhumi* for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy, is a research work, done under my supervision and guidance. The dissertation submitted by him has not formed the basis for 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 dissertation represents objective study and independent work of the scholar.

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DECLARATION

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

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STATEMENT ON ANTI-PLAGIARISM

It is hereby certified that the M. Phil dissertation entitled, '*Cultural History of Liquor in Mizoram*' is the result of Master of Philosophy research programme and have not taken recourse to any form of Plagiarism in any of the chapters of the dissertation, except for quotations, from published and unpublished sources which are clearly indicated and acknowledged as such.

The source material from works such as books, articles, essays, interviews and internet sources are properly acknowledged and quotations and paraphrases are clearly indicated. This dissertation or any version of it has not been previously submitted to any university and the same has not yet been published.

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ABBREVIATION

| | | |
|-------|---|--|
| MHIP | : | Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl |
| MLTPC | : | Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition and Control |
| MLTP | : | Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition |
| MZP | : | Mizo Zirlai Pawl |
| NGO | : | Non- Governmental Organization |
| VDP | : | Village Defense Party |
| YMA | : | Young Mizo Association |

GLOSSARY

| | |
|-----------|--------------------------|
| Bawi | : Slave |
| Puithiam | : Priest |
| Serh | : Private part |
| Tlawmngai | : to be self-sacrificing |
| Zawlbuk | : Bachelor's dormitory |

Chapter I

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Different people in different societies have different cultures. Culture may vary depending on food, clothes, and religion and may differ due to differences in geographical location. In simple terms, culture is the identity of a group of people living in a specific place. It is the product of society and grows through social interaction. The culture was defined as a network of knowledge, consisting of learned routines of thinking, feeling, and interacting with other people, as well as a corpus of substantive assertions and ideas about an aspect of the world.¹ As well as everyday attitudes, values, assumptions, and prejudices, culture encompasses rituals and practices that express these ideas from magical beliefs to gender roles and race.

To have a better and deep understanding of one's culture it is important to examine and analyze one's culture from different perspectives and methods. Culture comprises material and immaterial forms, as well as the principles that govern societies. Culture examines how and why humans have transformed a natural product into a potent societal icon that varies in different places, through the passage of time and space.²

Alcohol is a colorless liquid that has, in itself, no material, cultural or moral value. But like many other commodities, it has been ascribed to complicated and often contradictory sets of values that have varied over time and place, and that are interwoven with the complexities of powers gender, class, ethnicity, and age in the societies in which it is consumed.³

¹ Robert S.Wyer, Chi-yue Chiu, Ying-yi Hong (ed), *Understanding Culture- Theory, Research and Application*, New York, Psychology Press,2009, p.4

² Steve Charter et al., *The Routledge Handbook of Wine and Culture (ed)*, New York, Routledge, 2022, p. 4, 6

³ Rod Phillips, *Alcohol, A History*, USA, University of Carolina Press, 2014, p.10

The consumption of alcohol, as a custom, has been in place since ancient times.⁴ In almost every society and culture, liquor has occupied a significant place. It was used in daily life as a beverage, for recreation, in ceremonies, and even in medicine. Its significance continues to be debated. Various cultures utilized it as a part of their dietary practices, while others included it as part of their cultural ceremonies. It was generally used as a tool to treat various diseases in certain cultures, and as a leisure activity in other cultures. It was included in many events, feasts, and festivals in most countries. On different occasions, it was consumed and marked a significant element of a program or ceremony. Many people find that alcohol relaxes them and helps them forget their worries sometimes.

Alcoholic beverages, especially beer and wine have often been associated with divinity, and they have historically been credited with having medicinal or therapeutic properties: it is hard to think of an illness, disease, or physical pathology that has not at the same time, been treated by some form of alcohol. It has been credited with ridding the body of worms and cancer, aiding digestion, fighting heart disease and turning back old age, and extending life itself⁵

Alcohol occurs naturally as a by-product of fermentation- the action of sugar eating on fruit.⁶ Ethanol is the least toxic type of alcohol and the only one used in beverages. It is classified as a depressant that inhibits the function of the central nervous system. It is incredibly versatile. Alcohol is a universally available and widely used and commonly abused chemical substance.

1.2 Liquor and its Origin

Before stressing about liquor, it is important to remember that there was water before there was any beer or wine which is a requirement on earth. Humans need water in their daily life and need to rehydrate themselves according to their dietary patterns, physical activities, and climate. Humans relied on water for thousands of years along

⁴ Emma Fossey, *Growing up with Alcohol*, London, Taylor & Francis e- Library, 2005, p.17

⁵Phillips, *Alcohol, a History*, p.11.

⁶ Iain Gately, *Drink a Cultural History of Alcohol*, New York, Penguin Groups, 2008, p. 2

with fruits, berries, and meats in their diet. They usually choose a settlement where there was a good supply of water mainly streams, rivers, and lakes. If alcoholic beverages became a part of the pre-historic diet, they must have made a negligible contribution to rehydration at first because nomadic populations would not have been able to produce significant volumes of alcohol while constantly on the move.⁷

We can trace alcoholic beverages made by humans to about 7000 BC, nine millennia ago, but it is certainly prehistoric humans consumed alcohol in fruits and berries many thousands of years earlier than that. When fruits and berries pass the point of optimum ripeness and sweetness and start to decay, wild yeast began to consume the sugar they naturally contain and produce alcohol by a spontaneous process of fermentation.⁸

Everything changed in the Neolithic period (about 10,000 to 4000 BC) when humans begin to build a permanent settlements, cultivate cereals and other crops, and keep livestock. Domesticated varieties of many kinds of crops began to appear, including cereals that are suitable for making beer and grapes varieties that were selected for wine production because they were easier to propagate and had a higher ratio of flesh to seeds than many wild grapes. In this period we find the earliest evidence of beer and wine, partly because Neolithic cultures also began to produce pottery; it is in clay pots and jars that archaeologists have found some of the oldest evidence of alcoholic drinks, in the form of seeds, grains, yeast, acids, and other residues.⁹

The art of distilling is believed to have been developed 5000 years ago by the Mesopotamians as they distilled essential oils by heating a mixture of plants and water in a pot, then collecting the condensation that formed on its lids. This principle was later applied to alcohol, which has a lower boiling point than water. Simply put, when a mixture of alcohol and water is heated, the droplets of liquid that forms from the vapor are heavy with alcohol. These droplets are then collected, and what you end up with is a more concentrated product than the original. It was the Chinese who

⁷ Phillips, p. 20

⁸ Phillips, p.18

⁹ Phillips, p.21

seemed to have discovered this neat trick, probably about 2000 years ago when alchemists distilled small amounts of alcohol from fermented grains¹⁰

The earliest proof that they were converting some of their produce into brews derives from the chemical analysis of the residue found inside pottery jars discovered in a grave in Jiahu, in northern China, dating to 7000-6600 BC. These clay vessels coincidentally the most ancient of their kind, contained fermented drinks made with rice, honey, grapes, and hawthorn berries. Further evidence of prehistoric brews comes from Transcaucasia, part of present-day Georgia, where grape pipes have been discovered around Neolithic settlements with shapes that differ slightly from those of wild grapes, suggesting that they have been cultivated.¹¹

In China, wine was buried with the high-ranking dead for consumption in the afterlife. There were also ceremonies in which people drank wine to achieve a mind-altered state that would enable them to communicate with their ancestors. More evidence of the funerary purposes of wine drinking emerges from the later Shang dynasty (1750-1100). Excavations of thousands of tombs show that wine vessels were often buried with the dead not only with the powerful but even with some of the poor. A strong emphasis was on drinking on a festive occasion, if not on an everyday basis¹²

The findings that make up the earliest known history of alcohol- from about 7000 BC to the beginning of the Christian era, a little more than 2,000 years ago- produce a continually changing narrative. Archaeologists, historians, linguists, chemists, and other scholars regularly report finding evidence that claims to be the earliest example of this and that aspect of alcohol. The earliest evidence of any form of alcoholic beverages has been found in northern China, while the earliest known wine production facility is claimed for Armenia. There is evidence that one of the earliest commercial breweries was located in Peru.¹³

¹⁰ Jaime Joyce, *Moonshine - a Cultural History of America's Infamous Liquor, USA*, Zenith Press, 2014, p.11-12.

¹¹ Gately, p.11

¹² Phillips, p.29

¹³ Phillips, p.27

Proof that people were cultivating plants to manufacture alcohol first appears in the so-called Fertile Crescent, a geographical area curving between the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf. The analysis of the yellow residue found on the inside of a jar at a Neolithic settlement in Haji Firuz Tepe (Iran), dating to 5400-5000 BC, revealed that the jar had once held wine. The amount that each household might have produced suggests that it was a small but significant part of their diet. In such a community, wine making was the best technology they had for storing high perishable grapes, although whether the resulting was intended for intoxication as well as nourishment is unknown.¹⁴

An earlier and much more complete winemaking facility, dating from 4100-4000 BC, was found near the village of Areni, in the Little Caucasus range where Hajji Firuz and Godin Tepe were located. It consists of a shallow basin in which grapes would have been crushed with a hole allowing the juice to flow into an underground vat, where it fermented. These vessels along with cups and bowls, showed evidence of malvidin, and grape seeds, pressed grapes, and dried grapevines at the site further support the belief that this was a wine-making facility.¹⁵

It is believed that brewing and winemaking, the processes that produced the two most common alcoholic beverages in the ancient world, seem to have followed different paths of diffusion and development. The transfer of wine-making knowledge and technology seems fairly linear, as it moved from western Asia to the Eastern Mediterranean and Egypt and from there to Crete, Greece, and southern Italy, before reaching the rest of Europe about 2,000 years ago.¹⁶

Much more reliable shreds of evidence of the production of alcohol and cultures of alcohol consumption emerged from about 3000 BC onward. There is detailed pictorial evidence of wine production in Egypt by 3000-2500 BC.¹⁷ In Uruk, the principal city of Sumerian, brewing was practiced on an epic scale. The fragments of their laws that have survived, incised on clay tablets, tell us that they had regulated

¹⁴ Gately, p.12

¹⁵ Phillips, p.32

¹⁶ Phillips, p. 33

¹⁷ Phillips, p.34

drinking places: their material culture shows us that they staged formal drinking sessions and associated alcohol with ceremony and ranks. The artifacts, laws, and records of the Sumerians show that alcohol was abundant in their society, that access to it was regulated, and that it was a favorite of its elite and offered to its gods.¹⁸

The wine was drunk only by the elites in Egypt as it was in many ancient cultures. The scarcity of wine probably gave it cultural value everywhere because it was made only once a year, unlike beer which could be made continually, year-round, in small batches using stored-up grains.¹⁹ By c 3100 BC in Egypt, beer had been established as the beverage for workers whereas wine was the drink of the elite.²⁰ In Egypt, wine was employed in ceremonies, often being poured as a libation as prayers were said, but wine tended to have more religious or spiritual associations throughout the ancient world.²¹

Alcohol occupied not only a religious position in ancient cultures; it was regularly employed as medicine either in its own right or as a medium for plants, herbs, and other products that were believed to have therapeutic properties. Many of the Neolithic alcoholic beverages identified in China and the Middle East contained plant material that was not used for the production of alcohol, and although it might well have been to add flavor, it might also have been added because of its perceived medicinal value.²²

Greece was the first civilization to leave a coherent account of alcohol. Alcohol, specifically wine played a pivotal role in Greek culture. The wine was omnipresent in Hellenic society. It was used as an offering to their deities; as a currency to buy rare and precious things from distant countries; and it was drunk formally, ritually, as a medicine and to assuage thirst. The wine was the drink of the fighting men, the indispensable lubricant of their culture of death, and the honor of sacking cities, off carrying off armor, cattle, and women.²³ The Greeks also recognized that drinking

¹⁸ Gately, p.13

¹⁹ Phillips, p.36

²⁰ Gately, p.15

²¹ Phillips, p.40

²² Phillips, p.44

²³ Gately, p.22

could kill and there were many examples of men and mythical beast which lost their lives to wine found in their literature.

The wine was consumed among all levels of Greek society, but there were important differences in the quality of wine consumed and the circumstances in which it was drunk. The most famous Greek wine institution was the symposium; the modern meaning of the word – a conference or a meeting – is much diluted from the original. The Greek word *symposium* means ‘drinking together,’ and it referred to a get-together of Upper- class Greek men for a long night of wine consumption, discussions, and entertainment. Symposiums could also be rites of passage, occasions for the induction of young men into adult male society.²⁴

Some symposiums were serious affairs, as the men discussed politics and the arts through the night. Others seem to have been boisterous drinking parties where drinking, as well as sex with prostitutes and boys servers, took priority. Many symposiums were probably a blend of all these activities. Symposiums were confined to males, and women present were musicians, servers, or prostitutes or sometimes looked after men who had drunk themselves sick. Women of the Greek upper classes also drank wine, but this practice was not looked upon favorably.²⁵

In the classical world, Rome was a great classical drinking civilization. Roman had left us a comprehensive picture of their drinking habits. They thought the wine was superior to beer. By the beginning of the Christian era, Roman had sponsored the planting of vineyards in many of the best-known modern wine regions in France as well as England and many parts of central and Eastern Europe. Rome demonstrated an impressive thirst for wine, especially for cheap wine that the masses could afford.²⁶ Archaeologists have discovered hundreds of bars in Roman cities, and some 200 have been excavated in Pompeii, the major wine shipping port.²⁷

From about AD 1000, changes in the political, economic, and cultural landscapes of Europe brought about significant shifts in the social position of alcohol and drinking

²⁴ Phillips, p.53

²⁵ Phillips, p.57

²⁶ Phillips, p.61

²⁷ Phillips, p.64

cultures. Right through the middle ages, ale was brewed in households in rural areas. Making ale took time and required equipment, and integrating brewing into the daily agricultural work was not always easy.²⁸ Wine and beer were staples of the European diet, but other alcoholic beverages were also available. In England, Ale was commonly part of the diet that harvest workers were fed in England during the middle ages.²⁹

The early modern period, from about 1500 to the eighteenth century saw alcohol firmly entrenched in the daily diets of European populations but also witness changes in the types of alcohol available. Distilled spirits, with their higher alcohol levels, had been made in Europe for medicinal purposes. The Protestant Reformation had important consequences on the history of alcohol in Europe.³⁰ In the 1500s, only a few radical Protestants called for complete abstinence from alcohol.³¹

In India, from the time of Rig Veda (c.1200 B.C) *sura* (a ferment of rice or barley) is mentioned as an intoxicating drink, used in certain rituals alongside the more prestigious *soma* about whose nature and manufacture there is still controversy. The Arthasastra gives a recipe for several fermented drinks including those whose ingredients are rice, sugarcane juice, grapes, and various spices. The early medicinal texts have sections on intoxicants and intoxication, recommending their use for certain conditions and supplying many recipes, including some to combat alcoholic remorse. They describe several categories of drinks, both medicinal and others, all produced by fermentation. But there is no indication that any of the ferments were concentrated by distillation.³²

In 1835, when the first distillery on European lines was established in India there was already in many parts of the sub-continent a local cottage industry distilling spirits from a variety of fermented liquors, including unrefined sugar, palm juice, rice, and

²⁸ Phillips, p.116

²⁹ Phillips, p.133

³⁰ Phillips, p.148

³¹ Phillips, p.150

³² F. R .Allchin, *India, The Ancient Home of Distillation?* Man, New Series, Vol. 14, 1979, p.58, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/201640>, (accessed on 07 September 2020).

the flower of the *mahua* tree (*Bassia latifolia*).³³ The customs of taking alcoholic drinks, including the product of distillation, were certainly current among Indians in early British times, and lead one to believe that the native distilleries were then patronized not only by tribal peoples but also by the princes.³⁴

1.3 Liquor and Mizo Culture

Mizoram is located in the northeast corner of India. It is situated between Myanmar and Bangladesh and has a strategic significance geographically and politically.³⁵ Different tribes inhabited the Lushai hill which was now known as Mizoram. The pre-colonial Mizos were traditionally ruled by a chief who was assisted by village elders known as ‘*Upa*’ and formed a sort of council which would uphold all the village administration. They were mainly agriculturalists and practiced shifting cultivation. Their livelihood mostly depended on it. Mizo society was patriarchal.

Zu is a local name given to beer or any fermented liquor, fermented grains ready to convert into beer by the addition of water.³⁶ It also includes spirits. The beer is made of fermented rice, millet, maize, etc. mixed with yeast. *Chawl* or *dawidim* is added to the rice beer. *Chawl* or *dawidim* is the name given to yeast. It is still an unanswerable as to how and when *chawl* was made. A new *chawl* had been made by mixing the flour of rice with a little quantity of *Chawl* previously made. After three days it became ready to use. The better the leaven results stronger the beer.³⁷

The origin of fermenting *Zu* by the Mizos was difficult to trace. There were some myths about the origins of fermenting *Zu*. According to one of the Mizo mythologies, two persons namely, *Chawnsela* and *Chawipoha* were responsible for discovering *Zu*. They found a white object in the jungle that they brought home and kept in a vessel with some cooked rice. They wrapped the mouth of the vessel very tightly

³³ F. R Allchin, *India, The Ancient Home of Distillation?*, p.56

³⁴ F. R. Allchin, p.57

³⁵ Rintluanga Pachuau, *Mizoram A Study in Comprehensive Geography*, New Delhi, Northern Book Centre, 2013, p.1.

³⁶ James Herbert Lorrain, *Dictionary of Lushai Language*, Kolkata, The Asiatic Society, Reprint , 2008, p.570.

³⁷ *Zu in Mizo society (Past and Present)*, Aizawl, Tribal Research Institute, 1983, p.1.

and left it untouched for some time. After some days they opened the vessel. Thus, they discovered the art of fermenting *Zu*. This myth has no supporting evidence³⁸

Mizos had four main types of liquor mainly *zupui*, *zufang*, *rakzu*, and *zulawm*. These liquors were consumed in Mizo ceremonies, sacrificial and festivals. During the festive time, the quantity of liquor available determines the duration of the festival. During this time, liquor is in abundant supply and people were enjoying the festivals with liquor and feast which lasted for several days. On the annual sacrificial day, sacrifices were offered to the spirit to ensure prosperity, to protect them from wild animals, and for their safety for animals and raiders. Liquor was deeply embedded in the Mizo culture. Without liquor, Mizo festivals and sacrificial ceremonies would be incomplete. It was mainly consumed by adult male members of society. They were occasional drinkers and would drink at certain religious ceremonies and festivals.



Figure 1.1: Zu Bel or earthen rice beer pot

Source: Mizoram State Museum

³⁸ .V.S.Lalrinawma, *Mizo Ethos: Changes and Challenges*, Aizawl, Lengchawn Press, 2005, p. 153

There is another group of people called the Lakher or the Maras merely the names by which they were known to the Lushei, inhabiting the south-eastern corner of the Lushai Hills district, south of the Haka sub-division of the Chin Hills, and the extreme north of Arakan Hills tracts. The Maras had three kinds of rice beer- *Sahmapi*, *Sahmahei*, and *Zuri*. *Sahma* is a name of rice beer by the Lakhers or Mara. The chief occasion for *Sahma* drinking are weddings, wakes, the *Ia* ceremony after a head has been taken or a wild animal has been shot, and the formal entry into a new house. *Sahma* is never taken at meal times. It is treated with respect and not a mere adjunct of a meal. The *Sahma* is to be prepared sometime before it is drunk, and invitations are generally sent around the day before.³⁹

N.E.Perry wrote about the story of *sahma* discovery. There was a girl who was unhappily married and she wanted to divorce her husband but her parent would not let her do so as they did not wish to refund the bride price they had received for her. The girl decided to poison her husband. She started collecting python's excrement, boiled up some rice and mixed it with the python dung, and left the mixture to stand. After three days, the girl found that the mixture had a very pungent smell, thought that it would do to poison her husband, and gave him some to eat. Having eaten this mixture, the man got very drunk and fell unconscious and his wife thought that she had accomplished her desire. The man recovered the next morning and found the effect his wife had given him very pleasant. He made her go and make it again. It is believed that this is the origin of *Sahma* which plays a large part in all the village feasts and merrymaking.⁴⁰

As liquor had a firm connection with the Mizo society, culture, and religion from the earliest times nearly all full-grown men except the Christian drank liquor on various occasions and festivals. Liquor was not looked down by the people but it was rather a sacred and unblemished diet. A man never drinks whenever he liked, but he drank cheerfully only on special occasions and with genuine reason.⁴¹

³⁹ N.E.Perry, *The Lakhers*, Aizawl, Firma KLM Private Limited, 1932, p.87, 88.

⁴⁰ N.E.Perry, *The Lakhers*, p.87

⁴¹ *Zu in Mizo Society*, p. 41.

With the advent of the British, there were no changes at the beginning regarding liquor consumption. But towards the end of British rule, some people would get drunk till late at night, and among these, there were also government servants. There were also teetotalers among them. There was an increase in liquor consumption and people got intoxicated and would make trouble in the streets and create a public nuisance. Traditional manners of drinking and respect for elders gradually lost their way.⁴² Mizo society began to undergo changes wherein various nuisance and sources of various crimes started to set in and spoil the lives of young ones.

Liquor as a tradition began to see significant changes as it clashed with other forces. Perception of liquor consumption in society began to change. Different churches and the public were against the consumption of liquor. There was strong condemnation of drinking among the common masses. By the late sixties and early seventies, families and homes could not spend a day of peace and happiness because of overdrinking liquor by the men folks. No other things caused so many deaths or diseases, affecting physical and mental trauma among the Mizo then caused by liquor in various forms.⁴³

Till the first half of the sixties, foreign liquor was hardly consumed by the common drinkers due to its dearness and limited supply. Since the late fifties, some profiteers learned that they could make money easily by selling foreign liquor at two or three-fold its cost price. They started importing foreign liquor from the neighboring district and states where the selling of foreign liquor has been legalized. But from 1973 to 1976 such imports of foreign liquor were automatically stopped since temporary permits for selling foreign liquors in Mizoram were issued by the Government of Mizoram.⁴⁴ The Mizoram Excise Rules 1983 came into effect from 10th October 1984.

People began to notice the results and outcomes of drinking, they strongly condemned the manufacturing and selling of liquor. Many efforts were given by the Young Mizo Association (originally Young Lushai Association) founded in 1935

⁴² *Zu*, p.42

⁴³ *Zu*, p.62

⁴⁴ *Zu* in Mizo Society, p.49

and with the help of the Village Councils, several steps for the implementation of prohibitions programs were taken. The Mizo Zirlai Pawl also organized a public meeting at Dawrpui Middle School where speeches were delivered against the vices and effects of drinking liquor.⁴⁵ Steps were also taken by the Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl MHIP (Women Association) to prohibit liquor. They even organized ‘Silent Appeal’ in which the member stood silently for about 15 minutes holding condemnatory placards of drinking and selling of liquor. The Village Council and Village Defence Parties also played vital roles in the drive against drinking. The government as well as many NGOs took several steps to control and prohibit liquor. Several Acts and Rules were made to regulate the manufacturing, selling, buying, and transporting of liquors.

From time immemorial, liquor had a firm connection with culture. There may be differences in the drinking occasion and the types of liquor that they had for consumption liquor was deeply rooted in the lives of the Mizos. In the beginning, liquor acted as a social bonding between the rich and the poor although there might be less class differentiation compared to modern times. To understand one’s culture, their drinking pattern could be useful for knowing the society of a particular culture. For many cultures, liquor acted as a means of entertainment as it can be seen in the Mizo culture since liquor was present in every festival and celebration. Liquor also had a firm connection with folksong and dance during the pre-colonial period.

Liquor is associated with folksongs and dance. Despite the fact that liquor occupies an important place in the life of the Mizos, their perception of liquor began to change over time. Comparing the position that liquor assumed during the pre-colonial and during the colonial times, changes can be seen as the masses were against the consumption of liquor and prohibitions began to be invoked. It is in this background that this research assumed importance as it will look into the significance of liquor in Mizo culture, how it affected the lives of the Mizo people as well as the forces that led to the changes in the perception of liquor among the masses and its prohibition.

⁴⁵ *Zu in Mizo Society*, p.63

1.4 Review of Literature

Mack P Holt in his book *Alcohol, A Social and Cultural History* divided into three sections offering an outline of the drinking pattern of western Europeans. He sought to explain the changes in drinking behavior in various places and times in Western culture. With a focus on consumption, each contributor was professional historian who was trying to explain changes over time in the drinking patterns and how alcohol functioned in the Western culture.

Song Nong in his edited book *Chinese Medicated Liquor Therapy* discusses hundreds of prescriptions in which the ingredients, process, directions, and indications of each prescription. It also discusses the treatment of alcoholic drinks under the guidance of traditional Chinese medicine. It only focuses on the treatment of alcohol and does not write about alcohol history or its cultural impact of alcohol in Chinese society.

Rod Phillips in his book *Alcohol, A History* talks about how drinking is embedded in global culture and the historical depth of alcohol use is well captured. This book provides an essential introduction to the social, cultural, and economic role of alcohol in human society. This book shows that culture can also be better understood by reference to its drinking practices. Phillips takes a broad lens and seeks to write alcohol on a global scale, so there might be many things he would leave out regarding the history of alcohol as well as the drinking practices of many cultures.

Dimitra Gefou Madianou in his edited book *Alcohol, gender and Culture* focused on the European societies on the dimension of alcohol consumption – its social and ceremonial uses and its role in cultural, religious, and social identities. However, they present several limitations. They do not allow for consistent comparisons of ethnographic data. They approach alcohol drinking and alcohol-related behavior as social problems and aim at preventive measures.

Iain Gately in his book *Drink, A Cultural History of Alcohol* dives deep into the role of alcohol in ancient Chinese and Egyptian civilization and ends in the US until prohibition. He talks about the history of fermentation and distillation from early

civilization. It mainly focused on the Western civilization and how the different types of alcohol and how affected people.

David McKnight in his book *From Hunting to Drinking: The Devastating Effects of Alcohol on an Australian Aboriginal Community* discuss liquor use, a drinking problem, and social changes. It reveals the social change witnessed over a period of 30 years by an anthropologist. It mainly deals with the devastating effects that liquor has had on the community on the island.

Joe L Coker in his book *Liquor in the Land of the Lost Cause: Southern White Evangelicals and the Prohibition Movement* examined the tactics and results of temperance reformers. It is the first comprehensive survey of temperance in the South. It makes a worthy contribution to the history of Southern evangelicals and their role in the prohibition movement.

Jaime Joyce in her book *Moonshine: A Cultural History of America's Infamous Liquor* explores moonshine liquor from a variety of angles including the political, social, and cultural significance it has had for the American country. It provides a thorough investigation of moonshine's history and significance in American culture.

Zu in Mizo Society was published by Tribal Research Institute in trying to reveal the actual positions of Zu in Mizo society past and present. It deals with a variety of liquor preparation and a system of drinking. It also focuses on the relations between alcohol and Mizo culture. It gives valuable and detailed information regarding liquor in Mizo history from the pre-colonial and colonial periods.

C.Lianthanga in his book *Hmanlai Mizo Nun* discusses the significance of liquor in Mizo society. He mentioned that liquor was present in every festival and ceremony. He also talks about their drinking pattern, how they fermented alcohol and how they prepared it for consumption.

B. Lalthlengliana in his book *Pi Pu Zunleng* mentions different kinds of liquor that Mizo had. He talks about their way of drinking and their drinking occasions. He mentions in detail their drinking pattern and the practice which they follow and added some images of the type of alcohol bottle that they had.

1.5 Statement of the Problem

Due to the lack of written records and the fact that the pre-colonial Mizo history is limited by scarcity of sources the history of Mizos was passed down through oral tradition from generation to generation. Folktales, folklores, folksong, and myths gave an insight into the cultural life of Mizo and offer a glimpse into the pre-colonial Mizo history. With the advent of the British, written documents began to appear and the colonizers started recording their achievements and as well as describing the changes that took place in the social and cultural life of Mizos. Since the pre-colonial period, liquor was deeply rooted in the social and cultural life of the Mizos. By the beginning of the colonial period, not much change was made regarding liquor and its consumption. Very soon, however, liquor as a tradition began to clash with other emerging social forces which changed the perception of liquor consumption in Mizo society.

The significance of alcohol in the Mizo society went through several changes. However, there are no in-depth studies on liquor and its significance in the Mizo society despite raising a number of questions such as, what could be the reason that led to the change in the perception of liquor consumption in Mizo society? Is it the influence of colonialism or Christianity or is it the process of globalization that led to changes in the perception of liquor consumption? Does this clash with other forces that led to a cultural imbalance in the life of the Mizo? It is a matter of debate whether Liquor prohibition has a cultural impact on the life of Mizo itself and whether it has a positive or negative impact and how do people cope with these changes?

In the light of the above discussion, the proposed study aims to examine the cultural impact of liquor during the pre-colonial and colonial periods and the prohibition that took place in the post-colonial period as well.

1.6 Area of Study

The present study will cover Mizoram from pre-colonial up to contemporary times.

1.7 Objectives

1. To study the evolution of liquor, manufacturing, and consumption.
2. To examine the history and significance of liquor in Mizo culture.
3. To probe the changing perception of liquor that lead to liquor prohibition.

1.8 Methodology

To do an in-depth study on the cultural history of liquor in Mizoram, the qualitative method is employed to study the historical evolution of liquor, its nature, and its significance in Mizo culture by examining existing Mizo literature and other written records in the form of books, letters, and manuscripts. It will essentially be a historical study of liquor.

Official records and books published by colonizers will also be examined during the period under study. The research used both primary and secondary sources. Sources are collected from libraries such as Central Library and Mizoram State Library and archives such as Mizoram State Archives and Aizawl Theological Archives.

1.9 Chapterization

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, an attempt would be made to study the historical evolution of liquor.

CHAPTER 2: LIQUOR IN MIZO CULTURE

This chapter would examine the nature and significance of liquor in Mizo culture

CHAPTER 3: PROHIBITION AND MIZO SOCIETY

This chapter will examine changing perceptions on liquor leading to prohibition.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

This chapter will summarize the findings of the study

Chapter II

Liquor in Mizo Culture

2.1 Introduction

Traditional Mizo society has been characterized by the prevalence of liquor. There has been little research conducted on the importance and role of liquor in Mizo culture since pre-colonial times. Liquor served as a means of entertainment for all social activities. Festivals and ceremonies were not performed without liquor. It was treated with respect, and they had unwritten rules pertaining to its consumption. Those who consumed liquor tended to be occasional drinkers. They would not drink simply as per the availability only chiefs and *Upa* frequently consumed liquor.

Family members usually stored liquor at home for consumption on important occasions. When a man killed a wild animal, his neighbors would show up at his house and celebrate with liquor. As a way to offer comfort to a deceased member of a family, they would bring liquor and drink together when they visited the families of the deceased.

In pre-colonial times, the people were bounded by superstitious beliefs, which led them to make sacrifices and offerings to spirits. The purpose of making sacrifices was to avoid evil spirits that could harm them as well as to ask for a blessing on their work. Two types of priests performed these sacrifices. *Sadawt* was the one who performed the ceremony asking for a blessing. *Bawlpu* performed sacrifices to the spirit. During sacrifices and offerings, liquor was necessary to complete the ritual.

Agriculture was the main occupation of the people. Both men and women worked on the agricultural land. They practiced *jhum* cultivation or shifting agriculture. Most of the important festivals revolved around agriculture. In all these cultural and social events, liquor did play a significant role, as it was the item that completed everything. Liquor had a unique connection to dances and songs. The Mizo people are interested in dancing, and as part of their festivals and celebration ceremonies,

they will dance and sing. The Mizos also served liquor at these events as a form of entertainment.

During the pre-colonial period, Mizos freely consumed liquor on specific occasions. The Mizos prepared liquor for themselves and consumption on special functions and occasions. They would occasionally drink liquor. People did not consume liquor whenever they wanted to. Most adult males consumed liquor, and females seldom did. Liquor served as a form of social bonding among people. As well as a means of entertainment, it was also consumed as a means of respect and the eldest male member would drink first, followed by the rest, before other members could drink.

2.2 Types of Liquor and Methods of Preparation

Different types of liquor had been mentioned in the writings of the locals as well as colonial writers. In his book *The Lushei Kuki Clan*, Lieutenant Colonel J. Shakespear describes two kinds of homemade drinks made from rice. The most common one is known as *zu*, and it is a simple partially fermented drink. The other is named *rakzu* or *zutak*, and it is distilled. *Rakzu* was rarely made and was usually reserved for special occasions. Traditionally, *zu* was prepared by casting a gourd over an earthenware pot, with the joint made of rags and clay, and the pot being fixed securely on top of the gourd; as the water condenses from the pot, the vapor is passed through a bamboo swathed in damp rags.⁴⁶

J.Shakespear mentioned that “good *zu* takes some time to prepare. After being well bruised, the paddy is damped and packed away in several layers of leaves and kept for some months, the longer the better. When *zu* has to be brewed the bundles are opened and the contents placed in a large earthen jar and well pressed down, with a layer of leaves on top, and the jar filled with water. After standing a few minutes, the liquor is drawn off by a siphon into a brass or wooden bowl, out of which it is handed round to the guest in horns or small bamboo”.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ J.Shakespear, *The Lushei Kuki Clan*, Aizawl, Tribal Research Institute, Reprint 2008, p.37

⁴⁷J.Shakespear, *The Lushei Kuki Clan*, p.37

In *The Chin Hills* written by Bertram S. Carey and H. N. Tuck, mentions that “zu is the name given for liquor amongst the Mizos. It is made from rice, various millets, or Indian corn according to the staple crops of a neighborhood. To make the liquor, a quantity of millet is placed in a jar and drenched with water. It is then allowed to ferment. When fermentation occurs, it is frequently aided by the addition of the earliest fermented liquor which is left from each brew to aid the next. Liquor that has fermented for 30 days is better than that fermented for only a week. When the liquor is required the pot is brought forth and the mouth is closed with leaves a hollow red is passed through the millet almost to the bottom and water is poured into the jar”.⁴⁸

N.E.Parry wrote in *The Lakhers* about the discovery of Lakher rice beer called *Sahma* and the story behind its discovery. He mentioned three kinds of rice beer – *Sahmapi*, *Sahmahei*, and *Zuri*. He discussed the different methods of making the rice beer. *Sahmapi* is made with rice boiled and placed in an earthenware pot with yeast made from rice flour. It is allowed to ferment for one to four days, depending on how it ferments. Paddy husks are added when the rice is sweet enough, and the mixture is kept in a beer pot without water until the beer is ready to drink. The fermentation process for *Sahmahei* is the same as *Sahmapi*, but no husks are used. Fermented rice can either be eaten or water can be added to make beer, as preferred.⁴⁹

Parry wrote that ‘*Sahmapi*’, which is taken with a meal, is not an adjunct to it. Since it shares aspects of both food and drink, it is treated with respect and is not merely an addition. The chief occasion for *Sahma* drinking are a wedding, wakes, and *Ia* ceremony after a head has been taken or a wild animal has been shot and the formal entry into a new house. It is customary to prepare the *Sahma* sometime before the drinking and to send invitations the evening before the drinking. On the morning of the feast, young men are called in to add the water and prepare the *Sahma* pots and drinking vessels, and when all is ready the people who were invited the day before

⁴⁸ Bertram S. Carey, H.N.Tuck, *The Chin Hills*, Aizawl, Tribal Research Institute, Reprint 2008, p.183

⁴⁹ Perry, p.87

are again summoned to come and drink and the proceedings begin. If beer is being handed round in cups, the chief and elders are served first".⁵⁰

"*Pawi Chanchin*", a publication of the Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl, describes three types of liquor mainly *Zupui*, *Rakzu*, and *Zufang*. *Zupui* is by far the most popular and widely consumed liquor. *Zufang*, a kind of liquor made from rice, sticky rice, corn, and millet, was mainly used for personal consumption. *Rakzu* was a special occasion drink, while *Zufang* was primarily for personal consumption.⁵¹

V.L.Siama described five types of liquor in his '*Mizo History*'. These included *Zufang*, *Zupui*, *Rakzu*, *Zulawm*, and *Sumdeng Zu*. He wrote that Mizo was fond of drinking liquor however, they drank occasionally under proper customs of drinking. It was common for the chiefs and the elders to drink liquor. The adult males also consumed liquor often whereas young men and women rarely consumed alcohol unless it was part of a special ceremony or festival.

V.L. Siama wrote that *Zufang* is made from sticky rice. It is usually served in small pots for self-consumption. It is made to quench one's thirst and to enjoy one's time. Traditionally, *Zupui* was made in a large pot for communal consumption, using rice that had not yet been husked. There are two ways to make *Zupui*, but it was often made using un-husked rice. Besides pounding the rice, an alternative method was to add it without husking it. It is known as *Hran den zu*. *Rakzu* was specifically made for the clan's chiefs, *Upa*, and the wealthiest families. They rarely consume large quantities of *Rakzu* since it is distilled and highly intoxicating.⁵²

There are two types of *Zulawm*. One is when a group of friends contribute rice and made liquor. They would sell and buy their needs. It was usually done by the female. Another type of *Zulawm* is that before the festival when young men and women would contribute un-husked rice and would make liquor to drink during the festival.

⁵⁰ Perry, p.88

⁵¹ *Pawi Chanchin*, Aizawl, Tribal Research Institute, 1988, p.68.

⁵² V.L.Siama, *Mizo History*, Khatla, Lengchhawn Offset, 2019, p.55

Sumdeng zu was made specifically for *Sechhun* ceremony where liquor was served to the young men and women they employed for pounding the rice for liquor.⁵³

Zu in Mizo Society Past and Present published by Tribal Research Institute, Mizoram, wherein it may be noted that before the advent of the British rule in Mizoram there were three kinds of liquor namely *zupui*, *zufang* and *rakzu*. Among these, *zupui* was the most popular drink, as *rakzu* and *zufang* were never consumed in public places for drinking. *Zufang* was taken by a member of the family as we use to take tea today after coming home from work whereas *Rakzu* was drunk only by a few persons like the chefs and their elders. Only *Zupui* was served for communal drinking.⁵⁴

Zupui was commonly made of husked rice and sometimes from millet (*buhtun*), a species of millet (*mim*) maize (*vaimim*), large edible beans (*Fangra*), and the kernels of the fruit of a species of an oak (*thingchang rah- Quercus Lanceaefolia*). *Zupui* made from rice were of two kinds: *Hranden* and *Vaizu*. *Hranden* was brewed occasionally when large quantities of liquor were needed for ceremonies. *Zupui* and the feast had to be planned far in advance by the would-be performer, and the young men and maidens had to husk the rice for both. *Zupui* was commonly brewed from small broken pieces of rice produced in the process of the pounding rice.⁵⁵

When a man was going to perform a ceremony he had to provide a large quantity of *zu* and feast to the villagers. The would-be-performer had to invite young men and maidens to husk rice for preparing *zupui* and the feast well in advance. The liquor which had been brewed from specially husked rice was known as '*Hranden zu*' and the liquor supply to the young men and maidens who had husked the rice was called '*Sumdeng zu*'.⁵⁶

Rice husked for making beer was called '*Ngan*', which means malt. The name *Zukhawl* was given to rice beer during the time that it was dampened and ceased to be *zukhawl* until it started to ferment, when it was called *zubilh*. *Ngan* was also used

⁵³ V.L.Siama, *Mizo History*, pp.55,56

⁵⁴ *Zu In Mizo Society*, p.3.

⁵⁵ *Zu in Mizo Society*. pp.3- 4

⁵⁶ *Zu in Mizo society*. p.4

to measure the amount of fermented rice required to make a pot of beer or enough to steam or 'awm' the rice. To steam *ngan*, the *ngan* was first wetted and then placed in a pot with a perforated bottom called *ngan bel*. When completely wet, the *ngan* was placed in the pot and the pot was put in a larger pot that contained the boiling water, this pot was known as 'Ngando bel'. A form of cork or bung or stopper made of *vaiza* (*Hibiscus Macrophyllus*) or other leaves had been used to cover the mouth of the *ngan bel*. In between the *ngan bel* and the *ngando bel*, a long piece of cloth had been fastened and gummed with wet ashes. This had been done for no vapor would come out when the water in the *ngando bel* was boiling. The leaves which had been used to cover the *ngan bel* are called 'Huthup' and the piece of cloth placed between the two pots was called 'Ngansap'.⁵⁷

As soon as the *ngan* was thoroughly steamed, it was taken out of the pot and placed on a bamboo mat to cool. The mixture was then mixed with *chawl* and fermented in a beer pot. When a large quantity of liquor was needed for the ceremony, the *ngan* was brewed in a number of baskets lined with leaves. Due to a lack of pots, these baskets were used. The *ngan* was not fully fermented before three days, the longer the fermentation period, the better the drink.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ *Zu in Mizo Society* p.6

⁵⁸ *Zu in Mizo Society*. p.6



Figure 2.1: Ngan Khat Bel (a pot **that** contains 'ngan' measure for making rice beer).

Source: Mizoram State Museum.

Zufang, a fermented rice drink brewed in a smaller pot, was reserved for consumption on occasions of lesser importance. The rice was typically made from *kawnglawng* or *fazu*, which is a kind of glutinous rice. Usually, the fermented rice and liquor were taken as a drink by the family members for refreshment. To prepare *zufang*, glutinous rice is cooked and spread over a bamboo tray, which is used to sift and winnow the grains and finally cool them. Then, yeast is sprinkled on it and put in on an earthen pot for brewing into *zufang*, and then covered with *huthup*. It also could be steamed as was done with 'ngan'. In three days, *Zufang* would become fermented and liquor was thus produced.⁵⁹

Rakzu is a spirit distilled from fermented grains. The drink was very strong and was not served as communal drinks. It was consumed or drunk occasionally by the chiefs

⁵⁹ *Zu in Mizo Society*, p.7

and elders. During the preparation of *rakzu*, three pots were stacked on top of each other. The largest one was at the bottom containing the fermented grains mixed with water to be distilled. On top of this pot, the middle one was placed. The bottom of the middle pot was perforated to allow steam to rise from the bottom pot. For holding the condensed drop of the spirit, they placed a small pot inside the middle pot. The mouth of the middle pot was sealed with another pot containing cold water. Using draff and wet ashes, each joint was sealed so that no vapor could escape. Spirit Still was a complete set of vessels used for distilling fermented grains.⁶⁰

The 'spirit still' was put on the fireplace. When the fermented grains mixed with water in the bottom pot were boiling, the steam went up passing through the perforated bottom of the middle pot. When the steam reached the cold bottom of the uppermost pot it condensed and dropped down into the receptacle inside the middle pot. This was known as the 'spirit' or '*rakzu*'. The drink is highly strong and inflammable. They had to dilute it with water before drinking it.⁶¹

Zulawm was an ordinary *zupui* that had been made by boys for their consumption. It was often brewed by a group of two or more girls generally for sale and they equally shared the sale proceeds. Young men also sometimes prepared *zulawm* for their consumption. They usually drank *zulawm* on the occasions of festivals. All the boys of the village went in a company into one house after another demanding grains or *zukhawl* or unhusked rice for converting into beer. They then husked *mim* or rice thus collected and requested a housewife with whom they shared terms of intimacy to brew the same for converting into beer. When it is well fermented the boys of the village gathered together and drank *zulawm* in their appointed house. *Zulawm* was typically drunk once a year.⁶²

⁶⁰ *Zu in Mizo Society.* p.8

⁶¹ *Zu in Mizo Society.* p.8

⁶² *Zu in Mizo society,* pp.9,10

2.3 Requisite for Preparing and Drinking Liquor

During the pre-colonial period, despite the lack of better utensils like today, people prepared liquor from the material which was available to them. Few utensils were needed to prepare liquor. For preparing liquor, beer pots were commonly used. Different kinds and sizes of beer pots were available, while there were different types of cups for the chiefs and other members of the clan.

Zu bel or beer pots were different from ordinary pots. In *Zu in Mizo Society (Past and Present)* published by Tribal Research Institute Aizawl, it is mentioned that there were three kinds of beer pots namely '*Belpui*' (a large beer pot), '*zufang bel*' (a pot for holding *zufang*) and '*rothum bel*' (a small pots used for *zuhup*' and for other sacrificial purposes). *Zuhup* means to prepare or malt rice for brewing into beer. *Rothum bel* was the smallest of all the beer pots. The size of *belpui* was generally the quantity of beer it could contain. A pot that could contain one *ngan* of fermented grains was called '*ngan khat bel*' and that could contain two *ngan* was called '*ngan hnih bel*' and so on. (*khat* means one, *hnih* means two).⁶³



Figure 2.2: Zu bel lian/ large rice beer pot

Source: Mizoram State Museum.

⁶³ *Zu in Mizo Society*, p.11, 12

There were three kinds of cups namely '*Lalno*', a cup specially meant for the chief, '*nopui*' for the owner of the beer and the owner of the house in which drinking took place and also for a favored person, and '*hailawn no*' or '*noleng*' for ordinary people. *Nopui* and *Lalno* were more or less the same.⁶⁴ Cups made of '*seki*' (Gayal's horn) were used for drinking and were called '*seki no*'. Some cups were made from bamboo and were called '*Mau no*'. Both *seki no* and *mau no* had their own '*nopui*' and '*noleng*'. '*Seki nopui*' was made from the horns of bull-gayal whereas '*seki noleng*' was made from cow-gayal. '*mau nopui*' was made of *Phulraw* bamboo.⁶⁵



Figure 2.3: Mau Haileng No

Source: Mizoram State Museum

⁶⁴ Zu in Mizo Society, p.27

⁶⁵ Zu in Mizo Society, p.12

The *dawnkawn* siphon was used to draw beer from beer pots. It was usually made out of brass and was shaped as 'U' or 'V'. Two small bamboo pipes were attached at both ends of the siphon, one inserted into the beer pot and the other outside of it. The piping out or drawing of beer from the beer pot utilizing a siphon was known as '*zu siak*'.⁶⁶

A small bamboo or straw tube used for sucking beer from the beer pot was called *phunthli*. Taking beer by sucking through this *phunthli* was known as '*zu khawn*'. 'Peng' was the name given to a vessel made from gourd used for holding undiluted liquor. A small hole open made at the end of the neck of the gourd was closed with a tight stopper. On the occasions of communal '*chawhtawlh*' was used for storing a large quantity of liquor. It was a vessel made of wood in different shapes, round or oblong, used for siphoning the beer into or for catching rain water.⁶⁷



Figure 2.4: Phunthli or Siphon

Source: Mizoram State Museum

⁶⁶ *Zu in Mizo Society*, p.12

⁶⁷ *Zu in Mizo Society*, pp.12, 13

2.4 Manner of Drinking Liquor

Mizo culture has used liquor for cultural, religious, and sacrificial ceremonies for generations. Without liquor, the *Sechhun* or *Khuangchawi* ceremony could not be performed, and it was one of the primary items that made the people enjoy their festivals.

Despite the fact that alcohol was a part of almost every social and cultural activity, it was treated with respect, and there was a proper way of drinking that they followed. It was customary for the chief to be the first guest at every drinking occasion and to receive the first share. Someone who had achieved fame in his youth and then become a respected elder of the village was served the first share in the chief absence. After the principal guest finished his cup, he hailed the person in whose honor it was celebrated, who would in turn enjoy the next cup. He would then pass on the same with one of them. This sharing of beer in a large cup from one another was known as 'intawh'.⁶⁸

Those who served and prepared beer for drinking drank liquor in '*noleng*' and they served the owner of the house and the owner of the beer in '*nopui*'. After important personages ceremoniously entertained themselves with one another, the rank and file sat around in a circle and each of them enjoyed his share in turn in '*noleng*'. When drinking was in progress any one of them could share his cup of beer with any other person to show him his favor. After finishing the cup person would usually return his share to the same person who had earlier given him in the same '*noleng*'. This offering of a cup of beer to one another in '*noleng*' was known as '*inleh*'.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ *Zu in Mizo Society*, p.28

⁶⁹ *Zu in Mizo Society*, p.28 - 29



Figure 2.5: Seki Haileng No

Source: Mizoram State Museum

They also practice different modes of drinking when they drank '*sumdeng zu*'. On this occasion unless and until a person who had been selected as the best boy of the village in respect of perseverance, bravery, etc. drank the *sumdeng zu* in '*nopui*' none of the villagers including the chief could drink. The *nopui* used on this occasion for serving the selected boy was called '*tlawmngai*⁷⁰ no' as a mark of honor. The drinking of *sumdeng zu* was the only occasion on which the most *tlawmngai* man' in the village could be visibly honored.⁷¹

Even though liquor occupies an important position in the Mizo social and cultural landscape, not everyone consumes it regularly. Only the elders and the chiefs keep a drinking habit and the masses usually drink only during festivals, religious and other ceremonies. The young males who partake in these social and cultural activities also consume liquor, but seldom got drunk. The females who partake in these activities also consume liquor in very small quantities. It was typical for every Mizo household

⁷⁰ Literally means unselfishness or self- sacrifice

⁷¹ *Zu in Mizo Society*, p. 29

to make and prepare liquor beforehand for specific occasions. Since liquor was served as tea, it was essential for families to prepare liquor in advance and store it for special events.



Figure 2.6: Zu No or Liquor cup

Source: Mizoram State Museum

2.5. Festivals and Liquor

During the pre-colonial period, the only time that people could enjoy their leisure time was during the festive period. As they were engaged in agricultural activities throughout the year, they were only able to rest during the festive season without being bothered by their hard work in the fields. The villagers waited for the festive time and prepared themselves as much as possible for the festival. As much as adults looked forward to the festival, children were also eagerly anticipating it. Festivities were generally celebrated with singing, dancing, feasting, and drinking. Certainly, liquor was included, and it was one of the main highlights of the festival. In order to ensure an abundant supply of rice beer during the festive season, they prepared a sufficient quantity of rice beer ahead of time. Villagers who participated in the festival contributed to the festival's expenses.

The Mizos mainly celebrated three festivals which are *Chapchar Kut*, *Mim Kut*, and *Pawl Kut*. They fervently celebrated these festivals each year with feast and rice beer. *Chapchar kut* was the most important festival and it was observed during the period between the cutting and burning of the *jhums*. It lasted for about a week or more and its duration depended chiefly on the quantity of rice beer they had for consumption.⁷² On the first day, a pig is killed by each householder who can afford it and *zu* is drunk. On the second day, the whole population gathers in the open space in the village, dressed in their best. Everyone brings platters of rice, eggs, and flesh, and tries to force the food down the throats of their friends. After dark, the young men and girls collect in houses of well-to-do people with several daughters and dance 'Chai' till daylight.⁷³ The next day is known as *zupuini* which is passed in drinking *zu*. On this day the Mizo traditional dance 'Chai' was performed. The next day is known as *zuthing chawini* and more *zu* is drunk.

After they harvest their main crops *Pawl Kut* festival was observed immediately. It was a kind of harvest thanksgiving. It was generally meant for children though young men and women freely participate in this festival. A feast was organized where pigs

⁷² *Zu In Mizo Society*, p.14

⁷³ *The Lushei Kuki Clan*, p.87

were killed and *Zu* is drunk. The duration of the feast depends on the amount of liquor available.⁷⁴ They would prepare liquor beforehand so that there will be a sufficient supply of liquor during the festive time.

2.6. Liquor and Sacrificial Ceremonies

The pre-colonial Mizos believed in superstitions and myths. They had their own religious belief and believed in the existence of *pathian* or god and also believed in the existence of '*huai*' or demons which inhabit every stream, mountain, tree, river, and forest and to whom every illness and misfortune is attributed. In addition to *Pathian* and the *huais*, there is a spirit known as *Khuavang* which appears to people and believed that his appearance is always followed by the illness of those who see him. J. Shakespears in *The Lushei Kuki Clan*, wrote that there were two spirits in which one is a good spirit and guards people while the other is a bad spirit who is always trying to sell men to *Huais*.⁷⁵ With such belief, the pre-colonial Mizos had to offer sacrifices and offerings in order to protect themselves from any harm or misfortune that could happen to them.

Two types of *Puithiam* or priests perform the ceremonies and sacrifices. *Sadawt* performs sacrifices and offerings to receive blessings and prosper in their work, especially in *jhum* cultivation, while *Bawlpu* performs sacrifices when a person is sick in some way. Each clan had its own '*Sadawt*' to perform ceremonies.⁷⁶

'*Kawngpui siam*' was an annual event in which offerings were made to the spirits in order to ensure prosperity for the whole village, including hunting and trapping wild animals and protection from enemies and raiders. It was performed by the chief's priest with some elders a few days before *Chapchar kut* which was held at the main path just outside the southern entrance to the village. Liquor was brought them in a bamboo tube (*tui um*) and in a gourd (*peng*), which was consumed on the spot with

⁷⁴ *Zu In Mizo Society*. p.15

⁷⁵ *The Lushei Kuki Clan*, p.61

⁷⁶ Siana, *Mizo History*, pp.57,58

the meat of the sacrificed animal except for the '*serh*', the parts taken and offered to the spirits. On this day no one was allowed to leave the village and no strangers were permitted to enter the village. The chief and his elders drank *zu* at the chief's house on the day⁷⁷.

'*Fano dawi*' is another ceremony performed for the whole village which was performed for the protection of the young and growing paddy plants and to prevent them from being destroyed by wild animals and birds. It is usually performed in the month of July⁷⁸. *Zu* is prepared in the chief's house. *Puithiam* and two *Upa* would go just outside the village along the road to the *jhum* and sacrifice a cock. The cock's wings are hung on either side of the road and the *sherh* is placed on the middle side of the road. The next day is *hrilh*; the villagers did not leave the village except to carry water⁷⁹. The specially made '*Fano dawi zu*' beer was drunk by the villagers. No one was allowed to go outside the village and there was a fine, a pot of beer was imposed on those who violated this.

Another annual sacrifice was "*Ramar thih*" which was a sacrifice for the safety of the villagers from the risky work of cutting the jungle for their *jhums*. The whole village observed this day just before cutting off the jungles for their *jhum*. *Zu* was drunk on this occasion⁸⁰. The villagers performed these annual sacrifices were done in order to ensure their safety from things that could harm them or harm their paddy crops. They also performed these sacrifices to ensure prosperity in their agricultural works. A good production of crops was necessary to ensure their livelihood since agriculture was their main occupation.

Another sacrifice is '*Khuangchawi*' which is the most important sacrifice that a Lushai can perform. This sacrifice costs a great deal of money so that practically speaking it is only performed by chiefs and a few well-to-do people, as ordinary Lushai cannot afford it. Its object is to help the performer on the road to *Pialral* or paradise. The feast consists of several series and it takes many years for a man to

⁷⁷ *Zu in Mizo Society*, p.16

⁷⁸ *Zu in Mizo Society*, p.16

⁷⁹ *The Lushei Kuki Clan*, p.80

⁸⁰ *Zu in Mizo Society*, p.26

complete the whole series.⁸¹ When he has completed all these series, he is granted the title ‘*Thangchhuah*’ which allows him to enter paradise. A man who could obtain the ‘*Thangchhuah*’ title was highly admired among the clan.

Chawng or *chawnfang* was the first step in the series of *Khuangchawi* sacrifices⁸². A man who is going to perform *chawng* has to arrange a lot of *Zu*, so invites all of the young men and girls of the village, kills a pig, and serves them a feast. In exchange, they would bring rice necessary for making *Zu* and husk it, and prepare *Zu*, and as soon as they finish husking the rice they would be given *zu* as a reward. There are about 80 pots of *Zu* are required and of these 15 pots would go to the young men and girls who had husked the paddy while the rest is kept for the feast. The *Zu* which was given to those who had husked the paddy is known as ‘*sumdengzu enlawk*’. As soon as the *Zu* is prepared, the day for holding the *chawng* sacrifice is set. The sacrifice takes four days to complete.⁸³

The first day of *Khuangchawi* sacrifice is known as ‘*inchhe siam ni*’. On this day the house of the one who performed the sacrifice must be strengthened so that it can withstand the weight of the crowd of guests invited. All the workers get a portion of *Zu*, altogether about 15 pots of *Zu* are required⁸⁴. On the first night, the young people enjoyed the *sumdeng Zu* of seven *ngan* or pots in quantity in the residence of the one who perform the sacrifice. The elder sister of the performer also had to contribute at least six *ngans* for the young people. It was during the night of the celebration that the best boy in the village was selected whom the first special cup of rice beer was offered in honor of his service to the public. Then only the rest of the people could start drinking the rice beer. It was compulsory for the boys and girls to sing and dance overnight⁸⁵.

⁸¹ N.E.Perry, *A Monograph on Lushai Customs & Ceremonies*, Aizawl, Tribal Research Institute, Reprint, 2019, p.94

⁸² *Zu in Mizo Society*, p.21

⁸³ Perry, *A Monograph on Lushai Customs & Ceremonies*. P.95

⁸⁴ Perry, p.95

⁸⁵ *Zu in Mizo society*, p.21

The second day is known as *zupuini*. On this day everybody drinks *zu* all day long⁸⁶. Pigs were killed and the whole day was for feast and drinking of beer. In this type of sacrifice not only the beer prepared by the host was consumed but also the contribution made by his friends and near relatives. As a whole, more than one hundred *ngans* of rice beer would be consumed on this occasion⁸⁷.

The third day was known as '*ruaipuini*' or the day of the great feast. A feast is held and quantities of *Zu* are consumed and all the participants get drunk. When the feast is over the *thianbul* (best friend), *ruatlans* (men sent to the sacrificer by the *thianbul*), and the *Rualkos* (the people who go to call the friend) go to the sacrificer's house, and to amuse the crowd they dressed up. As soon as they arrived at the sacrificer's house he seats the *Thianbul*, the *thianler*, his wife's father, his *Pu*, the chiefs, the *Thirdeng*, and the *Puithiam* (priest) in a line at the head of the *Khumpui*, and an equal number of the other people sit on the floor in front of them and each is given a cup of *Zu* and two handfuls of well-cooked meat which they consumed. This is called the *Thiantawk*. If any of the people who are taking part in the *Thiantawk* are too drunk and that they could drink anymore, substitutes may be provided for them. The cup used at this *Thiantawhna* is a large mythun's horn which will contain about three pints of *zu* so the drinkers require to be in a good form to be able to manage it⁸⁸.

The fourth day is known as '*Chawndoni*'. All the people who had taken part in the *Thiantawk* on the previous day would bring according to their means, meat, other eatables, and *zu* to the sacrificer's house and will hold a feast. At night the young men and girls were invited and were given *Zu*. This *Zu* is known as *Sumdengzu* and is a reward for the help they had given in for pounding the rice. This night is also known as '*Sumdeng thlakzan*' and is the end of the feast⁸⁹.

Sacrifices occupied an important place in the life of the Mizo. Due to their belief in the existence of *Pathian* or spirit, they offer sacrifices for protection, prosperity, and

⁸⁶ Perry, p.95

⁸⁷ *Zu in Mizo Society*, pp.21, 22

⁸⁸ Perry, p.97

⁸⁹ Perry, p.98

blessings in their work. It is evident that in sacrificial or religious ceremonies liquor was an important item that fulfilled the ceremony. In order to protect themselves from any misfortune or bad luck that could happen to them, they performed offerings and sacrifices.

The Mizos were fond of hunting and would go hunting from time to time. A man who killed many wild animals was highly admired by all. There was keen competition among the men in hunting. When a man killed an animal in the hunt he would invite his friends and neighbor to celebrate with him. They sat up all night with the head of the animal which was usually accompanied by a feast consisting of at least one pot of beer, the flesh of the animal, and a fowl. This ceremony was known as '*sa lu men*'. It was a celebratory drink and those who had rice beer in ready stock cheerfully brought it in for consumption at the ceremony. Those who received the legs of the animals as a due had to contribute at least one large pot of beer. On the next day, they performed another ceremony known as '*ai*' or '*aih*' in order to put the spirit of the animal killed under control. The villagers enjoyed this with liquor and feast. One had to sacrifice either a *Mithun* or goat or pig for this ceremony⁹⁰.

When a child is born, it is also celebrated with liquor. A.G.MacCall in '*Lushai Chrysalis*' mentioned that after the birth of the child, the mother is given rice water to drink. Perhaps to help her regain strength and avoid fainting, or near fainting, she would be given some mild *Zufang*, or rice beer, to help and revive her. The Lushais also believed that this *Zu* helps to alleviate the mother's pain, and she would also be encouraged to smoke tobacco as a sedative⁹¹.

Liquor was also used as a means of celebration for different occasions. Before marriage, when the wedding day was settled, the family of the bridegroom and the bride's family would prepare liquor for the marriage feast⁹². Liquor was also used as a means of celebration for different occasions. On the night of the wedding day a priest killed a fowl known as '*rem ar*' (a fowl of agreement) and would chant for the newly married couple long life and let them suck beer together from the beer pot

⁹⁰ *Zu in Mizo Society*, pp.17,18

⁹¹ A.G.McCall, *Lushai Chrysalis*, Aizawl, Tribal Research Institute, Reprint 2015, p.175.

⁹² Perry, p.23

after he ties the hair of the groom to the bride. This sucking of beer by the couple simultaneously was known as '*khawntiang*'. (*khawn-* to suck, *thiang-* dual).⁹³

Zu was also drunk on the day of purification (*in then ni*) after the death of a member of a family in the house. '*Inthian*' or '*inthen*' was a ceremony that marked the cleansing and driving away from the spirit of the dead person in the home and the beginning of its journey to '*mitthi khua*', the dead men's village or the abode of the death.⁹⁴ The relatives and friends of a dead person would come together while bringing along rice beer to condole, singing a song of lament to comfort the bereaved family.

Liquor was also consumed by warming the chief's house and the Zawlbuk (bachelor's dormitory), erecting stone platforms (*lungdawh*) in memory of the dead persons, killing a domestic animal for a feast without any sacrificial or religious intent, and killing a hog which had been dedicated and set apart for sacrifice⁹⁵.

Liquor was prepared for consumption on the occasion of '*Sakung Phun*,' the beginning of one's religious practice since separation from one parent's house. Rice beer specially made for that purpose was drained by means of a siphon. The *Puithiam* sprayed beer upon the hog to be killed and again upon the '*serhs*' dedicated to the god⁹⁶. *Sakhaw zu* a beer specifically prepared for the religious purpose was drunk on the day of *sedawi chhun* by members of the family who performed the ceremony with their near relatives⁹⁷.

There were other religious ceremonies in which liquor was used. They were *Hnuaipui* which is the sacrifice to the god inhabiting the lower regions of the world, *Hnuaitte* which is the sacrifice for prosperity, *Lolak* which is a *Hnamte* religious rite, *Sumtawng*, a religious rite and ceremony of the *Paite* and *Khelte*, *Nutar* which is a religious rite of the *Pawis*. In a sacrifice known as "*Tlanghuai biak*" in which offerings were made to the demons who were supposed to inhabit the mountains. A

⁹³ Zu in Mizo Society, p.30

⁹⁴ Zu in Mizo Society, p.18

⁹⁵ Zu in Mizo Society, p.25

⁹⁶ Zu in Mizo Society, p.33

⁹⁷ Zu in Mizo Society, pp.32, 33

pig or a *Mithun* was killed and two pots of beer were consumed with the sacrificial meat⁹⁸.

2.7 Liquor and Dance

During social and cultural events, dance was an essential component. There are many different types of dance that Mizo tribes have been practicing for some time immemorial. Mainly Cheraw, Sarlamkai, Chawnglaizawn, Khuallam, Chheihlam, Chai lam, Rallu lam, and Sawlakia were the most popular dances among the Mizos. Dances vary depending on what occasion they were performed, be it festivals or ceremonies.

Mizos are highly accustomed to drinking and dancing together. Dances are performed at festivals and religious ceremonies. As part of the Mizo cultural display, dances played an important role. It was a must to perform traditional dances during the festival time, which was usually accompanied by a grand feast, as well as a large amount of liquor to consume during the festival. Both women and men participate in these traditional dances, however, the significance of each dance differs from tribe to tribe among the Mizos.

2.8 Social Status

Liquor played a significant role in indicating the social status of a person in society during the pre-colonial period. Social stratification was not much glaring during the pre-colonial period. The chief, his *Upa* or the elders, and well-to-do people in the society (particularly a person who can accomplish *Khuangchawi* sacrifice) were of the higher status in the society whereas the common masses belonged to the lower section of the society.

As different types of liquor had their significance, a person who could consume also differs. There is no strict rule that prohibits any person from consuming any type of

⁹⁸ *Zu in Mizo Society*, p.33, 35

liquor. However, it is in the tradition that *Rakzu* was mostly consumed by the Chiefs, the elders, and well to do person in the society. Since *rakzu* was a strong drink, it was never drunk at the place of public drinking. It was consumed on special occasions and was not drunk by ordinary people.

At the time of public drinking, if the chief was present he would be served first. The existence of different cups such as '*Lal no*' (cup specially meant for the chief), '*nopui*' (cup meant for the owner of the rice beer or owner of the house), and '*Hailawn no*' or '*Noleng*' (meant for ordinary people) signifies the social stratification within the society. *Nopui* was also used to show favor towards a particular person and not anyone who could drink liquor. However, people who consumed rice beer in *noleng* could also give a cup of beer to any person in order to show his favor towards him.

During the pre-colonial period, it is evident that the best boy or most '*tlawmngai*' man among the male member was highly admired by society. It was a kind of competition among the male member to become the best boy. To mark their honor, the best boy would be served liquor in '*Nopui*' which was called '*tlawmngai no*' to show their respect to him. The best boy occupied a high status among the male member and was highly admired by society. While assembling for drinking, the chiefs, the elders, and the best boy or most *tlawmngai* man are revered by the people. The Mizo society honored those they admired by giving them a cup of liquor, as they used liquor to showcase favor of a particular person.

2.9 Liquor during the Colonial period

Mizoram was ruled by the British in the early 20th century. However, during the beginning of the early colonial era, few notable changes were made to social, religious, or cultural practices. The chief continued to exercise authority over the village under British rule. A new kind of liquor known as '*tin zu*' was introduced with the advent of the British. It is said that in around 1911, the wives of Nepali military personnel introduced this kind of liquor to the local people. The wives of

this military personnel used kerosene or ghee tins for brewing this kind of liquor and because of that reason the liquor got its name. It was made from husked rice and was usually fermented for around three to four days. It became popular among the local people and was used for commercial purposes by illicit liquor sellers over time. This type of liquor was not consumed during the festive period⁹⁹.

Tin zu took the place of *Zupui* and *Zufang* gradually. However, *Zupui* was the main drink during all the festive days whereas *Zufang* was still common among the drinkers to quench their thirst. *Rakzu* was not abundantly consumed during the British period. Old men, chief, and his elders or a small number of people used to drink it for companionship. *Hah zu* still enjoyed popularity among drinkers, and the Mizos had been following this custom since time immemorial and for many years during the British era.¹⁰⁰

2.10 Changes in Social and Religious Belief

As a British subject, the Mizo chief enjoyed some autonomy but not full independence as they did in the past. During the early nineteenth century, two pioneer missionaries - Rev F. W. Savidge and Rev J. H. Lorrain – came into Mizoram from the plains. They stayed for more than two years waiting for the chance to serve in Mizoram. On 11 January 1894, they reached Sairang, and on 13 January 1894, they set foot in Aizawl. Upon arriving there, the masses were illiterate and living conditions were poor, with poor hygienic conditions. Mizos had a hostile relationship with the British and frequent raids from the hills and violent and aggressive and counter military operations have clouded the atmosphere¹⁰¹.

The relationship between the Mizos and the missionaries was not friendly. As the colonial government was protective of the missionaries, the Mizo started to develop a high regard for the two missionaries. They started learning the language of the Mizos

⁹⁹ *Zu in Mizo Society*, p.36

¹⁰⁰ *Zu in Mizo Society*, pp.37,45,46

¹⁰¹ Rohmingawii, 'Christianity and Society in Mizoram' in Malsawmdawngliana and Rohmingawii (ed), *Mizo Narratives: accounts from Mizoram*, Guwahati, Scientific Book Centre, 2013, p.193

and with the efforts of the missionaries, an alphabet using a Roman script based on the Hunterian system was devised. They compiled Lushai Grammar and Dictionary and published the first book Child's Primer printed in Mizo language. Numbers of hymns were translated into Mizo by the Missionaries¹⁰². Through the missionaries, the native people were taught reading and writing. Missionaries also preached to the Mizo about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. With these efforts, gradually new converts appeared among the Mizos.

Having been predominantly agriculturalists and illiterates, the pre-colonial Mizo had poor hygienic conditions and were afflicted by a wide array of diseases since there was no modern medicine available. They restrained themselves from doing certain things and when something unusual happened to them, it was taken as an indication of bad luck or misfortune. In order to protect themselves from the harm that could happen to them, they would offer sacrifices to the *pathian* and appease the spirit which led them to perform various sacrificial ceremonies. Nevertheless, when their belief system changed, all the sacrifices and offerings were abandoned. They could no longer carry on with their tradition that had been in place for so long. The change in the belief system had a significant impact on the cultural tradition.

The significance of liquor has been depicted in this chapter, as well as its changes over the years. Liquor played an important role in the lives of pre-colonial Mizo people. The use of liquor in times of celebration and various activities was essential. Each family in a village kept at least one pot of rice beer for consumption. Since most of the families worked on agricultural land year-round, festive times were the only opportunity to enjoy themselves without worrying about their hard work.

Before the British arrived, the Mizos lived in isolation and had few contacts with the outside world. Therefore, they had little contact with other cultures and religions. They had their unwritten laws and customs, which they had observed for centuries. Traditionally, liquor consumption has been regulated by self-imposed social control. The rules and norms reflect the values, attitudes, and beliefs of the Mizo culture. It does not take place anywhere and there are specific places where they consume it. It

¹⁰² Rohmingmawii, *Mizo Narratives* , p.195

acted as a means to facilitate social bonding and interaction. The Mizo include liquor in major life events such as birth, marriage, and death. In fact, liquor occupies a central role in all significant events in their culture. Liquor is often associated with festivities, fun and a celebration most certainly requires liquor. Nevertheless, this does not mean that every drinking occasion needs to be celebrated.

Mizo culture and practices under British rule did not significantly change in the beginning. Since Mizo history was passed on through oral tradition, very little was known about the problem or ill effects of liquor in Mizo culture. There was no hostility toward alcohol and, rather, it was seen as a sacred and unblemished diet. Loitering in the street due to drunkenness was considered shameful and despicable by all the people¹⁰³. After the arrival of the English missionaries to Mizoram to spread the gospel, things started to change slowly, especially the role of liquor in the Mizo culture.

Mizo culture has changed fundamentally in the perception and also of the place liquor occupied in the society. Liquor, though no longer practiced in the contemporary era, still represents an important and valuable aspect of Mizo culture. The pre-colonial period was characterized by liquor being an integral part of most cultural events and religious ceremonies. Liquor was necessary for most cultural events and religious ceremonies, but gradually lost significance due to the emergence of a new culture.

¹⁰³ *Zu in Mizo Society*, p.42

Chapter III

Prohibition and Mizo Society

3.1 Introduction

The term prohibition was defined as “The act of officially not allowing something”. Liquor prohibition was derived as a result of the temperance movement in the eighteenth century. Since liquor consumption was a part of the traditional custom for a long period of time, it was socially constructed to consume alcohol on a specific occasion and for their merry-making. However, the widespread consumption of liquor among the masses leads to disintegration and poverty within the society. There was also religious revivalism in the 1880s and 1920s which resulted in the increased call for temperance.

The British influence on Mizo's cultural identity and religious beliefs has had a major impact on the state. The introduction of western education, the transition from chieftainship to colonial administration, and the introduction of Christianity all had a profound impact on the lives of the Mizos. Through the missionaries' work, the traditional practice of the consumption of liquor began to gradually change with the introduction of the new religion. As a result of the new religion, Mizo life also underwent a tremendous transformation.

3.2 Origin of Prohibition

It has been a part of the liturgy of early Christians to drink consecrated bread and wine since the beginning of the first century. It was during the Protestant Reformation that the Protestant Church began to limit and restrict outside church consumption of wine. Martin Bucer was a German reformer and contemporary of Luther whose goal was the reformation of Christian society. His goal was to limit, if not eliminate, the consumption of wine outside the church unless it conformed to the drinking of wine in the church during the Lord's Supper. John Calvin who was

strongly influenced by Bucer sought to reform inns and taverns. He wanted to separate the consumption of wine from the sociability of drinking it with friends by making it illegal to buy another person a drink. Few Protestant voices advocated the total prohibition of drinking alcohol. Furthermore, the voices calling for total abstinence did not have much traction¹⁰⁴.

Another radical Protestant, Sebastian Frank, advocated the total prohibition of alcohol. In his main argument, he argued that those who consumed wine were heathens and not Christians who did not exhibit the fruits of faith. For him, the only remedy available was the complete prohibition of alcohol. Those who refused to abide by this policy, he argued, should be expelled from the community.¹⁰⁵

With the increase in overconsumption of liquor, a number of social problems arise in society. Many people were alcoholics which let them neglect their family and their work. The Temperance Movement calls for complete abstinence from the use of intoxicating liquor. In the early 1800s, churches introduced temperance pledges among their members. Under the influence of the Churches, the movement spread rapidly. According to L. Ames Brown, “The Prohibition movement was an outgrowth of the temperance crusades of the first half of the nineteenth century”. The American Temperance Society was established in 1815. In 1826, the American Society for the Prohibition of Temperance was organized to advocate total abstinence¹⁰⁶. In 1851, Maine was the first state to pass the Prohibition Law.

The prohibition movement in the United States traces its origins to the mid-nineteenth century. The United States of America was the first among the great powers to attempt the prohibition of liquor. America was also the first nation to adopt prohibition as a national legislative assembly¹⁰⁷. In the early stage of prohibition, sales of intoxicating liquor to a minor, or drunkard and on holidays, Sundays, and specified hours in the day was prohibited. In Great Britain, the Intoxicating Liquor

¹⁰⁴ Steve Charter et al., *The Routledge Handbook of Wine and Culture* (ed), p.235, 235

¹⁰⁵ Steve Charter et al, p. 237

¹⁰⁶ L. Ames Brown, *Prohibition*, *The North American Review*, Nov. 1915, Vol. 202, No 720 , p 704, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25108648> (accessed on 3rd March 2021)

¹⁰⁷ Ernest H. Cherrington, ‘*World – Wide Progress toward Prohibition Legislation*’, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol 109, Sage Publications, p. 209 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1015011> (accessed on 5.03.2020)

Bill was introduced in the British Parliament in June 1923. This bill provides against the sale of intoxicating liquor to any person under the age of 18 years and the purchase of intoxicating liquor by any such person, the exception being the sale, purchase, or supply of beer, porter, cider, or perry to or by a person over the age of 16 years, where such liquor is sold, supplied or purchase, only for consumption at a meal to be consumed at the same time in such portion of the premises as is usually set apart for the service of meals, not being known as a bar.¹⁰⁸

In Norway, the manufacture, sale, or importation of intoxicating liquors containing more than 14 percent of absolute alcohol was prohibited. The law was adopted as the result of a referendum in October 1919 to make the prohibition of the beverage liquor traffic permanent¹⁰⁹.

The temperance movement was created in the early nineteenth century by physicians, ministers, and large employers concerned about the drunkenness of workers and servants. By the mid-1930 temperance had become a mass movement of the middle class. Temperance was on the cutting edge of social reform and was closely allied with anti-slavery and women's rights movements. Temperance remained the largest enduring movement middle-class movement of the nineteenth century. The temperance campaign was devoted to convincing people that alcoholic drink in any form was evil, dangerous, and destructive. Temperance supporters insisted that alcohol slowly but inevitably destroyed the moral character and the physical and mental health of all who drank it. Temperance supporters regarded alcohol the way people today viewed heroin: as an inherently addicting substance.¹¹⁰

From the beginning of the Temperance Movement, the ideology contained a powerful strand of fantasy. It held that alcohol was the major cause nearly of all social problems: unemployment, poverty, business failure, slums, crime, and violence (especially against women and children). In the twentieth century, a new

¹⁰⁸ Ernest, *World-wide Progress towards Prohibition Legislation*, p.212

¹⁰⁹ Ernest, p.213

¹¹⁰ Harry. G .Levine and Craig Reinerman, "From Prohibition To Regulation: Lesson From Alcohol Policy for Drug policy", *The Milbank Quarterly*, Vol 69, No.3, 1991, p.462.

prohibition organization the Anti-Saloon League came to dominate the movement. The League pushed through many local prohibition laws and some state measures by writing laws for those who enact the laws. In 1913, the League declared itself in favor of Constitutional prohibition¹¹¹. In November 1918, the War Prohibition Act was passed which banned the manufacture and sale of all beverages including beer and wine that contained more than 2.75 percent of alcohol.

In India, within the predominant Hindu faith, drinking was set down under Hindu scripture as a mortal sin. With the passing of time, prohibition only came to apply to the highest Brahmin caste, and the use of alcohol spread widely among lower caste people and aboriginal tribes beyond the reach of Hinduism. In the Muslim religion, the use of alcohol was prohibited under the Qur'an. While in Buddhism, the goal was complete abstinence from all intoxicating and spirituous liquor. The arrival of the Portuguese and the Dutch traders in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries led to the adoption of European drinking practices among a few Buddhists. Sikkism also banned the use of alcohol. Jains were especially important in opposing alcohol because they dominated the industrial bourgeoisie that financed the nationalist movement that later came out against alcohol. Parsis also solemnly renounced alcohol, especially for women but from the eighteenth century onwards, Parsis traders took part in the liquor business¹¹²

The British introduced the excise on alcohol from 1790 through 1971. It was introduced to suppress illegal distilleries and restrict consumption. This policy adversely affected the poor, low-caste, and tribal communities who had distilled their alcohol. The liquor excise became a growing source of revenue for the British over the course of the next hundred years. In 1888, the Anglo-Indian Temperance Association was founded by a prominent British member of Parliament, William S. Caine. By the 1920s, the association had 195 affiliates in India with membership

¹¹¹ Harry. G. Levine and Craig Reinerman, *From Prohibition to Regulation*, p.463.

¹¹² Jack S. Blocker, David M. Fahey and Ian R. Tyrell, *Alcohol and Temperance in Modern History, An International Encyclopedia*, pp.307,308

mainly of Indians. The association published a journal 'Akbari' (or Excise) that documented the links of the government to liquor prohibition and sale¹¹³.

In 1905, the British Parliament appointed an Excise Committee which made stronger recommendations including the complete abolition of the out-still system, prohibition of the employment of women on licensed premises, and prohibition of sales to children and drunken persons. For M.K. Gandhi, the drink was a problem of Western origins. He argued that in America, it was the people who impeded prohibition in the 1920s. However, in India, it was a foreign government. In July 1921, the Indian National Congress endorsed Gandhi's campaign of picketing liquor shops¹¹⁴.

The colonial government introduced a consolidated excise law in 1856 to control the liquor business. The main intention of the government was to collect more revenue from liquor while regulating liquor consumption. This was soon understood by the educated politically conscious Indians as another means of extracting revenue from the Indians. From the second half of the nineteenth century, the intemperance was increasing due to the colonial government policy. The colonial society was condemning the government policy on liquor and only from 1870 onward, did the Temperance Movement start¹¹⁵. Upon independence in 1947, prohibition was included in the Constitution of India and the governments of several states such as Gujarat introduced it. The modern Indian state of Haryana imposed prohibition, forcing government-run liquor stores and privately owned outlets to close in 1996¹¹⁶.

After independence liquor sales had been one of the most substantial sources of revenue for state governments. Prohibition when it is imposed is seen as a sacrifice by a state government of its 'ill-gotten gains in order to address the popular antipathy towards alcohol. Prohibition has often also emerged as a central plank of socio-

¹¹³ Blocker, Fahey and Tyrell, *Alcohol and Temperance in Modern History*, p.308

¹¹⁴ Blocker, Fahey and Tyrell, , p.309

¹¹⁵ Amrita Mondal, *Struggle for Temperance*, Proceeding of the Indian History Congress, 2017, Vol .- 78, p 652, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26906137>

¹¹⁶ Blocker, Fahey and Tyrell, *Alcohol and Temperance in Modern History*, p.309

religious movements, particularly among the working classes, rural poor, lower caste, and tribal.¹¹⁷

On 28th January 1953, the Assam Liquor Prohibition Act 1952 was published in the Assam Gazette in which possession, consumption, and manufacture of liquor and the smuggling thereof into the Barpeta sub-division and other areas of the state¹¹⁸. In Nagaland, the Nagaland Liquor Prohibition Act, 1989 was imposed on which possession, sale consumption, and manufacture of liquor and import thereof in the state of Nagaland¹¹⁹. In the present day, the sale of liquor and consumption is banned in Bihar, Gujarat, Tripura, Lakshadweep, Mizoram, and Nagaland. It is also banned partially in some districts of Manipur¹²⁰. The other Indian states and Union territories were permitted the sale of alcohol.

3.3 Factors leading to Prohibition of Liquor

Before the arrival of the Christian missionaries, liquor was an integral part of social, religious, and cultural events. Domestic consumption of liquor was common in the pre-colonial period. Sometimes they served their guests' liquor in the same way that tea is served today. It was a key tool for showing favor to others. There was a considerable amount of liquor available due to its importance for every type of cultural event, which included festivals. Liquor was common among the common masses before the arrival of Christian missionaries. Mizo relies mainly on agricultural production. In the absence of modern medicine, people lived in poor hygienic conditions and suffered many diseases.

¹¹⁷ *How Does One Deals With Drinks? Indian society needs to have a different relationship with liquor: neither prohibition nor free sale is an answer*, Economic and Political Weekly, 2014, Vol .-49, p.8. <http://jstor.com/stable/24480693>,

¹¹⁸ The Assam Liquor Prohibition Rules, 1953, Assam Gazette, 28th January 1953, , <https://www.latestlaws.com/bare-acts/state-acts-rules/assam-state-laws/assam-liquor-prohibition-act-1952/assam-liquor-prohibition-rules-1953/> (accessed on 7 October 2021)

¹¹⁹ The Nagaland Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1989, The Nagaland Act No.4 of 1990, https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/11850/1/the_nagaland_liquor_total_prohibition_act_1989.pdf (accessed on 7 October 2021)

¹²⁰ Citizen Matters, published on 08.04.2021, <https://citizenmatters.in/alcohol-consumption-when-is-drinking-legal-and-what-if-you-break-those-laws-24326> (accessed on 28.10.2021)

As time passed, several people started to be intoxicated because of the high consumption of liquor during social and celebratory events. This can be seen in the writings of colonial writers. In a Report by the Missionaries of Baptist Missionary Society, it is written that “drink is one of the curses of this land. The *Lushais* do not know what moderation is where rice-beer is concerned, and the only course open for the converts is to abstain from it altogether”. Mr. Lorrain wrote in a 1913 report, “A single horn of liquor always led to another and yet another, and almost invariably ended intoxication. That indeed is the only object a *Lushai* has in view when he drinks. The associations that strong drinks have in *Lushai* are completely at odds with a holy Christian life. At a beer drink all the vilest passions of the people are let loose, obscene songs and jests abound”¹²¹.

McCall wrote in the ‘*Lushai Crysallis*’, “Traditionally, *Lushai* dances consisted of slow movements that were accelerated into a faster tempo by jerks until the climax was reached, with much of the attraction lies in its obscene patter and vulgarities intoned by the dancers, who were plied with *Zu* and encouraged by the clapping of spectators”¹²². Dances were performed during this time, where liquor was drunk, as dance is a part of festivals and celebratory occasions. Since liquor was abundant during the festive season, there may have been some people who became intoxicated. It is, however, difficult to find an instance of the Mizo behaving indecently or immorally because of intoxication in the oral histories that had survived for so many years. Drunkenness was considered shameful, and people who caused chaos due to alcohol were reprimanded by elders

In the past, there was a hostile relationship between the British and the Mizos because of raids from the hills to the plains. The *Lushai* Hills (now Mizoram) was the last part of Northeast India to be reached by the Christian Missions. On 11th January, F.W. Savidge and J.H.Lorrain sent by the Arthington Mission reached Sairang and reached Aizawl on 13 January 1894. They had been staying in the plains for more than two years waiting for their opportunity to come to Mizoram. They

¹²¹ *The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram 1901- 1938*, Series No 3, Serkawn, the Mizoram Gospel Centenary Committee, Baptist Church of Mizoram, 1993, pp.17, 98

¹²² McCall, p.209

settled in Tea Garden, which was now known as Mac Donald Hill where they build a small bamboo house¹²³. Due to the hostile relationship between the British and the Mizo, and the opposition to the Gospel in the hills during their entry, they faced many challenges coming to Mizoram.

Through the efforts of the Christian missionaries, the sanitation, health, and living conditions of the Mizo people improved as well. Missionaries created the Mizo alphabet which enabled the Mizo to read and write in their own language. The change in religion had a significant impact on the life of the Mizo which resulted in abandoning some of the traditions that they had followed for so long. They no longer offered sacrifices to the spirit and many social taboos were abolished. Lorrain and Savidge wrote in their report that during their stay in Mizoram for five years, about thirty families in their field had given up sacrificing to demons, and rather they were trying to serve God to the best of their ability¹²⁴. Despite the sparse population of the Mizos, the growth rate of Christianity was extraordinary.

The Christian Missionaries had a liberal view about the consumption of liquor in Mizo culture in the beginning. Despite its importance in social, religious, and cultural events, liquor was not opposed by Christian missionaries because it was deeply ingrained in the culture. However, with the passage of time, as the missionaries stayed with the Mizos for a long period of time and saw how the Mizos consumed liquor during their various social and cultural events, the missionaries started to dislike the way they behave when they become intoxicated.

J.H. Lorrain in a Report by Missionaries of Baptist Missionary Society wrote that “At a beer drink all the vilest passions of the people are let loose, obscene songs and jests abound, and it is unthinkable that any follower of Jesus could join such a company and still keep his garment unspotted by the world. So with the full consent of our early converts, we made a rule that strong drinks must be abandoned by all

¹²³ Rohmingmawii, p.191

¹²⁴ *The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram 1901- 1938*, p.7.

Lushais who wish to join the Christian community, and therefore everyone who bears the name of Christian in this country is a total abstainer”¹²⁵.

N.E. Perry also wrote In *The Lakhers* that “*Lakher* and *Lushei* Christians are not allowed to drink wine, beer or spirits and no person can become a Christian whoever touches alcohol”¹²⁶. Due to drunkenness and excessive drinking of liquor, there was chaos and the breaking up of the family. Divorce also increased. The economic condition of the family also collapses due to liquor consumption. Apart from the ill effects of liquor in the family, it also affected the health condition of the drinker. An accident caused due to drunkenness also increased.

In ‘*Mizo Hnam Nunphung and Zu*’ published by R.Rozuala, he wrote that liquor was an integral part of the Mizo culture. Meanwhile, in the writings of Pastor Liangkhaia, he wrote that there were many Mizo who consumed liquor. Many became alcoholics. Liquor was to be considered the main enemy of Mizoram. Liquor had a negative effect on the lives of people. Rev. Zairema in his book “*Mizo leh Zu*’ says that it was wrong to say that liquor was prohibited by the early missionaries rather it was the early Christians¹²⁷.

In the North, the first Mizoram Presbytery was held on 22nd April 1910 in Aizawl¹²⁸. In this Presbytery, there were 9 agendas, one of which was ‘*zu in loh thu*’, which means refrain from drinking alcohol. This shows that the early Christians were against the consumption of liquor. A.G. McCall also mentions that the *Lushai* church condemns drinking liquor, which has had a definite result on society. In response to the condemnation of drinking liquor, drinking tea has gained wide popularity.¹²⁹

A number of changes took place within Mizo social, religious, and cultural practices. McCall mentioned that “the changes which were taking place among the *Lushai* villagers were greatly due to missionary fervour, infused through salaried deputies, operating among a people who had never been subject to any firm or powerful

¹²⁵ *The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram 1901- 1938*, Series No 3, p.98.

¹²⁶ Perry, p.21

¹²⁷ *Zu leh Mizo Kristiante*, Aizawl, Social Front Committee, 1995, p. 27

¹²⁸ Lalhinga, *Mizo Kristian Kohhran A Chanchin Hmasa Lam Leh Presbytery Neih Hnulamte (1894-1939)*, Aizawl, Published by Lalfima, 1996, Appendix I, p.1

¹²⁹ McCall, p.209

priestly class”¹³⁰. Under British rule, the ‘*Bawi*’ (slave) system was abolished and *Zawlbuk* and chieftainship were also abolished.

3.4 Liquor Prohibition in Mizoram after Indian Independence

Till 1972, Mizoram was one of the districts of Assam. It became a Union Territory on 21st January 1972. The first Legislative Assembly passed The Mizoram Excise Bill in 1973. It came into effect on 10th October 1984. The Mizoram Excise Rules 1983 came into existence after 10 years of the enactment of the Bill. The Mizoram Excise Act 1973 controls the import, export, transport, manufacture, sale, and possession of alcoholic liquor and intoxicating drugs. Import of India-made foreign liquor was permitted with a pass or license¹³¹.

With the permission of the Government of Mizoram, ten liquor shops and four bars were opened in Aizawl whereas, in Lunglei, four liquor shops were opened¹³². The Commissioner or the Superintendent of Excise acting on behalf of the deputy commissioner of the importing district can issue this license. Both the Mizoram Excise Act 1973 and the Mizoram Excise Rules 1983 came into force on 10th October 1984. There were rules and punishments for those who violated the Mizoram Excise Act 1973 and Mizoram Excise Rules 1983. However, there was no punishment for people who consume liquor.

The Government felt it necessary to take measures to fight against alcoholism. The Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act 1995 came into existence. The Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act 1995 and the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Rules, 1996 are enforced with effect from 20th February 1997. The Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1995 provides for total prohibition of import, transport, manufacture, possession, sale, and consumption of liquor in the state of Mizoram.

¹³⁰ McCall, p.207

¹³¹ Mizoram Excise Rule, 1983, Published vide Notification No. Exc. 101/81/2, dated 8th October 1984, <https://police.mizoram.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/mizoram-excise-rule-1983> (accessed on 4th October 2021)

¹³² Report of Study Group of the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1995, excise.mizoram.gov.in (accessed on 24 October 2021)

However, the three autonomous district councils namely *Chakma* Autonomous District Council, *Lai* Autonomous District Council, and *Mara* Autonomous District Council were not included under this Act¹³³.

Whoever contravenes this Prohibition Act of 1995 shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to five years but not less than three months and also with a fine which may extend to ten thousand rupees but not less than one thousand rupees. Whoever consumes liquor shall, on conviction, be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to one month or not less than 24 hours or with a fine which may extend to one thousand rupees but not less than five hundred rupees or with both. Whoever in any street or thoroughfare or public place to which the public have or permitted to have access is drunk or in a state of intoxication for being drunk shall, on conviction, be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three months but not less than seven days and with a fine which may extend to one thousand rupees but not less than five hundred rupees¹³⁴. Under the MLTP Act, no person other than the Registered Medical practitioner shall issue any prescription for liquor

Under rule 16 of MLTP rules, the 1996 State Prohibition Council and District Prohibition Committee were set up to advise the government on how to enforce Prohibition. They were also set up to study the immediate result of Total Prohibition and suggest better ways how to prohibit liquor. The council and committee were mainly set up to help the government with the prohibition of liquor. The MLTPC Act was imposed by the government as there was strong pressure from the Church.

The Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act 1995 was in force for 17 years. However, in 2014 the Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition and Control) Act was put into effect on 17 July 2014. This Act prohibits and controls the production, manufacture, possession, transport, import, export, purchase, sale, and consumption of intoxicating liquor. The license was issued for the establishment of a distillery, brewery, bottling plant,

¹³³ The Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1995, Published by Mizoram Excise & Narcotics Department, p.1, excise.mizoram.gov.in (accessed on 5 October 2021)

¹³⁴ The Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1995, p.9, excise.mizoram.gov.in (accessed on 24 October 2021)

bonded warehouse, retail sale of liquor, and permits for purchase, consumption, import, export, and transport of Indian-made Foreign Liquor. This Act extended to the whole State of Mizoram except the three autonomous district councils, namely *Chakma* Autonomous District Council, *Lai* Autonomous District Council, and *Mara* Autonomous District Council constituted under the sixth schedule to the Constitution of India.¹³⁵

In the Mizoram Liquor Prohibition (Prohibition and Control) Act, punishment for contravention of Section 42: “.Whoever contravenes the provisions of sub-section (1) of Section 42 of this Act shall, on conviction, be punished with imprisonment for a term of not less than six months which may extend to five years, and also with a fine of not less than five thousand rupees which may extend to ten thousand rupees; Whoever in contravention of the provisions of sub-section (2), (3), (4) or (5) of Section 42 of this Act shall, on conviction, be punished with imprisonment for a term of not less than one month which may extend to two years or with fine of not less than one thousand rupees which may extend to five thousand rupees, or with both”¹³⁶

Liquor shops were opened again in Aizawl after nearly 18 years of prohibition. A liquor card was issued by the excise and narcotics department. In this card, not more than six bottles of hard liquor and ten each of wine and beer every month could be purchased solely for only personal consumption. To ensure that the rules were enforced and followed, at least one official from excise and narcotics was on duty in the liquor shop.

In 2019, The Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition) Act, 2019 was enforced to provide for the prohibition of import, export, transport, manufacture, possession, sale, and consumption of liquor in the state of Mizoram. This Act extended to the whole of the state of Mizoram except the three Autonomous districts council namely *Chakma* Autonomous District Council, *Lai* Autonomous District Council, and *Mara*

¹³⁵ The Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition and Control Act, 2014, p.3 excise.mizoram.gov.in (accessed on 5 October 2021)

¹³⁶ The Mizoram Liquor Prohibition and Control Act, 2014, p. 26, excise.mizoram.gov.in (accessed on 5 October 2021)

Autonomous District Council constituted under the Sixth Scheduled to the Constitution of India.

In the Mizoram Liquor Prohibition Bill, 2019,” no person, without a license or permit issued under the provisions of this Act or Rules made thereunder, shall – (1)(a) import, export, transport liquor; (b) possess, sell or buy liquor; (c) manufacture liquor; (d) possess or use or keep for use any material, utensil, implements, apparatus, chemical or compounds whatsoever for the manufacture of liquor; and (e) construct any brewery, distillery, winery, bottling plant or warehouse, or as such place; (2) consume liquor”. And whoever contravenes the provisions of sub-section (1) of Section 5 of this Act shall, on conviction, be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to five years with a fine which may extend to one lakh rupees; (2) Whoever in contravention of sub-section (2) of Section 5 of this Act, consumes liquor shall, on conviction, be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months or with a fine which may extend to five thousand rupees, or with both. In Section 6 (3) whoever, in any street or thoroughfare or public place behaves in a disorderly manner under the influence of liquor, makes or causes a nuisance, or drives a vehicle after consuming liquor shall, on conviction, be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to two years and with fine which may extend to ten thousand rupees, or with both¹³⁷.

3.5 The Role played by different Churches in Liquor Prohibition.

Churches played a vital role in every aspect of society, especially in the process of the prohibition of liquor. As religion had a huge impact on the life of the people, the church and its teaching had a significant influence on their decision-making as well as on their everyday life. As there was an increase in the number of converts and various Missions entered Mizoram, churches of different religious denominations started to emerge. The first Presbytery of Mizoram Presbyterian Church held in Aizawl, 1910 also prohibits its member to abstain from liquor. This shows that the

¹³⁷ The Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition) Act, p.13, excise.mizoram.gov.in (accessed on 4 October 2021)

early Christians were against the consumption of liquor. The Salvation Army and The seventh Day Adventists also strongly opposed the drinkers and the manufacturers of liquor. To become a full member or soldier of the Salvation Army one has to take a vow not to indulge in any kinds of intoxicating drinks, drugs, etc. A known drinker cannot be enrolled as a soldier. If a soldier starts drinking, his or her name shall be struck off from the soldiers' roll but entered in the Backsliders' Roll. The Salvation Army observed one Sunday in a year for preaching the evil of drinking and the day is known as 'anti-drinking Sunday'.¹³⁸

No drinkers or manufacturers or sellers of liquor can become a member of the Seventh Day Adventist Church. If a member starts drinking liquor, two or three church leaders with or without the concerned Pastor pay a visit to the drinker's residence and tell him the sinfulness of drinking. He is warned and corrected openly by the church if he does not stop drinking. Pamphlets in English explaining the sinfulness of drinking are distributed free of cost¹³⁹.

The Presbyterian Church of Mizoram was also against the consumption of liquor. In the early years of its establishment, if a full member got drunk publicly, he was punished by the Church. In '*Zu in Mizo Society*' published by Tribal Research Institute, it is mentioned that the Presbyterian Church is one of the most lenient churches towards drinkers¹⁴⁰. The Presbyterian Church is the largest denomination in Mizoram. Generally, it is found in the northern part of Mizoram, whereas the Baptist Church is dominant in the southern part.

The Presbyterian Church of Mizoram, The Baptist Church of Mizoram, and, other denominations in Mizoram urged their members to abstain from alcohol and resist the temptation of liquor. The teaching of these different denominations in Mizoram was deeply influenced by the teachings of the Christian missionaries.

¹³⁸ *Zu in Mizo Society*, p.55

¹³⁹ *Zu in Mizo Society*, p.56

¹⁴⁰ *Zu in Mizo Society*, p.55

3.6 The Role played by Non-Profit Organizations in Liquor Prohibition

Non-profit organizations played an important role in the prohibition of liquor. Young Mizo Association (YMA) was established in 1935 and had three important mottos with which ‘revere Christian ethics’ was one of its mottos. Due to this reason, YMA strongly opposed the consumption of liquor which was considered a sin in the Christian faith. From 1944, their main aim was to improve the quality of life for the community as a whole. They would search around the village and its surroundings to check whether there were people who sold liquor illegally. Since YMA is the largest non-profit organization in Mizoram, its effort in the prohibition and abolition of liquor had helped the government in its effort to prohibit liquor.

The Village Defence Party (VDP) also contributed to the prohibition of liquor. Its main aim was to maintain peace and sanctity in the village. VDP sometimes joined hands with the police and YMA in their effort to prohibit liquor. Rev. Chuauthuama in his book “*Bible, Zu leh Mizote*’ mentioned that there was ‘*Zu Do Pawl*’ which was established to fight against liquor¹⁴¹.

During the 1980s, the *Mizo Zirlai Pawl* (MZP) strongly advocated liquor prohibition. In March 1979, the MZP organized a public meeting at Dawrpui Middle School, Aizawl where speeches had been delivered against the vices and ill effects of drinking liquors. The meeting was conducted and presided over by the Hon’ble Minister, in charge of Education. For the first time in Aizawl in 1979, more than 780 members from different branches of MZP checked the numbers of liquor-selling shops and houses between Treasury Square and Zarkawt in Aizawl town. They found a good quantity of various kinds of illicit liquor which they proudly poured down the side drain. Different branches of MZP in different parts of Mizoram were also taking bold steps in their locality or area towards a prohibition campaign¹⁴².

Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP), which was founded in 1974, also took various steps toward prohibition. They regarded drinking as the common enemy of each family in particular and for the nation as a whole. In 1978, the MHIP launched a

¹⁴¹ Rev.Chuauthuama, *Bible, Zu leh Mizote*, Aizawl, 2014,p.84.

¹⁴² *Zu in Mizo Society*, p.64

silent procession at Aizawl and Lunglei in protest against drinking. Placards condemning alcohol consumption and sale were held by the protestors¹⁴³.

The Village Councils and the Village Defence Party also played crucial roles in fighting against drinking. All the efforts by the non-governmental organization helped the government in their drive against liquor. The sale of liquor and its consumption decreases as a result of their efforts.

3.7 Prohibition and Changes in Perception of Liquor

The clash between liquor culture and the new religion induced changes and the new Mizo perspectives on liquor had brought about significant transformation in the society. The change in religion had a visible impact which changed the position and perspective of liquor in Mizo society and culture. Before the advent of Christianity, without liquor almost, no social, cultural, or religious functions could be done. The main purpose of liquor was mainly for communal consumption. It was not intended for personal use. Every household had liquor in stock for consumption, but it was never taken with meals. However, some families did not follow this practice and it differs from family to family. This practice of drinking liquor completely changed with the introduction of the new religion. The converts were expected to attend the church regularly and to give up liquor in case they happened to be a liquor drinker.

“When the missionaries came and converted the Mizos to Christianity, the concept of *saphun* (the traditional practice of conversion or proselytization) still remained in the minds of the people. If early Mizo Christianity is interpreted in the light of this proselytization, then Mizo Christianity can be seen as a change of religion. This means from the “inferior” Mizo religion to the “superior” religion of Christianity. Another interpretation is a change of clan or race, which means a conversion from the Mizo traditional family to a more civilized one. If one looks at the transformations of the Mizo society from this perspective, it was not only the

¹⁴³ *Zu in Mizo Society*, p. 64,65.

missionaries but also the Mizo Christians themselves who were responsible for the changes and transformations of the society”¹⁴⁴.

There was a growing dislike of liquor among Mizo society in general and among church members. The Church urges its members to abstain from consuming alcohol and encourages its members to be free from liquor. The teaching of the Church greatly influenced the mind of the people in their perspective towards liquor. Many people had a negative perception of liquor as a result of this teaching. It was considered a sin and the Church often disciplined its members if they are caught indulging in liquor.

The perspective and opinions of the people regarding the prohibition of liquor vary. There are differences of opinion among those who are in favor of prohibition and those who do not want to prohibit liquor. It is an ongoing debate among the people from the beginning of prohibition till contemporary times. Study Group of Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act 1995 was formed to study whether the prohibition of liquor was successful or not. From the study, it can be seen that the prohibition was not successful. It had affected society in a negative and positive way. Though there are some people who consider that the prohibition was successful, the majority of people consider that the prohibition of liquor was not successful. Some people wanted to continue the enforcement of the prohibition Act. After prohibition, the health condition of the people was affected more than before prohibition, as can be seen in the report of the Study Group on a number of alcohol-related liver disease cases received in Civil Hospital, Aizawl. The churches, women, and the elders wanted to continue with the prohibition of liquor even though it was not a success.

During the pre-colonial period, liquor was never seen as a sin rather it was considered sacred. The significance and role played by liquor in Mizo culture were discussed in the earlier chapter. Even though it played a pivotal role in almost all the social, cultural, and religious events, the position and significance of liquor were challenged with the advent of the Christian religion. Even though not much changed

¹⁴⁴Lawmsanga, ‘A Critical Study on Christian Mission with Special Reference to Presbyterian Church of Mizoram’, PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2010, p.89, Available from: etheses.bham.ac.uk, (accessed on 01.11.2021)

during British rule, things began to change when missionaries entered the *Lushai* hills and started doing evangelical work. As a result of their newfound faith, the Mizo abandoned their old religion and social and cultural practices.

The change in their belief system completely transformed the Mizo traditional worldview. A new set of doctrines and beliefs was introduced by the Christian missionaries. The teachings of the missionaries greatly influenced their view in every sphere of their life. However, the development led by the Christian missionaries upon the Mizo society cannot be overlooked. The educational and intellectual development was also at a whole new level for the Mizo society. The life of the Mizo slowly began to change after the advent of the British.

Early converts, as well as missionaries, forbade alcohol consumption among their members. It can be seen that all denominations of churches that were established inside Mizoram urged their members to refrain from drinking alcohol. Even if one disregards the cultural significance of liquor, its negative effects on society were felt more strongly by people at the time. There was a growing increase in the number of drunkards among the Mizo people, so society condemned it. In addition to the Church, non-governmental organizations also came out fighting against alcohol consumption.

When Mizoram gained statehood, the government imposed rules which controlled the sales of liquor. Only India-Made Foreign Liquor was allowed to be sold in Mizoram. In 1995, a new act was legislated and enforced in 1997 in which the total prohibition of liquor was imposed. This Act was enforced for about 18 years and in 2014, a new Mizoram Liquor Prohibition and Control Act controls the sale of liquor and its consumption. India Made Foreign Liquor was sold inside Mizoram under the supervision of the State government. However, a new bill was passed in 2019 which completely prohibits the sale and consumption of liquor. And once again Mizoram became a dry state.

The prohibition and sale of liquor in Mizoram are subject to debate. Opinion about liquor prohibition also varies among the citizens. Since the majority of the people residing in Mizoram were Christian, many people were in favor of the prohibition.

The State government and the respective department in charge of enforcing the laws were taking steps to prohibit liquor. Various NGOs also joined hands and step up the enforcing the prohibition law.

Chapter IV

Conclusion

Since time immemorial, Mizos had consumed liquor. Today, the place of liquor in culture remains a matter of debate. Liquor is an important Mizo cultural artifact that played a central role in Mizo history and culture. It occupies a significant place not only in Mizo culture but also in every culture around the globe, even though there might be differences in the types of liquor consumed. Throughout history, liquor had been a highly contested commodity. It was often associated with religion, and sometimes drinking was part of religious practice.

In some cultures, liquor consumption is embedded in their diets and it is also used as a medicine. In Mizoram, consumption of liquor at social, cultural, and religious events is evident that liquor was deeply embedded in the pre-colonial Mizo lives. The significance of liquor can be seen not only in cultural events but also in religious ones.

It is a long-established practice for many cultures to consume liquor. In Mizo culture, liquor occupied a significant position in traditional practices. In all social, religious, and cultural ceremonies, liquor was an essential item without which the event could not have been completed. It was unknown when this fermentation process began and where they learned it. Due to the lack of written records and evidence that could support the origin of liquor by the Mizos, its origin is uncertain. Despite the myth about the origin of fermentation, there is no proven evidence to support the theory that it originated amongst the Mizo.

In Mizo culture, liquor has lost some of its significance and role due to the influences of colonialism and religious beliefs. This results in people giving less value to the traditional practices of consuming liquor. Since liquor had been a part of almost every culture in the world, its role in the culture and how it affects society cannot be denied. Liquor had been an element of culture that helps in portraying the nature of a culture and its cultural norms and customs. The drinking of liquor is governed by the

traditions of different communities. Every society has its own beliefs and rules regarding the drinking of liquor. The place and manner of consumption of liquor are governed by the traditions of society.

Before colonization, drinking liquor was associated with festivals and celebrations. The availability of liquor was substantial during this period, but excessive drinking and inappropriate behavior were strongly discouraged. Norms and customs of society accepted the consumption of liquor on many occasions. Social norms and customs established constructive norms of drinking behavior. Liquor consumption patterns are heavily influenced by social, cultural, and contextual factors. Drunken behavior was frowned upon by society and punished by the elders in communities. Also, liquor was used to soothe the emotional pain of defeat and loss.

During the British era, Mizoram witnessed a great deal of change as a result of colonialism and the advent of a new religion. The way of life of the people was improved, as well, the health and the hygienic conditions of the people significantly improved. On the one hand, there was development in education and intellectual development due to the missionaries but on the other hand, traditional Mizo customs and practices which they had practiced from time immemorial were abandoned. Sacrificial rituals and ceremonies were no longer performed. The influence of the teachings of the new religion forbade sacrificial rituals and ceremonies. The Christian members were advised to abstain from drinking liquor. It was considered a sin in their new religion.

Upon Mizoram's attainment of Statehood, the government imposed rules to regulate the sale and consumption of liquor. The political party of Mizoram used liquor as one of their propaganda in every election knowing that the Churches, NGOs, and several other groups were in favor of prohibition. Almost every state election featured the issue as a campaign priority. The government also earned revenue from the liquor trade. Having total prohibition imposed on the state, the government can no longer generate revenue from the liquor trade. The churches strongly opposed the lifting of prohibition. The opinions of the people in Mizoram also differed. Despite opposition to prohibition, some people wanted the government to enforce the total prohibition.

Meanwhile, there are people who want the government to sell liquor and earn revenue from the sale of liquor. Since the majority of Mizoram's population is Christian, many people were in favor of Prohibition as it contradicted Christian teachings.

While the Mizo people during the pre-colonial period adhered to social norms and customs, the colonizers' records showed their behavior and moral standards were not appropriate for the Christian member when they became intoxicated. In the light of this, the missionaries, in consultation with the early Christian converts declared that liquor must be banned. However, in the oral history of the Mizos, few mentions are made of the misappropriate behavior of the Mizo due to intoxication. The reason for this could be the influence of the missionaries who came from different cultures. The temperance movement was on the rise in the western world at the time of their arrival in Mizoram.

Findings:

By analyzing both available primary and secondary sources, this study attempts to reconstruct the history of liquor in Mizo culture. It shows how liquor played a large role in the social, religious, and cultural life of the Mizo. The origin of the fermentation of liquor was unknown even though there was a myth which gave us an idea about the origin of the fermentation of liquor. This myth, however, has no supporting evidence. They might have known about the fermentation of liquor from their connections with other tribes before migrating to Mizoram.

As far as the tribe Mizoram are concerned, liquor was prevalent among all tribes. While *Pawis* and *Lushai* shared the same name of liquor such as *Zupui*, *zufang*, *rakzu* while Lakher named their liquor *Sahmapi*, *Sahmaei*, and *Zuri*. Lakher had a different story of the discovery of *Sahma*, in which a divorced wife decided to poison her husband by boiling the python's excrement with rice and mixing it with the python dung. After the arrival of the British, a new type of liquor called "*tin zu*" was introduced by the wives of military personnel using kerosene and ghee tin for

brewing. *Tin zu* was mainly popular among the common masses. It was never consumed in any cultural or religious events.

During the pre-colonial period, liquor served as a social bonding element between the people. Liquor was only drunk occasionally and on special occasions during the pre-colonial period. Only the Chief and elders (*Upa*) were allowed to drink it regularly. Different liquor was consumed based on social status. There is no law that forbids anyone from consuming any type of liquor. As per tradition, *Rakzu* is primarily enjoyed by the chiefs, the elders, and the well-off members of society. Traditionally, no public drinking occurred when drinking this liquor, and only special occasions were observed when it was drunk. Nobody ordinarily drank it. On the day on which one separates from the parental house and begins their own religious practice, separate liquor called '*Sakhaw Zu*' is consumed. In general, people consumed liquor only on festivals, celebratory occasions, and to alleviate the pain of loss.

Liquor played a key role in celebratory events. For instance, festivals were celebrated fervently with liquor, feasts, dancing, and singing. For this purpose, the villagers would prepare an enormous amount of liquor in advance. During hunting expeditions, liquor was drunk as means of celebration when men shot wild animals. Marriages were also marked by the drinking of liquor which was prepared by the grooms and bride's relatives for the marriage feast. Apart from celebratory occasions, when a loved one dies, the family and neighbors would bring liquor to console the grieving family members and would share their sadness and sorrow while consuming the liquor.

Agriculture was the primary occupation of the village and villagers relied on hunting and trapping wild animals to ensure prosperity for the entire village, as well as to defend it from enemies and raiders, which prompted the performance of annual sacrifices such as *Kawngpui Siam*, *Fano daw*, and *Ramar thih*, in which liquor was an important part of the ceremony.

Mizo used liquor as medicine. The usage of liquor after childbirth is evident in A.G. McCall's book '*Lushai Chryllis*'. In this book, when a woman was given lukewarm

mild *Zufang* or rice beer to revive her and relieve her pain after childbirth. As a medicinal substance, liquor was also widely used by the Mizo society before and during colonial rule.

Liquor was used as a form of showing respect towards the elders and to display appreciation for '*tlawmngai*' man and the best boy in the village. Drinks were served in different cups. *Noleng* was used by those who served and prepared beer while *Nopui* was used by the owner of the house and the owner of the beer. Not everyone can be the first to drink liquor. One has to wait for their turn. So long as the chief, elders, or the best boy do not consume liquor, the young men will wait their turn. Drinking in this manner was a tradition. They did not have a written drinking tradition but rather a conventional tradition that was passed down from generation to generation.

In the pre-colonial era, *Thangchhuah pa* or *Thangchhuah* man was highly regarded among the Mizos, since it required many steps to be completed and a multitude of commodities to be obtained. The title *Thangchhuah* required the completion of several steps. Very few were able to achieve this title. To achieve this title, one needs to perform a ceremony known as *Khuangchawi*. Both '*ram lama Thangchhuah*' and '*in lama Thangchhuah*' were types of *Khuangchawi* ceremonies. In the *Khuangchawi* ceremony, several steps had to be performed, in which liquor was crucial.

As colonialism and a new religion called Christianity impacted traditional drinking methods, changes were made to the practice and consumption of liquor. Several major changes occurred as a result of the British influence upon the Mizo culture which led to many changes such as the adoption of western fashion and the abandonment of traditional religious practices that required offerings and sacrifices.

The role of the missionaries cannot be ignored since they played an important role in discouraging people from drinking liquor. They disseminated the negative implications of liquor through their teachings. The Christians and the newly converted individuals were persuaded to abstain from drinking liquor, which greatly influenced the masses and led to a change in their views on liquor. As a result of the

change in religious belief and the teachings of the new faith, liquor is prohibited among Christian members. The missionaries disliked how the Mizo behaved when drunk. By consulting the early Mizo Christian, the Christian Missionaries prohibited the consumption of liquor among the member of Christian.

The early articles published in vernacular newspapers discussed the negative effects of liquor and encouraged readers not to consume it. The early vernacular newspaper had numerous articles urging people not to drink alcohol and mentioning how it affects both a person's health as well as society as a whole. It is also evident from the writings of colonial writers that many became highly intoxicated during social and cultural events. There is no moderate drinking among the *Lushai*, according to them. Once they drink one cup of rice beer, they end up drinking another. Colonial writers wrote differently from how Mizo recorded their drinking history. They wrote that they were occasional drinkers, in contrast to the colonial writers who wrote differently from how Mizos illustrated their drinking practices.

In the south *Lushai* hills, missionaries viewed liquor liberally, even though they abstain from liquor. It was only later that they discovered that the Mizo had no concept of temperance whatsoever when it came to strong drinks. Upon consulting early converts, they argued that the *Lushai* who wished to join the Christian community must abandon strong drinks. The first Presbytery held in North *Lushai* Hills in 1910 forbade the consumption of liquor as part of its agenda. The Church had a great influence in teaching its members to restrain themselves from the consumption of liquor.

In 1973, the first Legislative Assembly passed the Mizoram Excise Bill. After ten years of enactment of the bill, the Mizoram Excise Rule 1983 came into existence. Both came into force on 10th October 1984. There were rules and punishment for those who violated the Act and Rules but no punishment for people who consume liquor. In 1995, the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act (MLTP) came into existence as the government felt it was necessary to fight alcoholism. The Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Rules and the MLTP Act came into effect on 20 February

1997. The MLTP Act 1995 provides total prohibition of import, transport, manufacture, sale, and consumption of liquor in the state.

In 2014 the Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition and Control) Act was put into effect on 17 July 2014. It prohibits and regulates the production, manufacture, possession, transportation, importation, exportation, purchase, sale, and consumption of intoxicating liquor. The Act applied to the entire state of Mizoram except for the three autonomous district councils: Chakma Autonomous District Council, Lai Autonomous District Council, and Mara Autonomous District Council. Almost 18 years after prohibition, wine and liquor shops opened again in Aizawl. As of 2019, the Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition) Act, 2019 was enforced to prohibit the import, export, transport, manufacturing, possession, sale, and consumption of liquor in the state of Mizoram. It covered the entire state of Mizoram except for the three autonomous district councils namely Chakma, Lai, and Mara.

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ABSTRACT
CULTURAL HISTORY OF LIQUOR IN MIZORAM

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Introduction

Since the beginning of time, drinking has been a social activity. Liquor played an important role in almost every culture and was deeply ingrained into people's lives. Pre-colonial Mizo life revolved around a variety of social, religious, and cultural events. In pre-colonial times, festivals occupied an important place and were accompanied by dance, feasts, and liquor. In addition to being a factor for social bonding, it played a significant role.

Liquor was consumed for a specific reason. It was an essential part of the celebrations. Excessive indulgence and excessive drinking were discouraged. If a person caused a problem for others, he would be warned by the village elders and if it was repeated would be severely punished. Furthermore, this shows that alcohol was regulated and overindulgence and intoxication were not taken lightly by society.

Mizos had four main types of liquor, namely *zupui*, *zufang*, *rakzu*, and *zulawm*. These liquors were consumed in Mizo ceremonies, sacrificial and festivals. Liquor availability determines the length of the festival during the festive time. Liquor was plentiful during this time and people celebrated the festivals with alcohol and feasts lasting several days. A sacrificial day was held each year to offer sacrifices to the spirits in order to ensure prosperity, protect them from wild animals, and keep them safe from animals and raiders.

The Maras had three kinds of rice beer, namely *Sahmapi*, *Sahmahei*, and *Zuri*. *Sahma* is a name of rice beer by the Lakhers or Mara. *Sahma* is never taken during meals. Rather than being merely an adjunct to a meal, it is treated with respect. The *Sahma* is to be prepared sometime before it is drunk, and invitations are generally sent around the day before.

During the pre-colonial period, despite the lack of better utensils like today, people prepared liquor from the material which was available to them. Few utensils were needed to prepare liquor. For preparing liquor, beer pots were commonly used.

Different kinds and sizes of beer pots were available, while there were different types of cups for the chiefs and other members of the clan.

Mizos consumed liquor freely on certain occasions during the pre-colonial period. It was customary for the Mizos to prepare liquor for themselves and to consume it on special occasions and functions. Mizos occasionally consumed liquor. Liquor wasn't consumed whenever people wanted to. Most adult males consumed liquor, and females seldom did. Alcohol served as a social bonding tool. In addition to being a form of entertainment, it was also consumed as a sign of respect. The oldest male member would drink first, followed by the rest, before anyone else could drink. Even though liquor occupies an important position in the Mizo social and cultural occasions, not everyone consumes it regularly. Only the elders and the chiefs keep a drinking habit and the masses usually drink only during festivals, religious and other ceremonies. The young males who partake in these social and cultural activities also consume liquor, but seldom got drunk.

Mizo traditional belief systems and practices were associated with several sacrificial ceremonies in pre-colonial times. Offerings and sacrifices were performed, and liquor was an integral part of the ceremony. Liquor was part of the celebrations and sacrifices associated with birth, death, marriage, harvest, and successful hunting. It was consumed with a purpose or with a significant bearing. '*Kawngpui siam*' was an annual event in which offerings were made to the spirits in order to ensure prosperity for the whole village, including hunting and trapping wild animals and protection from enemies and raiders. '*Fano dawi*' is another ceremony performed for the whole village which was performed for the protection of the young and growing paddy plants and to prevent them from being destroyed by wild animals and birds. Another annual sacrifice was "*Ramar thih*" which was a sacrifice for the safety of the villagers from the dangerous work of cutting the jungle for their *jhums*.

Another sacrifice is '*Khuangchawi*' which is the most important sacrifice that a Lushai can perform. This sacrifice costs a great deal of money so that practically speaking it is only performed by chiefs and a few well-to-do people, as ordinary

Lushai cannot afford it. Its object is to help the performer on the road to *Pialral* or paradise.

There was keen competition among the men in hunting. When a man killed an animal in the hunt he would invite his friends and neighbor to celebrate with him. They sat up all night with the head of the animal which was usually accompanied by a feast consisting of at least one pot of beer, the flesh of the animal, and a fowl. This ceremony was known as '*sa lu men*'.

Liquor was also used as a means of celebration for different occasions. Zu was also drunk on the day of purification (*in then ni*) after the death of a member of a family in the house. '*Inthian*' or '*inthen*' was a ceremony that marked the cleansing and driving away from the spirit of the dead person in the home and the beginning of its journey to '*mitthi khua*', the dead men's village or the abode of the death. Liquor was also consumed on warming the chief's house and the Zawlbuk (bachelor's dormitory), erecting a stone platform (*lungdawh*) in memory of the dead persons killing a domestic animal for a feast without any sacrificial or religious intent and killing a hog which had been dedicated and set apart for sacrifice.

With colonial encounters, there was a gradual transformation in the cultural, social, and religious life of the Mizo. Colonialism brought about a significant transformation in the perceptions of the people toward liquor. With the introduction of the new religious faith, liquor was slowly abandoned by the people leading to increasing negative perceptions of liquor in general amongst the people and eventually undermining its social relevance. The traditional religious and cultural practices were now considered to be in contradiction with the new religious belief system, values, and accompanying new orientations.

When Mizoram attained its statehood, the government imposed a rule which control the sales of liquor. Only Indian Made Foreign Liquor was allowed to be sold in Mizoram. In 1995, a new act was legislated and enforced in 1997 which total prohibition of liquor was imposed. This Act was enforced for about 18 years and in 2014, a new Mizoram Liquor Prohibition and Control Act controls the sale of liquor and its consumption. India Made Foreign Liquor was sold inside Mizoram under the

supervision of the State government. However, a new bill was passed in 2019 which completely prohibits the sales and consumption of liquor. And once again Mizoram became a dry state again.

Objectives

1. To study the evolution of liquor, manufacturing, and consumption.
2. To examine the history and significance of liquor in Mizo culture.
3. To probe the changing perception of liquor that lead to liquor prohibition.

Methodology

In order to do an in-depth study on the cultural history of liquor in Mizoram, the qualitative method is employed to study the historical evolution of liquor, its nature, and its significance in Mizo culture by examining existing Mizo literature and other written records in the form of books, letters, and manuscripts. It will essentially be a historical study of liquor.

Official records and books published by colonizers will also be examined during the period under study. The research used both primary and secondary sources. Sources are collected from libraries such as Central Library and Mizoram State Library and archives such as Mizoram State Archives and Aizawl Theological Archives.

The first chapter studied the historical evolution of liquor globally and in Mizoram. There has not been much in-depth study and research on the role and significance of liquor in Mizo culture since pre-colonial times. In the process of understanding one's culture, their drinking pattern could be useful in knowing in-depth about the society of a particular culture.

In the second chapter, the nature and significance of liquor in Mizo culture were studied. The types of liquor, methods of preparation, utensils, and materials that were necessary for making and drinking liquor were critically discussed. Manner of drinking liquor amongst the Mizo during the pre-colonial period and how liquor was

associated with festivals, sacrificial ceremonies, and how the manner of drinking reflected the social status of the people was also highlighted. The impact of colonial encounters in Mizoram and the advent of a new religion which led to the changes in Mizo society, religion, and culture were stressed in this chapter.

The third chapter examined the factors which led to the changes in perception of liquor. How these changes affect the position and significance of liquor in Mizo culture, and how it leads to prohibition were also highlighted. It also stresses the various Prohibition Acts after Mizoram attained its statehood and the role of various groups in the prohibition of liquor.

Findings

By analyzing both available primary and secondary sources, this study attempts to reconstruct the history of liquor in Mizo culture. It shows how liquor played a large role in the social, religious, and cultural life of the Mizo. The origin of the fermentation of liquor was unknown even though there was a myth that gave us an idea about the origin of the fermentation of liquor. This myth, however, has no supporting evidence. They might have known about the fermentation of liquor from their connections with other tribes before migrating to Mizoram.

As far as the tribes in Mizoram are concerned, liquor was prevalent among all tribes. While *Pawis* and *Lushai* shared the same name of liquor such as *Zupui*, *zufang*, and *rakzu* while Lakher named their liquor *Sahmapi*, *Sahmaei*, and *Zuri*. Lakher had a different story of the discovery of *Sahma*, in which a divorced wife decided to poison her husband by boiling the python's excrement with rice and mixing it with the python dung. After the arrival of the British, a new type of liquor called "*tin zu*" was introduced by the wives of military personnel using kerosene and ghee tin for brewing. *Tin zu* was mainly popular among the common masses. It was never consumed in any cultural or religious events.

During the pre-colonial period, liquor served as a social bonding element between the people. Liquor was only drunk occasionally and on special occasions during the

pre-colonial period. Only the Chief and elders (*Upa*) were allowed to drink it regularly. Different liquor was consumed based on social status. There is no law that forbids anyone from consuming any type of liquor. As per tradition, *Rakzu* is primarily enjoyed by the chiefs, the elders, and the well-off members of society. Traditionally, no public drinking occurred when drinking this liquor, and only special occasions were observed when it was drunk. Nobody ordinarily drank it. On the day on which one separates from the parental house and begins their own religious practice, separate liquor called '*Sakhaw Zu*' is consumed. In general, people consumed liquor only on festivals, celebratory occasions, and to alleviate the pain of loss.

Liquor played a key role in celebratory events. For instance, festivals were celebrated fervently with liquor, feasts, dancing, and singing. For this purpose, the villagers would prepare an enormous amount of liquor in advance. During hunting expeditions, liquor was drunk as means of celebration when men shot wild animals. Marriages were also marked by the drinking of liquor which was prepared by the grooms and bride's relatives for the marriage feast. Apart from celebratory occasions, when a loved one dies, the family and neighbours would bring liquor to console the grieving family members and would share their sadness and sorrow while consuming the liquor.

Agriculture was the primary occupation of the village and villagers relied on hunting and trapping wild animals to ensure prosperity for the entire village, as well as to defend it from enemies and raiders, which prompted the performance of annual sacrifices such as *Kawngpui Siam*, *Fano daw*, and *Ramar thih*, in which liquor was an important part of the ceremony.

Mizo used liquor as medicine. The usage of liquor after childbirth is evident in A.G. McCall's book '*Lushai Chryllis*'. In this book, when a woman was given lukewarm mild *Zufang* or rice beer to revive her and relieve her pain after childbirth. As a medicinal substance, liquor was also widely used by the Mizo society before and during colonial rule.

Liquor was used as a form of showing respect towards the elders and to display appreciation for the *'tlawmngai'* man and the best boy in the village. Drinks were served in different cups. *Noleng* was used by those who served and prepared beer while *Nopui* was used by the owner of the house and the owner of the beer. Not everyone can be the first to drink liquor. One has to wait for their turn. So long as the chief, elders, or the best boy do not consume liquor, the young men will wait their turn. Drinking in this manner was a tradition. They did not have a written drinking tradition but rather a conventional tradition that was passed down from generation to generation.

In the pre-colonial era, *Thangchhuah pa* or *Thangchhuah* man was highly regarded among the Mizos, since it required many steps to be completed and a multitude of commodities to be obtained. The title *Thangchhuah* required the completion of several steps. Very few were able to achieve this title. To achieve this title, one needs to perform a ceremony known as *Khuangchawi*. Both *'ram lama Thangchhuah'* and *'in lama Thangchhuah'* were types of *Khuangchawi* ceremonies. In the *Khuangchawi* ceremony, several steps had to be performed, in which liquor was crucial.

As colonialism and a new religion called Christianity impacted traditional drinking methods, changes were made to the practice and consumption of liquor. Several major changes occurred as a result of the British influence on the Mizo culture which led to many changes such as the adoption of western fashion and the abandonment of traditional religious practices that required offerings and sacrifices.

The role of the missionaries cannot be ignored since they played an important role in discouraging people from drinking liquor. They disseminated the negative implications of liquor through their teachings. The Christians and the newly converted individuals were persuaded to abstain from drinking liquor, which greatly influenced the masses and led to a change in their views on liquor. As a result of the change in religious belief and the teachings of the new faith, liquor is prohibited among Christian members. The missionaries disliked how the Mizo behaved when

drunk. By consulting the early Mizo Christian, the Christian Missionaries prohibited the consumption of liquor among the member of Christian.

The early articles published in vernacular newspapers discussed the negative effects of liquor and encouraged readers not to consume it. The early vernacular newspaper had numerous articles urging people not to drink alcohol and mentioning how it affects both a person's health as well as society as a whole. It is also evident from the writings of colonial writers that many became highly intoxicated during social and cultural events. There is no moderate drinking among the *Lushai*, according to them. Once they drink one cup of rice beer, they end up drinking another. Colonial writers wrote differently from how Mizo recorded their drinking history. They wrote that they were occasional drinkers, in contrast to the colonial writers who wrote differently from how Mizos illustrated their drinking practices.

In the south *Lushai* hills, missionaries viewed liquor liberally, even though they abstain from liquor. It was only later that they discovered that the Mizo had no concept of temperance whatsoever when it came to strong drinks. Upon consulting early converts, they argued that the *Lushai* who wished to join the Christian community must abandon strong drinks. The first Presbytery held in North *Lushai* Hills in 1910 forbade the consumption of liquor as part of its agenda. The Church had a great influence in teaching its members to restrain themselves from the consumption of liquor.

In 1973, the first Legislative Assembly passed the Mizoram Excise Bill. After ten years of enactment of the bill, the Mizoram Excise Rule 1983 came into existence. Both came into force on 10th October 1984. There were rules and punishment for those who violated the Act and Rules but no punishment for people who consume liquor. In 1995, the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act (MLTP) came into existence as the government felt it was necessary to fight alcoholism. The Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Rules and the MLTP Act came into effect on 20 February 1997. The MLTP Act 1995 provides total prohibition of import, transport, manufacture, sale, and consumption of liquor in the state.

In 2014 the Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition and Control) Act was put into effect on 17 July 2014. It prohibits and regulates the production, manufacture, possession, transportation, importation, exportation, purchase, sale, and consumption of intoxicating liquor. The Act applied to the entire state of Mizoram except for the three autonomous district councils: Chakma Autonomous District Council, Lai Autonomous District Council, and Mara Autonomous District Council. Almost 18 years after prohibition, wine and liquor shops opened again in Aizawl. As of 2019, the Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition) Act, 2019 was enforced to prohibit the import, export, transport, manufacturing, possession, sale, and consumption of liquor in the state of Mizoram. It covered the entire state of Mizoram except for the three autonomous district councils namely Chakma, Lai, and Mara.